

# So, what's next?

A guide to careers for  
Psychology Majors



Faculty of Health

**KEEPING MORE PEOPLE HEALTHIER, LONGER.**

## A message from the Dean of Health and the Chair of Psychology

At York's Faculty of Health, our vision is to educate future global leaders who will help redefine and advance health and human science. Each day, our graduates do exactly that.

The Department of Psychology's approach integrates a wide variety of perspectives and valuable learning opportunities that give our students a breadth and depth of understanding of research and issues related to the field of psychology. That educational background allows our students to step into a wide variety of careers upon graduation. A degree in Psychology is a valuable qualification that can take you in many directions. It will provide you with opportunities in business, marketing, human resources, law, social work and many other careers where an understanding of human behaviour is an asset.

What career awaits you upon graduation?

That will depend on your interests, knowledge and abilities. Today, our graduates can be found working as administrators, researchers, educators, consultants, advisors and many get involved in community-based projects. A degree in Psychology is an excellent lead-in to all forms of postgraduate studies that can take you on to a career in, for example, medicine, law or clinical psychology.

We encourage you to read about the exciting careers that our alumni of the Department of Psychology are pursuing as they make a difference in health and human science.



**Harvey Skinner, PhD, CPsych, FCAHS**  
Dean  
Faculty of Health



**Suzanne MacDonald, PhD**  
Chair  
Department of Psychology



## **As a student, you get asked lots of questions.... in class, on tests, as part of your term papers.**

Well, here are a few more you'll want to consider:

- What's next for you?
- Post graduate education?
- A job?

Whatever choice you make, your studies at York's Faculty of Health have provided you with a great start towards a financially secure and interesting career. We take a broad view of health. That wide perspective creates an extensive range of career opportunities requiring a variety of skills and backgrounds.

The demand for caring, qualified professionals with a background in psychology is increasing due to stressful working environments, an aging and growing population and workforce, new technologies, restructured health care systems and new views on fitness, disability and lifestyle.

## **When deciding on your next steps, and particularly when choosing your career, it helps to ask yourself:**

- What are my biggest interests—the things I really enjoy doing?
- What are my special talents and skills?
- What types of situations or environments appeal to me?
- What types of job tasks do I enjoy?
- What job tasks do I not like?
- What is going to matter to me next year?
- In five years?
- In fifteen?



Your priority may be to find a long and satisfying career, or simply to learn about viable job options. Or, you may want to “make a difference” where you can play a leading role in research or improve our understanding of human behaviour. Regardless of your choice, York’s Faculty of Health wants you to succeed. On the following pages, we offer you a variety of sources of information to help you as you transition from student life.

### **Where would I work?**

People with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology can be found working almost anywhere. Their employers include federal, provincial and municipal governments, community health centres, public health, education, health program development, insurance industry, academic, medical, industrial, science, pharmaceutical and research institutions, professional associations, clinics, hospitals, international agencies, information technology firms and consulting companies.

### **What have others done with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology?**

People with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology enter the workforce in commercial, social service, educational and government settings, or operate their own businesses. Their undergraduate degree provides them with an understanding of how people think and react. It also provides a good grounding in statistical analysis and research design—highly useful skills for careers in everything from business, management and education to the public sector service, sales and marketing.

**We’ve invited a couple of graduates to tell us about their career choices and offer you further questions to ask yourself.**



## Interested in continuing your studies?

Tudor Oprea

2012 BA Psychology

Graduate Student in Public Health, Umeå University, Sweden

From inside the neuron to trying to understand the contextual influences of abnormal behaviour, all the way to figuring out the role of stress in recovering from an illness – the opportunities with a degree in psychology are endless.

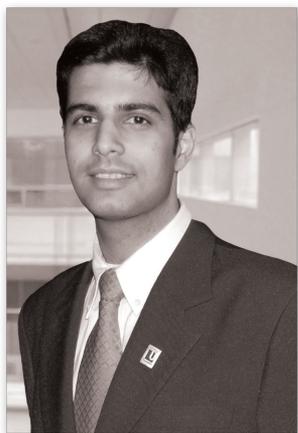
This flexibility is what allowed Tudor to realize his passion for pursuing a career focused on health. “My education at York University gave me a very diversified outlook to the different fields a psychology background can reach out to,” says Tudor. “An important moment in my university career was realizing how psychology is present everywhere, from business to medicine, to taking care of oneself. I was able to understand that psychology could be taken and applied to a majority of fields with great success, and I decided to take my knowledge and apply it to the health field by continuing my education in public health”.

Tudor is currently in Sweden completing a Masters in Public Health. Having a psychology background is a great foundation for the public health sector as the ability to identify underlying causes of behaviour enriches the creation of effective programs and resources for the general population.

**“An important moment in my university career was realizing how psychology is present everywhere, from business to medicine, to taking care of oneself.”**

He encourages students to pursue psychology because of its integrative and holistic approach: “I would recommend the Psychology program at York for all those who wish to understand the interconnectedness of today’s world”.

## Are you able to understand people and markets?



**Yohan Mahimwala**  
2006 BA Psychology  
2006 Certificate Human Resources Management  
Marketing Supervisor, Small Business, UPS Canada

In human resources and in marketing, success depends in large part on being able to understand people and the way in which they behave. That has been the experience of Yohan Mahimwala, who has worked in both fields since graduating in 2006.

Yohan joined UPS Canada in May 2006 in its human resource department, which is responsible for 2,000 employees at the company's Toronto hub. A year later, he moved into marketing, helped implement a country-wide public relations program, and is now a marketing supervisor with responsibilities for helping build the company's presence in the small business segment of the market.

"Psychology helps you understand the way people interact and that's obviously important when your job is to hire, retain and help motivate people in an organization," Yohan says. "But it's also important in marketing, which is all about delivering messages to the marketplace and shaping an image. To do that, it helps to have an understanding of how people respond and react to messages—what attracts them and what does not."

Yohan credits his professors and on-campus employers for helping connect him with potential employers prior to graduation. It was part of a broader networking approach, which he says is vital to finding a good job. "The hidden job market is where a lot of the choicest jobs are, and tapping into it requires networking and informational interviews with employers before graduation, as well as attending job fairs and career expos."

## Interested in people and human resources?



Colleen O'Brien-Wood

1996 MA Psyc

2001 PhD Psyc

Vice-President International Development & Consulting at  
Self Management Group (SMG)

When Colleen O'Brien-Wood was at York completing her PhD in the social personality area of psychology, she initially thought she would go on to an academic career. Her strengths and skills, however, lent themselves more readily to the applied business sector. As it turns out, it was an especially appropriate career choice since she now helps companies identify people whose personalities, attributes and others

skills are best suited to particular jobs and careers.

"Everyone's success in their job depends, to a great extent, on how well their skills, interests, and personality are suited to their work," Colleen explains. "Identifying the right person for a job is a challenge for many organizations, and the cost of not making the right choice is significant in terms of recruiting and training expenses and lower productivity and performance."

Colleen is Vice-President International Development & Consulting at Self Management Group (SMG), which helps organizations improve retention and performance through selecting and developing top people from within and outside the company. SMG develops a variety of tools for their clients' use, including online recruiting portals involving psychometric assessments to screen job applicants, in-depth job and personality profiles for clients to use when interviewing candidates, and approaches for companies to provide ongoing coaching and career development for their employees.

"The competition for top talented people in the job market is fierce, and will remain so for several years to come," says Colleen. "As a result, organizations will have an ongoing need for assistance in attracting, retaining and motivating their most talented people, which creates a wide range of career opportunities in the human resource field for people with backgrounds in psychology."

## Lisa Goos

1999 MA : Psychology

2004 PhD. Psychology

Whether it is an individual research program or a world-renowned research institute, success depends on planning and focus, explains Dr. Lisa Goos, who obtained her Master's and PhD. in psychology at York. Since graduation, she's had experience with both.

"After graduation, I spent three years at the Hospital for Sick Children conducting my own research into novel genetic regulatory mechanisms in the inheritance of attention deficit disorder," Lisa explains. "Now, I'm at Baycrest Geriatric Health Care System where my role is helping our two research institutes plan and focus their research to achieve exceptional results."

Baycrest is internationally renowned for its care of aging adults and its excellence in aging brain research, clinical interventions and treatments, and promising cognitive rehabilitation strategies. Members of the Rotman Research Institute study changes in brain function that stem from normal aging, stroke and disease, while members of the Kunin-Lunenfeld Applied Research Unit work with clinicians to develop new prevention, treatment and management strategies for these disorders.

As Director of Research Policy and Planning, Lisa's responsibility is to facilitate excellence in research by working to implement strategic research goals and ensuring the resources, processes and other factors are in place to generate timely, cutting-edge results -- reinforcing Baycrest's reputation as a world-class research centre.

While she never imagined a career such as this when she started, she's very happy about the path her career has taken. "You never know where things are going to lead. Just keep working hard, doing what you enjoy doing, and stay open to different possibilities; you may be surprised where you end up!" she says.

## Nicky Cohen

1996 BA: Psychology & Health Study

2000 MA: Kinesiology and Health Science

2006 PhD: Clinical Psychology

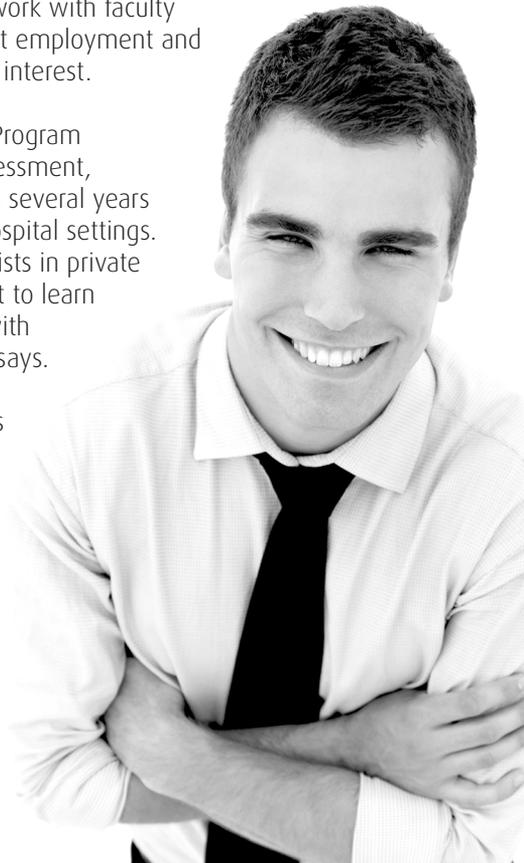
Five years ago, the twin challenges of raising her young daughter at the same time as she was completing her Ph.D. helped Dr. Nicky Cohen determine where she would focus her future clinical and counselling psychology practice.

“Parents commonly face sleep problems with their children such as setting limits at bedtime and during the night, and developing appropriate sleep schedules,” Dr. Cohen explains. “I faced these problems with my own daughter, and was surprised that there was no one in the city who provided assistance in this area. I eventually found a psychologist in Philadelphia, who helped me. Through her, and my own research, I began to study this area and now counselling parents regarding children’s sleep is the focus of my practice.”

Dr. Cohen recommends that people interested in pursuing graduate studies in clinical psychology work with faculty with similar interests as well as seek out employment and volunteer opportunities in their areas of interest.

“The York Clinical Psychology Graduate Program provided an excellent foundation of assessment, treatment, and ethical issues, as well as several years of practical experience in a variety of hospital settings. However, working with other psychologists in private practice upon graduation, was important to learn about the practical aspects associated with operating a private practice,” Dr. Cohen says.

“As a practitioner in private practice, it is ideal if you are able to match your own clinical interests with a specialty area that is not yet being well served in your community” Dr. Cohen adds.



## **Interested in continuing your studies?**

Perhaps professional school?

York is a great place to prepare for professional school.

What makes York such a great choice for pre-professional school education? Lots of things including:

- Personal contact with professors
- Prerequisite courses required by professional schools available
- Flexibility to structure courses to suit your interests and goals
- Pre-professional academic advising and student clubs
- Volunteer and paid positions in research labs
- Opportunities to be involved in community-based projects

Use the checklist on the inside back cover to see if postgraduate education is right for you.

## **How can I gain work experience in the Department of Psychology?**

Graduates unanimously agree—working in your field as a volunteer, with not-for-profit organizations, with campus organizations, or others is invaluable. It's the best way to gain the relevant job experience that will catch the attention of future employers.

Eligible students interested in research careers or post-graduate study may apply to work at York's Research@York program (RAY) and be paid to participate in research projects with faculty members and/or fellow students, while receiving compensation at a competitive rate.

## **What kind of salary can I expect?**

Depends on the job. The best way to learn about salaries is to check with an industry association or on the internet during the course of your occupational research.

## **Who can help me make my career decisions?**

Ultimately, it's up to you! Parents, friends and teachers may provide advice; the media can be a source of up-to-date career information and your recent job experiences will shape your decisions. However, it's your life, your work and your purpose.

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It's your future, and it's a big choice. York University students and recent alumni have access to the York University Career Centre, a team of career professionals who support you in the development of career self-management skills. The Career Centre delivers job search and career development programs to help you build success on your terms.

Check out [www.yorku.ca/careers](http://www.yorku.ca/careers)

## Careers for Psychology graduates

- Psychiatric/Institutional Aide
- Psychologist (with further postgraduate training)
- Science Technician
- Rehabilitation Practitioner
- Mental Health Worker
- Early Childhood Educator
- Human Resource Consultant
- Research Assistant
- Social Worker
- Child and Youth Worker
- Counsellor (Schools, substance abuse, bereavement)
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- Probation Officer
- Lawyer (Family Law)
- Policy Advisor
- Management and Marketing
- Mediator
- Labour Relations Specialist
- Educational Administrator
- Elementary School Teacher
- ESL Teacher
- Librarian
- Professor (with further post graduate training)



### **Check out further information at:**

The Career Centre site at [www.yorku.ca/careers](http://www.yorku.ca/careers) and the Faculty of Health, Department of Psychology site [www.yorku.ca/health/careers](http://www.yorku.ca/health/careers)

### **Useful Career Publications**

Careers in Psychology: Opportunities in a Changing World by Tara L. Kuther and Robert D. Morgan (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2009)

Opportunities in Psychology Careers by Donald E. Super (McGraw-Hill, 2008)

Majoring in Psych?: Career Options for Psychology Undergraduates by Betsy L. Morgan, Ann J. Korschgen (Allyn & Bacon, 2009)

See back cover for useful websites



## IS AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR YOU?

Do you:

- Have an interest in how the mind works?
- Want to learn how to think critically?
- Have an interest in research?
- Feel comfortable with computers?
- Have an interest in biology, the brain, and the physiology of behaviour?
- Have an interest in mental health?
- Like mathematics or statistics?
- Have an interest in how we grow and change over the lifespan?
- Have an interest in personality and what makes people unique?
- Wonder how we perceive stimuli in our environment?
- Want to learn how to work well with others?
- Want a well-rounded education?
- Have the ability to be flexible and deal with ambiguity?
- Want to help people?
- Want to know why people behave or act the way that they do?
- Want to know why people think or feel the way that they do?

Scoring: The more boxes you checked, the more likely it is that you're a good match for a psychology major.

## IS FURTHER POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR YOU?

- Do you need an advanced degree to prepare yourself for your career?
- Do you want to teach and/or lead major research projects at a university or in a government/industry/business environment?
- Do you want to practice clinical psychology?
- Do you have a deep and abiding interest in understanding human behaviour?
- Do you have a love of learning?
- Are you self-motivated, self directed, organized, committed, curious, and focused?
- Are you empathic, insightful, and self-aware?
- Do you have a strong wish to improve the quality of life for individuals and for society?
- Do you want to generate, maintain, sustain, and transmit knowledge about human behaviour, thoughts, and emotions?

Scoring: The more boxes you checked, the more likely it is that you're a good match for graduate school and a career in psychology.

### References

- Kuther, T.L., & Morgan, R.D., (2007). *Careers in psychology: Opportunities in a changing world* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- APA (2007) *Getting In: A step by step plan for gaining admission to graduate school in psychology* (2nd ed). Washington, DC: APA

## Useful Websites

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### **Careers in Psychology in Canada**

[www.cpa.ca/careers](http://www.cpa.ca/careers)

### **Canadian Research.org (Academic Research Positions in Canada)**

[www.canadianresearch.org](http://www.canadianresearch.org)

### **Charity Village (Non-profit positions)**

[www.charityvillage.com](http://www.charityvillage.com)

### **JOBS.GC.CA (Government of Canada)**

[www.jobs.gc.ca](http://www.jobs.gc.ca)

### **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

[www.tcu.gov.on.ca](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca)

### **PsychCareers - American Psychological Association**

[www.apa.org/careers/psycareers](http://www.apa.org/careers/psycareers)

### **Working in Canada**

[www.workingincanada.gc.ca](http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca)

### **Ontario Internship Program**

[www.internship.gov.on.ca](http://www.internship.gov.on.ca)

### **Ontario Public Service Careers**

[www.gojobs.gov.on.ca](http://www.gojobs.gov.on.ca)

### **Search by Province**

[www.jobsearch-in-canada.com](http://www.jobsearch-in-canada.com)

### **York University Career Centre**

[www.yorku.ca/careers](http://www.yorku.ca/careers)

## York Student Clubs & Services

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### **Pre-Med Society at York University**

[www.yorku.ca/ypms](http://www.yorku.ca/ypms)

### **Undergraduate Psychology Students Association**

[www.yorku.ca/upsa](http://www.yorku.ca/upsa)

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