



Strategies for Success Advising Guide: Psychology Major



The **Psychology Concentration Associate in Arts** degree program is designed for students planning to transfer to a bachelor's degree program in psychology. This program provides students with a foundation of scientific knowledge, theories, research and practical applications in psychology. This program qualifies for *MassTransfer*, which guarantees credit transfer to Massachusetts state universities.

This advising guide includes information that will help you to explore your academic and career interests and determine whether the **Psychology major** will support your long-term goals.

Exploring Your Options

Before deciding upon a major, you should take some time to explore your interests and develop your long-term academic, career, and personal goals. Periodically throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests. These activities are for your first year or during your first 30 credits at MCC.

___ During the first few weeks of your first semester at Middlesex, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor and discuss your future plans and how the **Psychology degree** can help you to achieve your goals. You and your advisor will work together to build an academic plan in DegreeWorks (an online educational planning tool that can be accessed through MiddleNet (<https://middlenet.middlesex.mass.edu>) that will include:

- Your major and degree requirements
- A map of the courses you will take each semester
- Your academic, career and personal goals, as well as, plans to achieve them

___ Complete the Focus 2 online career assessment tool which is located on our website at www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/FOCUS2.htm. After completing FOCUS2, schedule a meeting to discuss your results with a career counselor. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.

___ Review the career biographies which are located on the career services website at <http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/CareerServices/bios.asp>

___ Mid-Semester; schedule an appointment with your advisor to review your academic progress. Also, use this time to discuss your progress toward meeting your academic and career goals.

___ Before the semester ends, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor to discuss the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November to plan for Spring Classes, Early April to plan Fall and Summer classes).

EXPLORE YOURSELF

As you look at the field of psychology it's useful to ask yourself certain questions to determine if this is the major and career for you.



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What Are Your Interests and Strengths?

■ Ability to work with people

Psychology is a field that emphasizes personal growth and the ability to work with people. Are you the type of person who is strongly tuned into others – are you keenly aware of the reactions of others and often try to understand why people react the way they do? Do you take the time to pay attention to what others are saying and understand the points that are being made? Do you enjoy learning about diverse ways of seeing/doing things? Do you enjoy helping people?

■ Ability in math/science

Psychology is a science that depends on the use of critical thinking approaches to reduce any reliance on “common sense” or biased patterns of thought to make sense of observations, problem solving, and decision-making. Do you feel confident in using math and/or statistics to better understand or problem solve? Could you feel confident using the scientific method to investigate or conduct experiments to better understand behavior? Do you enjoy reading about psychological research?

■ Ability to speak and write clearly

Psychology is a profession that requires strong communication skills in both speaking and in writing. Are you able to convey information accurately and successfully in your writing? Do you feel confident in your ability to express yourself and articulate your thoughts in conversation?

■ Interpersonal ability

Psychology is a field that heavily depends on interpersonal skills. Are you the type of person that has the ability to communicate, inspire trust and confidence, and motivate others? Are you typically aware of others people’s emotional and social needs? Do you have empathy for the mentally disturbed? Do you have the ability to mediate or resolve conflicts?

■ Ability to keep learning

Psychology is a profession that is constantly growing and developing. Are you confident in your ability to keep learning in order to stay current with the field? Do you enjoy reading about psychological literature? Are you motivated to continue to grow and expand your ways of thinking about people?

What Are Your Values?

■ Helping Others

Ask yourself about your commitment to helping others. Reflect on your sense of personal responsibility to the social world.

■ Respect for socio-cultural diversity

Consider your commitment to the multicultural world. Psychologists often address issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class and culture.

■ Making the world a better place

Ask yourself about what matters to you. Psychologists typically seek to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, communities and society.

Explore the Field

Many students are surprised at how broad the field of psychology is. Most students are aware of therapy, but Psychologists are interested and work in a wide range of areas including hospitals, schools, and businesses. One way to learn more about the varied fields in psychology is to explore the American Psychological Association’s website.

To learn more about fields of psychology, visit www.apa.org/about/division/index.aspx.

To learn more about careers in psychology, visit www.apa.org/careers/resources/index.aspx.

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Psychology Program Outcomes

Graduates of the program are prepared to:

- Articulate and explain major psychological concepts, theories, and empirical findings;
- Write effectively, incorporating information and technology literacy skills as appropriate;
- Analyze and apply psychological principles to understand the causes of human behavior personally, socially and organizationally;
- Move from relying on “common sense” or biased patterns of thought to make sense of observations, and problem solve to effectively use the scientific method and critical-thinking approaches for these same purposes;
- Discuss and demonstrate their understanding of, and respect for, diversity as a result of their study of psychological research and theory;
- Use self-reflection and self-assessment to develop strategies that enhance self-improvement, and to clarify and strengthen their sense of personal responsibility in the social world.

AND

- Use knowledge acquired at MCC as a foundation for continued study and/or practical application;
- Interpret and analyze information in order to engage in critical thinking and problem solving;
- Communicate, use information, and employ technology effectively;
- Communicate an understanding of the world from a global perspective;
- Demonstrate social responsibility within the college community;
- Demonstrate the capacity for on-going personal and professional development

The Career Path

Students may pursue a wide range of careers in psychology, including human services, clinical/ counseling, educational and guidance, and industrial/organizational. As a student interested in the psychology major, you should research the career fields associated with a degree in psychology. Ask your advisor for assistance to get started.

Career Planning Activities:

- ___ Work with your advisor to create a Career Plan. As a student who is on the Career Path, your focus should be on building your skill-set and marketing yourself for a job.
- ___ Work with an MCC career counselor who can help you create a resume and cover letter. Consider looking for an internship to enhance your skills and establish some work experience. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.
- ___ Continue to work with an MCC career counselor who can help you with interview skills and job search techniques. Schedule an appointment with your advisor to follow up on your career plan.

The Transfer Path

Most students in the Psychology major will continue their studies toward a bachelor's degree. Students should identify the requirements of their intended transfer institution and schedule a transfer counseling appointment with an advisor in the Academic, Career and Transfer Center to discuss specific program planning. This program qualifies for *MassTransfer*, www.mass.edu/masstransfer which guarantees credit transfer to

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Massachusetts state universities. Academic advisors and transfer counselors work closely with students to plan course selections in accordance with their intended bachelor's degree major and transfer institution.

Below are the schools that are linked to the Psychology major through MassTransfer:

Bridgewater State University	Fitchburg State University	Framingham State University
Salem State University	Westfield State University	Worcester State University
UMass Amherst	UMass Boston	UMass Dartmouth
UMass Lowell		

Transfer Planning Activities:

- ___ Work with your advisor to create a Transfer Plan. Identifying and applying to a Bachelor's Degree program will be your focus. You'll need to research academic programs of interests, colleges that offer these programs and be aware of deadlines for admissions, financial aid, and housing deposits (if you are interested on living on campus). The transfer process can be complex. Your advisor and transfer counselor can help you with this process.
- ___ Schedule an appointment to meet with an advisor to learn about the transfer programs that are available to you as an MCC student, such as Mass Transfer, transfer/articulation agreements with other colleges, and other programs. Also, ask about the Common Application and the benefits of using this form. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career, and Transfer Centers in Lowell or Bedford to schedule your transfer counseling appointment.
- ___ If the transfer institution that you are applying to requires that you write a college essay, make an appointment with a tutor in the writing center to help you edit and review your essay. Remember the essay reflects who you are as a student and is also a sample of your writing ability.
- ___ Look for transfer scholarships that may be available. Consider applying to the MCC Foundation Scholarships. The deadlines for these MCC scholarships are typically at the end of the fall semester.
- ___ Whenever possible plan to visit your choices in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo...but you can get a better feel for the school when you visit. Your transfer counselor can help you prepare to get the most from this visit.

MCC Advising Resources:

- Career Services: www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices
- Transfer Services: www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer
- MassTransfer: www.mass.edu/masstransfer
- Financial Aid: www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid
- Foundation Scholarships: www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships
- College Board Match Maker: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp