

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HONOURS IN PSYCHOLOGY AT THE ANU

Below is a series of questions that students have asked us over the years. To try to help you, we have organized these questions into five different categories: (1) [Questions about Applying to ANU Psychology Honours](#), (2) [Questions about Being Accepted into ANU Psychology Honours and Accepting Your ANU Psychology Honours Offer](#), (3) [Questions about ANU Psychology Honours Supervisors and Research Topics](#), (4) [Questions about the ANU Psychology Honours Program Itself](#), and (5) [Questions about Your Future](#).

We strongly recommend that students read *all* questions and answers, regardless of the category labels, because our own labelling may not be the same as what students themselves would do (thus making it difficult to find answers to their questions).

Category I. Questions about Applying to ANU Psychology Honours

Question 1.01 Will the Research School of Psychology be holding an Honours information session in addition to the one held by the ANU joint Colleges of Science?

Yes. The dates and times will be announced closer to the time of the session.

Question 1.02 I intend to apply to a one-year full-time Honours program offered by your department. To which Honours Program must I apply?

The answer to this question depends on the degree you are seeking. What is most important is that you do *not* enrol in a *four (4) year* course (one that will take you an additional four years to complete) when you are seeking only a *fourth (4th) year* course (one that will take you only one year to complete, assuming you have already completed three years of an accredited psychology undergraduate sequence).

Question 1.03 I need a program code and an Honours course code in order to apply. Can you please tell me what these codes are?

If you completed a Science-based Degree, the Program Code is 3600. If you completed an Arts-based degree, the Program Code is 3111. The Honours Course code is PSYC4011.

Question 1.04 I understand that the application deadline is October 31. When is the start of the application process?

There is no formal start date for the application process for Psychology Honours at the ANU. However, if you submit your application too early (e.g., mid-way through your three-year degree), it will be too incomplete for us to make an assessment, and we are likely to return it to you. It is best to submit your application during the semester prior to the next Psychology Honours period.

Question 1.05 With regards to the application process, I have noted that there is both an honours application form and a form specific to the Research School of Psychology. Do I submit them to the same place or to different places?

If you are completing your degree through the ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment (CMBE), you should submit both application forms to the Science Student Enquiries counter at CMBE, Peter Baume Building 42, The Australian National University.

If you are a continuing ANU BA student, you must apply online from the CASS website at <http://cass.anu.edu.au/current-students/honours/forms>. However, you should submit your Psychology form directly to the Science Student Enquiries counter at CMBE, Peter Baume Building 42, The Australian National University.

Question 1.06 In the form for Supplementary Information for Honours in Psychology, it asks for “Title of your Pass Degree Program (e.g., BA, BSc)”. Should I include all of my previous degrees if I have more than one (Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts)?

What is most important is the degree associated with the Psychology Honours pre-requisites. However, listing all your degrees won't hurt.

Question 1.07 Would you be able give me an early indication of whether I'm likely to be accepted?

No. Unfortunately, we are not able to give students early indications of likely acceptance, beyond the criteria we have outlined on our Honours in Psychology web page under the headings “Minimum entry requirements” and “Grade requirements.”

Question 1.08 I am taking a summer course to complete my psychology requirements. Can I still apply to start Psychology Honours in Semester 1 immediately following my summer course?

Yes, you can. You are not, however, likely to be given a first-round offer, as we will not be able to assess your full application until the final mark for your summer course is officially received.

Question 1.09 I have earned my undergraduate degree at an Australian university other than the ANU. My undergraduate university says that I have to have a different number of undergraduate credit points than ANU says in order to be accepted. Which rule do I follow for my application to Psychology Honours at the ANU?

If your undergraduate degree in Psychology was earned from an APAC accredited institution, *and* you fulfilled all of the course requirements needed for honours entry at your home institution, then you will be eligible to apply for Psychology Honours at the ANU. Note, however, that the ANU grade criteria will be applied to you (e.g., if ANU has a higher cut-off than your home institution, we will apply the ANU cut-off).

Question 1.10 I am an ANU student who has completed a semester of study abroad. In doing so, I completed some of my psychology requirements at the overseas institution. Will the classes I took overseas be counted as part of my required undergraduate psychology sequence for Psychology Honours? Also, how do you calculate my grade average from the two different institutions?

You should ensure that any psychology courses you take overseas will be accepted as part of your minimum Psychology Honours entry requirements *before* you study overseas. We cannot make any guarantees about our acceptance of overseas courses until we see their content.

As for calculating your grade average, we will follow standard procedure to calculate your ANU grade average. We will then work to translate your overseas grades into ANU equivalents (e.g., a B+ grade will be a Distinction mark, but in the higher range).

Question 1.11 On the Psychology Honours information website it says provisional applications are not currently being accepted. However, other students told me they were. Which one is true?

The Psychology Honours web page is correct.

Category II. Questions about Being Accepted into ANU Psychology Honours and Accepting Your ANU Psychology Honours Offer

Question 2.01 When would students receive information regarding the success of their application?

We strive to inform successful students of their acceptance into Psychology Honours in Semester 1 by 24 December.

Question 2.02 Do I have to be in Canberra when Psychology Honours offers are made?

No. You will be contacted via e-mail. Current ANU students will be contacted through their ANU e-mail address; external students will be contacted through the e-mail address they provide on their application form. Make sure that you regularly check the relevant e-mail address.

Question 2.03 If my application is successful, how long do I have to accept the offer?

There will be a stated acceptance timeframe on your acceptance letter; failure to accept within this timeframe will lead to a lapse in the offer (i.e., your position will be given to another student). However, it would be best for students to accept their offer within two weeks of receiving notice.

Question 2.04 If I am accepted to Psychology Honours, do I have to inform the Research School of Psychology in order to confirm that the offer is accepted and to get further instructions or information from RSP?

No. If you are completing your Honours degree through ANU College of Medicine, Biology and Environment (CMBE), then you will receive your offer from CMBE; if you are completing it through the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS), then you will receive your offer from CASS.

The offer you receive will provide you with instructions on how you can make your acceptance. Once you accept, the relevant College will take all necessary administrative steps to complete your enrolment, and you will be sent further instructions on what to do next.

If you have any questions about your acceptance, please contact science.enquiries@anu.edu.au or students.cass@anu.edu.au, depending on your degree.

Question 2.05 Once I receive an offer to be admitted to Honours in Psychology at the ANU, can I defer that offer for a later year?

We review applications and make offers to students in good faith, with the understanding that students have applied because they want to enrol in Psychology Honours at the ANU in the academic year immediately beginning after the application was lodged. In this manner, we do not provide Psychology Honours offers with the intent of having students defer these offers. At the same time, however, we recognize that unexpected life circumstances may intervene between the time of application and the time the offer is made, leading some students to seek deferral.

The Research School of Psychology will consider requests for deferral of Psychology Honours offers on a case-by-case basis. Students should note, however, that we will grant these deferral requests only in cases of outstanding and unexpected circumstances. For example, we recognize that international students may need additional time to

arrange their visas; this is definitely an acceptable reason for requesting a deferral until the next academic year. In contrast, an example of a deferral request that is unlikely to be granted is something like, “I’ve just completed three years of undergraduate study, and I really need a break” or “I want a gap year between my undergraduate and honours study.” Most students applying for honours have just completed three years of undergraduate study, so this is not a reasonable basis for deferral.

Finally, students should note the formal ANU Rule that a person who is admitted to a program for an award may, with the approval of the appropriate Delegated Authority, defer his or her program for one year without penalty.

Question 2.06 Is it possible to start Psychology Honours while putting on hold the other component of my double degree (and complete that other component Psychology Honours)?

No, you must complete your degree requirements before you can enrol in Psychology Honours. The final offer for Honours is given by the College, and the first thing they check is that the student is eligible (i.e., actually completed a degree).

Category III. Questions about ANU Psychology Honours Supervisors and Research Topics

Question 3.01 I have heard from some students that you can choose between clinical and health psychology, cognitive and perceptual psychology, and social psychology; however, others told me that there are only two choices available (e.g., social or cognitive). Which one is correct?

Research supervisors will be available from all three areas of clinical and health psychology, cognitive and perceptual psychology, and social psychology.

Question 3.02 If one happens to be a successful Psychology Honours applicant, which streams of supervisors (i.e., clinical and health, cognitive and perceptual psychology, social psychology) are most popular and, thus, taken up quickest?

There is no way of knowing the answer to this question. Students have many different interests, and no area seems to be more popular than others.

Question 3.03 Will the research area of my Psychology Honours thesis affect my admission into clinical psychology post-graduate programs?

No, not at all. Students who complete their honours research in areas other than clinical and health psychology have an equal chance of being accepted in the post-graduate clinical psychology program as those who do complete their honours research in clinical and health psychology.

Question 3.04 Does the workload differ between the different psychology research areas (i.e., clinical and health, cognitive and perceptual psychology, social psychology)?

No.

Question 3.05 When can I start contacting academic staff to discuss possible Honours supervision?

Students can contact any academic staff member at any time to discuss possible research projects. However, whether any individual academic staff member will meet with you or not depends on: (1) the staff member's schedule, (2) the potential match between your research interests and the staff member's research interests, and (3) the number of months prior to the start of the Honours year that you contact the staff member. In terms of Point 3, if you approach a staff member too early, then the staff member may simply ask you to come back at a later date. A reasonable time to start discussing possible supervisory arrangements is in the semester immediately prior to the start of the academic year in which you want to start Honours (although, for some academic staff members, this may still be too early).

Question 3.06 What if there are no supervisors available to oversee the research project that I want to do?

Every student who receives an offer to enrol in Psychology Honours is guaranteed a supervisor. However, the Research School of Psychology does *not* guarantee that every student will receive his or her first supervisory preference; this is

something we simply cannot do. Moreover, academics are not obliged to supervise any research project that students bring to them. The best strategy is for students to review the available projects in any given year, and seek ones that align most closely with their own (i.e., students') interests.

Category IV. Questions about the ANU Psychology Honours Program Itself

Question 4.01 What is the difference between the start date listed on the ANU Colleges of Science web page and the one listed on the ANU Programs & Courses web page under PSYC4011?

The Colleges of Science start date is the date by which students completing Science degrees should expect to start their honours research (in consultation with their supervisor). The start date on the Programs & Courses web page is the date on which actual coursework starts (the honours research is not part of this coursework).

Question 4.02 Is Psychology Honours really hard?

Psychology Honours at the ANU is a challenging year for many students. It is certainly *not* easier than the three previous undergraduate years of study. Psychology Honours is particularly challenging because students will be asked to engage in independent, and often, creative thinking. Students whose study strategies for their first three undergraduate years entailed rote memorization may find Psychology Honours particularly challenging.

Question 4.03 What will I have to do during my Psychology Honours year at the ANU?

All students enrolled in ANU Psychology Honours must complete three required courses and an independent, year-long research project (under the supervision of an academic staff member). Throughout Honours, you will be required to read assigned readings, participate in class discussions, take exams, write reports/essays, work in groups, and work independently. More details can be found on the ANU Psychology Honours web page, particularly in the downloadable ANU Psychology Honours Handbook. Please note that the Honours Handbook is valid only for the academic year stated in the ANU Psychology Honours Handbook itself because we update it each year; however, reading through this Handbook will give you a good idea of what is involved in Psychology Honours at the ANU.

Question 4.04 Is it possible to take Psychology Honours part-time?

Yes. Students have the option of doing honours part-time. Coursework would be completed in the first year and the thesis in the second year of study.

Category V. Questions about Your Future

Question 5.01 How can I find out information about Psychology post-graduate options at the ANU?

To find out information about Psychology post-graduate options at the ANU, students should carefully read the relevant ANU web pages. The Honours staff, including the Honours Convenor, will not necessarily be the best people to answer your questions about your post-graduate options.

Question 5.02 Who can I talk with to get some Psychology career pathways advice?

Careers Advisors are really the best people to talk with about career pathways. Students can also access the relevant web page of the Australian Psychological Society at <http://www.psychology.org.au/studentHQ/>. Finally, a list of currently available psychology jobs within Australia can be found at <http://www.psychxchange.com.au/JobSearch.aspx>.

Question 5.03 Should I complete my Honours year in Psychology at the same institution at which I want to complete my Psychology post-graduate work?

Unfortunately, there is no real answer to this question. Sometimes it is helpful for students to continue their post-graduate research in the same area with the same supervisor as they had in their honours year. However, if, by the end of the honours year, students realize that they are no longer interested in that area of study, then change obviously makes the most sense. Other factors, of course, also come into play, including financial concerns and idiosyncratic preferences about where one would like to live. In the end, given that students will *not* know where they will complete their post-graduate study until *after* completion of their honours year, it may be best for students simply to choose where they wish to study honours based upon their preferences at the time. We certainly hope you choose ANU.

Question 5.04 Can you please tell me about Psychology Honours programs at universities other than the ANU?

No. At the ANU Research School of Psychology, we are not in a position to provide information about other institutions.