Research School of Psychology

Frequently asked questions for the Graduate Diploma in Psychological Studies

1  Aim of the Graduate Diploma
The course is a bridging programme for people who have done a previous degree but which did not contain enough psychology content to allow them to apply for honours. (also see FAQ 3)

2  What if my first degree didn’t include the first-year psychology units?
You will need to have done those courses before applying for the Graduate Diploma. At ANU they consist of PSYC1003 and PSYC1004. You can do them here prior to starting the Graduate Diploma or, if you want to do them more quickly, online at a university that offers that option. Note ANU does not offer that option. If you decide to do them here, you could also do PSYC2008 in Semester 2. You can apply to do those courses as part of a Bachelor of Science (even though you have no intention of completing the Bachelor of Science) and then at the end of Semester 2 transfer across to the Graduate Diploma.

3  What if my first degree wasn’t a BSc or BA or the equivalent?
Honours are not a standalone degree, so it has to be linked to a compatible Science or Arts degree. Thus, if you are planning to do Honours after the Graduate Diploma, you need to ensure that your first degree is compatible, i.e. a BSc or BA, or the equivalent. In Science, equivalent degrees include: Bachelor of Applied Science; Bachelor of Engineering; and Bachelor of Mathematics (or Statistics). Commerce, Finance and Economics degrees are problematic given they don’t fall under either Science or Arts. However, if in doubt, check with the Science or Arts Faculty.

If your first degree is not compatible, then your options are to do Psychology in a second degree, either a BSc or BA. Note you will get some credit towards that degree, but the amount of credit you get will depend upon which degree you decide to do and what you did in your first degree. Typically the BSc path is more flexible with gaining credit from your first degree but contact enquiries in both Science and Arts for more information.

Note: if you do Psychology this way, you will need to meet the following requirements in order to be eligible for honours:
http://psychology.anu.edu.au/study/programs/honours-study-psychology#requirements

4  Fee structure for the course
The Graduate Diploma is no longer HECS supported. Note, what this means is that it will be a lot cheaper to do the psychology courses as part of a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts. While that would mean you would end up doing more courses than you would in doing the Graduate Diploma you would get some credit for your first degree. Check with the College of Science or Arts (depending upon what your first degree was in) to determine how much credit you would get for your first degree. So, while the advantage of the Graduate Diploma is that it will be quicker, it will be more expensive than doing a second undergraduate degree. Also, if you have done minimal psychology in your first degree, you will do more third year courses and hence learn more by doing a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts.
5 Honours entry and improving your grades
When assessing your results for entry into the honours programme, we will only consider your grades from the Graduate Diploma. This means that if you have previously done a degree that included a double major in psychology, but your grades are not competitive for honours entry, you can do the Graduate Diploma to try to improve your chances of getting into honours. If you did your first degree at ANU, given that the Graduate Diploma consists of the standard undergraduate courses, you must have finished that degree at least 3 years prior to starting the Graduate Diploma. If you did your first degree somewhere other than ANU, you could start the Graduate Diploma immediately after completing that first degree.

6 Work load and getting into honours
While there is typically the desire to complete the Graduate Diploma quickly so you can start the honours programme, keep in mind that entry into honours is very competitive. We typically give out first round offers to students with a Distinction (70%) or better average. Depending upon the year, final round offers may go down to those with an average in the high 60’s. So, if you are doing the Graduate Diploma and you have other work commitments, be realistic about how many courses you can do in each semester. It would be much better to take an easier workload to give yourself the time to do well in the courses, rather than overloading yourself and performing badly because of time constraints. If your average in the Graduate Diploma isn’t competitive for honours entry, as far as getting into honours at ANU is concerned, there is no other option available to you after you have completed the Graduate Diploma. Note the courses in the Graduate Diploma are the standard undergraduate courses, so information on them is given on our website. While it is typically best to actually attend the lectures, lecture material (audio of the lecture and PowerPoint slides and overheads) is available on the web. Lab attendance is compulsory, though each course has at least one evening class time.

7 Applying for the clinical programme.
An Australian Psychological Society (APS) entry requirement, for entry into any clinical program is having done a course in Abnormal Psychology. At the moment, our third-year course in Abnormal Psychology (PSYC3025) is not a required course for the Graduate Diploma. This will be changed (PSYC3026 will become an elective). You can still meet the APS requirement by doing the Abnormal and Developmental elective in honours.

8 Ten year requirement for your first degree
If your first degree was completed more than 10 years ago but you have completed more recent studies, we can take those studies into account when assessing your eligibility for the Graduate Diploma.

9 Requests for Academic References
Note that ANU uses generic forms for graduate applications. For this course we do not require references.

10 Do I need to provide a copy of my Academic transcript?
Yes, you do, and if you completed your first years psychology courses independent of your undergraduate, then you also need to provide a transcript for them as well.