

# Honours year in Psychology – Internal Applicants

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## Who is the intended audience of this document?

This information is intended for **internal applicants** to the UNSW Honours year in Psychology – UNSW students who will complete an APAC-accredited undergraduate three-year (or bridging) sequence<sup>1</sup> in psychology at UNSW at any point during 2026.

All other applicants (including UNSW graduates who completed in 2025 or earlier) are considered external applicants. External applicants should refer [here](#) for information about how to apply.

## What is the Honours year?

The purpose of the Honours year in Psychology is to enable students who have performed well at undergraduate level to deepen their knowledge of approaches, perspectives and traditions in psychology while undertaking a substantial research project. Honours is a means for connecting undergraduate study with supervised independent research by consolidating and extending work completed in the undergraduate program and providing an academic foundation for students progressing to postgraduate studies, including a Masters by coursework, a Masters by research, or a PhD.

Honours is a one-year, full-time program available for commencement in Term 1 only. The program cannot be taken part-time or by distance<sup>2</sup> and mid-year entry is not possible. It is an [APAC-accredited](#) fourth year program.

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<sup>1</sup> A three-year sequence at UNSW can be completed within a single or dual Bachelor degree comprising a (minimum) 78 Unit of Credit major in psychology. A bridging sequence at UNSW is taken as a Graduate Diploma in Psychology.

<sup>2</sup> Adjustments were made in 2020 and 2021 to accommodate remote study as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students may undertake the Honours year in a variety of ways, as outlined below (program codes in square brackets). Honours content is identical regardless of the program code. Dual degree students should consult with their [Program Authority](#) about the recommended program structure (i.e., when the Honours year can/should be taken, as dictated by the program structure).

### **Embedded fourth year of a single degree program**

- Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) [3632]
- Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) [3962]

### **Embedded fourth (or later) year of a dual degree program**

- Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) / Bachelor of Laws [4721]
- Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) / non-Science Bachelor [various, incl. 3593, 3931]

### **A one-year, stand-alone program**

- Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) [4518]
  - Apply after completing a single degree program [e.g., 3970, 3435]
  - Apply after completing a dual degree program [e.g., 3529, 3930, 4722, 4770]
  - Apply after completing the Graduate Diploma in Psychology [5331]

### **What happens in the Honours year, and when does it start?**

The Honours year begins in late January with a mandatory *Orientation Meeting* for all Honours students. Those who may be travelling during the summer break should plan accordingly and be back in Sydney in order to attend the meeting on campus. Details of the meeting will be supplied to successful applicants when they are advised of their application outcome. The meeting is usually held in the final week of January.

After a student attends the Orientation Meeting, they 1) will be able to self-enrol in their courses for the year, and 2) are expected to meet with their supervisor and begin planning their research project.

Students may only enrol in PSYC4xxx-coded courses during their Honours year, and are not permitted to concurrently enrol in any other course or program.

Students will conduct a year-long, 30 UOC major independent research project (completed under the guidance of an academic supervisor), and write a thesis based on the project. The research project may be undertaken in most areas of psychology, such as: psychopathology, behavioural neuroscience, cognitive science, cognition and perception, forensic psychology, and social, personality and developmental psychology.

Students will also complete, across Term 1 and Term 2, 18 UOC of advanced-level core and elective coursework. The coursework requirement includes content that encompasses history, professional ethics, evidence-based practice and advanced coverage of selected contemporary issues in psychology that reflect the expertise and research specialisations of School staff (e.g., Recent Advances in Neuroscience, Emotions, The Psychology of Environmental Decisions).



Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Core and elective coursework (2-hour core lecture, 1-hour core tute, 2-hour elective seminar)	Core and elective coursework (2-hour core lecture, 1-hour core tute, 2-hour elective seminar)	Continuation of research
Research proposal and panel meeting	Continuation of research	Submission of thesis
Weekly independent study (approx.. 30 hours)	Weekly independent study (approx.. 30 hours)	Honours Conference presentation

## Eligibility for the Honours year

### Availability of resources

The number of places available for Honours varies from year to year. Admission is competitive and depends both on a student's academic performance (*Psychology Average*) and the availability of School resources. A *Psychology Average* of 75 is the minimum eligibility requirement but does not guarantee a place.

### Completion of an APAC-accredited undergraduate or bridging sequence in psychology

An undergraduate sequence in psychology at UNSW is a Bachelor degree with a psychology major of at least 78 Units of Credit (UOC). A 78 UOC psychology major comprises 10 core courses and three Level 3 elective courses. The BPsych(Hons) has a psychology major of 96 UOC comprising 11 core courses and five Level 3 elective courses.

A bridging sequence in psychology at UNSW is a Graduate Diploma in Psychology comprising 10 core courses.

	Stage 1 core	Stage 2 core	Stage 3 core	Level 3 PSYC electives
All other Bachelor programs	1001, 1011, 1111	2001, 2061, 2071, 2081, 2101	3001, 3011	1 x L3 List A 1 x L3 List B 1 x L3 List A OR B
BPsych(Hons)	1001, 1011, 1021, 1111	2001, 2061, 2071, 2081, 2101	3001, 3011	2 x L3 List A 2 x L3 List B 1 x L3 List A OR B
Graduate Diploma	PSYC5001, PSYC5002, PSYC5003, PSYC5004, PSYC5005 PSYC5006, PSYC5007, PSYC5008 PSYC5009, PSYC5010			

### Note about PSYC3371 Multivariate Data Analysis for Psychology (Level 3 elective)

This course, in conjunction with PSYC3001, is important as preparation for the Honours year – particularly for students planning on undertaking an Honours project that will require the use of multivariate statistics.

The core course, PSYC3001, focuses on ANOVA models and provides a thorough coverage of statistical methods for analysing single dependent variable data from experimental designs. The elective, PSYC3371, focuses on Multiple Regression models and provides an extensive coverage of



statistical methods for analysing data from non-experimental designs, and experimental designs with multiple dependent measures.

Together, these two courses provide a solid foundation for analysing data for different types of Honours projects. PSYC3371 is listed as a Level 3 List A PSYC elective, but can be taken as a List B elective.

### **Program requirements**

#### *Graduate Diploma in Psychology*

- Complete, by the end of Hexamester 6, all 60 UOC of the program

#### *Single Bachelor degree with an APAC-accredited psychology major (embedded or non-embedded Hons)*

- Complete, by the end of Term 3, the pass component of their program (typically 144 UOC, referred to as Stages 1 to 3)
  - Embedded Honours students who complete Stages 1 to 3 in Terms 1 or 2 **must** apply for Program Leave for Terms 2 and/or 3 or they will be administratively withdrawn from their program (an automated University process).

#### *Dual Bachelor degree with an APAC-accredited psychology major (embedded or non-embedded Hons)*

- Complete, by the end of Term 3, both the Science and non-Science pass components of their dual program (typically at least 192 UOC)
  - If a student has completed only the Science component of their dual program, they must consult with their [Program Authority](#) about their eligibility to pursue Honours before completing both components.

### **Psychology Average**

As noted above, admission is competitive and depends both on the availability of School resources and a student's *Psychology Average* ([Distinction](#) minimum). This is **not** the same as [WAM](#). A *Psychology Average* of 75 is the minimum eligibility requirement but does not guarantee a place. The higher the student's psychology average is from 75%, the more competitive their application will be for Honours.

For Graduate Diploma students the *Psychology Average* is calculated based on first attempt marks for **all** courses completed at UNSW during their program (i.e., from PSYC5001 to PSYC5010).

For Bachelor degree students the *Psychology Average* is calculated based on:

- First attempt marks for **psychology core courses common to all psychology programs / specialisations** (see below); AND
- The **three highest** first attempt marks of any completed Level 3 psychology electives.

Psychology core courses common to all psychology programs / specialisations:

Stage 1 – PSYC1001, PSYC1011, PSYC1111

Stage 2 – PSYC2001, PSYC2061, PSYC2071, PSYC2081, PSYC2101

Stage 3 – PSYC3001, PSYC3011



The *Psychology Average* does not include marks from:

- level 1 psychology electives (e.g., PSYC1031, PSYC1022 – PSYC1029, PSYC1062)
- psychology courses completed at another university (e.g., via credit transfer, cross-institutional study, exchange or study abroad)
- non-psychology free electives or courses counted as General Education.

### **Summer Term enrolment, Exchange studies and Supplementary exams**

Once applications close, the Honours Selection Committee will begin reviewing applications in bulk. The Honours Selection Committee aims to finalise allocations into the Honours program before the university closure date in December, however, offers may extend into mid-January.

In order to remain eligible for Honours, students must be aware of the following and plan their studies accordingly:

- **Summer Term:** Students undertaking studies in Summer Term will not be considered as results will be released much later after the allocation period. If a student is undertaking Summer Term, they will need to apply for the next Honours intake as an internal applicant.
- **Exchange Studies:** As each institution has its own dates for when their official transcript is released, we highly recommend that students applying for Honours **do NOT** take exchange studies during their final year. **This includes cross institutional studies.** If the exchange result is not finalised by UNSW Exchange Office by November, students will need to apply for the next Honours intake as an internal applicant.
- **Supplementary Exams:** Students who are provided the opportunity to undertake supplementary exam(s) for term 3 may still be considered for the Honours year. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis each year.

### **How to apply for the Honours year**

Applications open on 3 August and close on 13 November 3pm AEDT. Late applications **will not** be considered.

Please review the application guidelines on the [School's website](#) and apply accordingly.

### **Supervisor allocation**

Students do not choose their own supervisor, instead they submit a numbered list of preferences from the School's available supervisors. Similarly, supervisors do not select their own students.

Students nominate their supervisor preferences via the online [Intention to Undertake Honours form](#). Preferences must be informed by the "Supervisors and Research Areas" document available on the [School's website](#). The document may be edited after initial publication, so students should ensure they are viewing the most up-to-date version directly from the website (rather than from internet search results, or files saved at an earlier date).

Once applications close, submitted supervisor preferences are set and cannot be changed. It is therefore important that applicants read through the "Supervisors and Research Areas" document carefully and allocate their preferences wisely.

Allocating students to supervisors is a complex process that considers a number of factors, such as:



- supervisor availability
- School resources
- students' academic strengths
- students' preference nominations

Supervisors are typically allocated between one and three Honours students. As the admission process is competitive, it may be that you cannot be matched with any of your 10 preferences; you should not expect to be supervised by any particular member of staff.

Successful applicants will be allocated to a supervisor and be notified via email prior to the compulsory Honours Orientation Meeting in late January. The allocation process aims to pair students with a supervisor from their 10 nominated supervisor preferences. While unlikely, students may be allocated with a supervisor outside their nominated preference list if School resources are strained.

### **Can I defer my offer?**

No. An offer in one year does not guarantee admission in any subsequent year.

### **Category A** (as defined by the [Faculty of Science](#))

Should a successful applicant decide to decline their place in the Honours year they may re-apply for any subsequent year but will be assessed as an external applicant. Eligibility requirements for external applicants are not the same as for internal applicants. Places for external applicants, if any, are subject to the availability of appropriate research and supervision resources and will be assessed on the basis of academic merit. Information about applying as an external applicant can be found [here](#).

### **Category B** (as defined by the [Faculty of Science](#))

Eligible single degree students are expected to undertake Honours directly after completion of the pass components (Stages 1 to 3) of their embedded degree. Eligible dual degree students may or may not undertake Honours (if eligible) *immediately* after completion of Stages 1 to 3 of their Science component, depending on their program structure and advice from their [Program Authority](#).

Eligible students that complete their pass component/s and wish to take leave immediately before the Honours year must transfer to the relevant pass degree<sup>3</sup> in order to graduate. They would then apply for the stand-alone, one-year Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) program for the year they would like to commence Honours and be assessed as an external applicant. Information about applying as an external applicant can be found [here](#).

### **Alternatives to the Honours year at UNSW**

The UNSW School of Psychology is highly ranked, our Honours program is highly sought after, and we have set high entry standards for our Honours year.

There are other options available if a student does not meet the minimum eligibility requirements or is not offered a place in the Honours year at UNSW. Students who think they may be unlikely to meet the

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<sup>3</sup> e.g., 3632 BPsych(Hons) to 3435 BPsychSc, 3962 AdvSc(Hons) to 3970 BSc



requirements for the Honours year at UNSW are encouraged to think about their next steps, which could include:

- Applying for the [Graduate Diploma in Advanced Psychology](#), which is equivalent to the Honours program
- familiarising themselves with other accredited fourth-year programs in psychology by consulting the [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council \(APAC\) website](#)
- contacting other tertiary institutions to obtain information about their APAC-accredited fourth-year programs, eligibility requirements and application deadlines
- applying for APAC-accredited fourth-year programs offered by other tertiary institutions.

### **Further information**

If questions arise after students have carefully reviewed the information available about the Honours year on the [School's website](#), [Faculty website](#), and the relevant program entry in the [UNSW Handbook](#), they can contact the School via the [Ask a Question webform](#).

### **Honours Committee**

Prof Thomas Whitford, A/Prof Nathan Holmes, Dr. Miriam Matamales, Prof Simon Killcross

### **Program Administrator**

Samuel Chu

