Department of Psychology

Honours Application Guidelines

Please carefully read the following information about selection into the Honours in Psychology and Honours in Organisational Psychology programmes for Year 2026 intake and compile the information necessary for your application, before completing the online psychology and departmental application form.

Application into the programme

Honours in Psychology and Honours in Organisational Psychology are offered both full-time and part-time. Part-time (over 2 years) study is conducted through WitsPlus.

1. Please note that the application process is a two-step process. An application needs to be made on the central Wits application website (Student Enrolment Centre) at the following site: http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications/ Students wishing to study Honours in General Psychology part-time should apply for the part-time programme through WitsPlus.
2. Secondly, all applicants are required to complete the Psychology Departmental application form (hosted on the RedCap platform), which is available on the Psychology Honours website. Click here.

Academic Record

Academic performance is the primary selection criterion for both the Honours in Psychology and Honours in Organisational Psychology programmes. Before completing the psychology departmental application form, you should at least have a record of your mid-year marks for Third Year Psychology. Please note:

1. If you are currently in third year at another (Non-Wits) university, we will require your mid-year results for this application, and you will then have to supply your final marks to the psychology department as soon as they become available. If you do not have a full transcript available by the 15th December 2026, your application will not be considered.
2. If you have already completed your undergraduate degree (at Wits or another university), we will require a record of your final marks for Third Year Psychology as well as any research courses in Psychology that you have completed. Wits students do not need to upload a transcript as we have these on record.

3. If you are currently in third year at Wits in 2026, we will require a record of your mid-year results to complete this application. You do not need to supply your final marks to the psychology department as we will have access to them as soon as they become available.

Selection Process and Equity Criteria

Applicant information is collated and assessed for the selection process. Given the large number of applications into the programme, selections are based purely on scrutiny of the documentation supplied. Potential candidates should also note that because of over-subscription a large number of students who meet the faculty minimum criterion for entry into a masters' degree (65% average for 300 level psychology courses) may not be offered a place on the programme. The selection of candidates is based on academic performance as well as consideration of equity, diversity and social redress. The weighting of these aspects is to some extent dependent upon the nature of the applicant pool in any given year. The demographic information requested in the departmental application form is collected in order to serve, in part, as a basis for evaluating applicants' potential contributions to diversity in the course. This information also assists the selection committee to assess the applicant's performance relative to levels of (dis)advantage. Note: The information you provide in this application may be independently audited to evaluate its accuracy. Knowingly providing false information will be grounds for permanent exclusion from all postgraduate degrees in Psychology at WITS. Selection is conducted by a small team of Psychology staff who are bound by the graduate selection policy guidelines of the School of Human and Community Development.

Based on the application review process, applicants are ranked according to marks and equity criteria. In the case of the Honours in Psychology course the top 300 applicants are then shortlisted and will receive a letter from the Department of Psychology ideally by the end of November. Applicants who had not yet completed their third year psychology modules at the time of application will be emailed in early December and asked to provide their final year marks. Non-Wits candidates will need to upload final year transcripts to their SENC online applications by the 15th December 2026.

Final selection will take place in early December. Successful candidates will be sent a letter notifying them of a firm offer of a place in the programme by mid-December. Candidates who are waitlisted for places in the course will also receive a letter notifying them of their place on the waitlist and will see a 'decision pending' status on their online applications. Waitlisted candidates may be contacted any time between December and February. Those who have been declined places will see a 'declined' status.

Please note that given the large number of applicants the department will not be able to provide individual feed-back to unsuccessful candidates

Students who have been offered a place will be asked to notify the department of their availability to take up the place as soon as possible.

Duration

The Honours in Psychology and the Honours in Organizational Psychology programmes are both one-year full-time courses. Please be aware of this before you apply to one of these programmes and ensure that you will be able to make a full-time commitment to postgraduate study. Attendance at all classes is compulsory and you should ensure that you have the necessary financial resources to complete the year. Please note that applicants may only be permitted to enrol for an Honours degree once their undergraduate degree has been successfully completed. Concurrent registration for another degree or qualification whilst studying in any of the Honours programmes is not permitted.

Students wishing to complete their degree part-time (over 2 years) will need to indicate this wish on the departmental application form, where the option to apply into the Wits Part-Time programme (night classes) option will need to be ticked. Students are required to tick either the full-time or part-time option. Applications for both programmes are not permitted.

Curriculum

The Honours in Psychology students are expected to complete five (5) modules successfully in order to obtain the degree. This includes one (1) compulsory module (Research Methods in Psychology); a compulsory Research Essay on an approved topic; and three (3) elective modules, chosen from the clusters of optional modules on offer. It must be noted that in any given academic year only certain modules and/or combinations of these modules may be available, and students may not be allocated to all their preferences. Information about the electives can be found in Appendix C of these guidelines.

The part-time Honours in Psychology course will run over two years and will follow a set curriculum, including the two compulsory research courses and three modules.

For Honours in Organisational Psychology, students are required to complete five compulsory modules. The five modules are: Research Methods in Psychology; Individual Well-being and Effectiveness at Work; Theoretical Foundations of Organisational Psychology; Group Processes in Organisations; and the Research Essay on an approved topic.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST MAKE APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL AID SEPARATELY TO THE FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS OFFICE

Students may apply for **Postgraduate Financial Aid (NSFAS)** at the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office. Honour's students may also be eligible for the **Postgraduate Merit Award** (PMA) and there is no need to apply, the applicants are automatically selected based on merit and notified on the student self-service portal once registered as a student. Details of this and other awards are available from the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office (FASO) at: https://www.wits.ac.za/study-at-wits/financial-aid-and-scholarships-administration/scholarships-and-bursaries/

Deadlines for funding applications: Please check the relevant closing dates on the following website (and confirm these with the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office): https://www.wits.ac.za/study-at-wits/financial-aid-and-scholarships-administration/scholarships-and-bursaries/

Please note that you will not have heard whether you are accepted to the programme before the closing dates for financial aid, but you must apply for financial aid, scholarships, or bursaries anyway - in anticipation of your being accepted.

To apply: Please contact the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office directly (contact details available on the WITS website; physical office location: ground floor, Senate House) or follow the links to apply online from: https://www.wits.ac.za/study-at-wits/financial-aid-and-scholarships-administration/scholarships-and-bursaries/

Application Checklist

Your application will be considered complete when:

1. You have completed your Wits University application form through the Student Enrolment Centre (SENC) in person or online before the closing date. Please visit the Postgraduate applications site for further details: http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications/

2. You have completed the online Psychology departmental application form, available on the website.

3. All the documents required by SENC, including a university transcript of relevant undergraduate results, have been uploaded.

If you are not a Wits student and are currently completing your third year Psychology course

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

THE ONUS IS ON YOU TO GET AN OFFICIAL RECORD OF YOUR MARKS TO DATE AT THE TIME OF YOUR APPLICATION AND TO UPLOAD YOUR FINAL MARKS (OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT) TO YOUR SENC APPLICATION AS SOON AFTER THE COMPLETION OF YOUR DEGREE AS POSSIBLE OTHERWISE YOU CANNOT REGISTER FOR THE COURSE.

Any enquiries can be sent to selections.psychologyhonours@wits.ac.za

Appendix A: Information Required for Completion of Online Departmental Application – Wits Applicants

In terms of personal details and demographics, you will need to provide the following:

- Surname
- First Name/s
- Wits Student Number/Person number/Application Number
- Cell phone Number
- Email Address
- Indication of which honours programme/s in Psychology at Wits you wish to apply for
- Race
- Citizenship
- Gender
- If you have a disability, you will be asked to briefly state the nature of that disability.
- Home languages (up to maximum of three)
- Level of proficiency in each of the South African official Languages
- Details of and levels of proficiency in any additional languages (i.e., in addition to your home languages and the SA official languages) – use as many as appropriate, up to a maximum of three.
- Profession/ occupation and highest level of education of your guardians/ parents
- Details about the high school you attended (from which you matriculated), including the name, location, and type (Public/ government vs Private, urban vs rural)
- Details of any NSFAS funding you have received (i.e., for how many years you have received NSFAs funding, if any)
- Details of any work/ jobs you have undertaken during your undergraduate studies in order to fund your education.
- Information about how you intend/ plan to fund your honours studies should you be admitted to one of the programmes.

In terms of information about your academic record, you will need to have a copy of your university academic record or transcript available in order to answer the following questions:

- Details of any degrees you have already completed.
- Current status in terms of registration as a student
- Details of any degree you are currently completing.

For **applicants who completed/ are completing undergraduate psychology (and especially third year psychology) at Wits**, you will need to provide the following information:

- The year in which you first completed any of the modules in third year Psychology offered at Wits (including WitsPlus)
- The overall mark obtained (where available) for your first attempt at these modules.
- If you have repeated any modules in third year Psychology at Wits, you will need to provide the year and overall mark obtained (where available) when you repeated these modules.
- Your marks (for RDA IIA (PSYC2005/2012) and RDA IIB (PSYC2006) (where available)
- Information about any research experience you may have had at this point in your education/ career.

Appendix B: Information Required for Completion of Online Departmental Application –

Applicants from Other Institutions

In terms of personal details and demographics, you will need to provide the following:

- Surname
- First Name/s
- Wits Student Number/Person number/Application Number
- Cell phone Number
- Email Address
- An indication of which honours programme/s in Psychology at Wits you wish to apply for
- Race
- Citizenship
- Gender
- If you have a disability, you will be asked to briefly state the nature of that disability.
- Home languages (up to maximum of three)
- Level of proficiency in each of the South African official Languages
- Details of and levels of proficiency in any additional languages (i.e., in addition to your home languages and the SA official languages) – use as many as appropriate, up to a maximum of three.
- Profession/ occupation and highest level of education of your guardians/ parents
- Details about the high school you attended (from which you matriculated), including the name, location, and type (Public/ government vs Private, urban vs rural)
- Details of any NSFAS funding you have received (i.e., for how many years you have received NSFAs funding, if any)
- Details of any work/ jobs you have undertaken during your undergraduate studies in order to fund your education.
- Information about how you intend/ plan to fund your honours studies should you be admitted to one of the programmes.

In terms of information about your academic record, you will need to have a copy of your university academic record or transcript available in order to answer the following questions:

- Details of any degrees you have already completed.
- Current status in terms of registration as a student
- Details of any degree you are currently completing.

A number of questions will specifically relate to your academic record in Psychology, for which you will need your academic record/ transcript and, in the case of students from outside of Wits, details about the contents of and assessment practices in (a) third year psychology and/or (b) courses in research methods.

For **applicants who completed/ are completing undergraduate psychology (and especially third year psychology) at a university other than Wits**, you will need to provide the following information:

- Course codes (as these appear on your academic transcript) for all courses completed/ being completed in third year psychology.
- Course names for each of the above courses
- The year in which each of these courses was/is to be completed.
- The format of coursework assessments in each of these courses (essays/written assignments/projects; Short-question assessments; MCQ assessments)
- The format of formal tests and exams in each of these courses (essay-style questions; short questions; MCQs)
- Overall marks (where available) for each of these courses. (If the awarding institution does not provide marks, but only symbols/ classes of pass, these can be provided.)
- Information about which, if any, of these third-year courses contained content related to research methods (research design, psychometrics, qualitative methods and analysis, statistics)
- The course code, overall marks, and information about the content of any other courses in your undergraduate training that focused on research methods.
- Information about any research experience you may have had at this point in your education/ career.

Appendix C: Module Information – Honours in Psychology Electives

As explained in guidelines, students enrolled in the Honours in Psychology programme take three (3) elective modules (in addition to the compulsory research module and research project module), chosen from the clusters of optional modules on offer in each term. **It must be noted that in any given academic year only certain modules and/or combinations of these modules may be available, and students may not be allocated all their preferences.**

PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY (PSYC4029)

The module takes a critical focus, examining description, classification, etiological theories, and intervention strategies for a range of psychological problems. The module will examine definitions of pathology and abnormality, specifically in relation to theories of normal and abnormal personality development, and critically explore dominant taxonomies of mental and psychiatric illnesses - most notably the DSM system of classification. The knowledge acquired in this field is used by clinical practitioners to understand and treat abnormal patterns of functioning.

QUALITATIVE AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION TECHNIQUES (PSYC4098)

The module introduces students to the central paradigms in qualitative and programme evaluation research. Basic and advanced principles of qualitative and multi-method design and data collection and explored, exposing students to techniques that derive from ethnographic, participatory action research, empowerment bases and social construction approached. The module is strongly skills based, emphasizing practical aspects of data collection and analysis, yet equally concerned with theoretical underpinnings of techniques and criteria of rigour for research.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY (PSYC4009)

The community psychology module explores an approach to psychology that attempts to locate the individual within a community or social context. As such, it emphasises the interaction between the individual and his or her context as the origin of individual adjustment difficulties and psychological problems. The community psychology module is also concerned with an examination of the applied preventative interventions that are most successful with larger groups or populations. Not only is this applied focus directed towards knowledge and skills acquisition pertaining to methods and approaches to intervening, but the module also rigorously explores the community individual nexus through an examination of a range of theoretical models emerging from community psychology as a sub-discipline.

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (PSYC4057)

This course is designed to introduce post graduate students to the contribution of the specialized field of health psychology in health management. The course aims to introduce the student to health psychology and health research as well as cover a variety of topics including health-seeking behaviour, adherence to medical advice, stress, chronic illness (i.e., cardiovascular disease and HIV and AIDS), gender-based violence, substance abuse, pain management and the role of exercise etc.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS (PSYC4035)

This module will provide students with a historical and contemporary view of several leading contemporary psychotherapeutic modalities. The course will include the major schools of psychotherapy for example: Psychoanalytic, Person Centred, Jungian, Feminist, Systemic, Cognitive-Behavioural and Narrative psychotherapy, as well as a consideration of African indigenous healing modalities. Theories of psychotherapeutic cure and the evidence for them will be explored and evaluated, as well critiques of psychotherapy. Students will gain theoretical knowledge about principles and techniques of psychotherapy/counselling practice. The aim of this module is to extend and deepen your understanding of psychotherapy and to become familiar with contemporary debates and issues in the broad field of psychotherapy, including a critical consideration of the relevance of western psychotherapeutic modalities for the South African context. The primary aim is not to learn how to perform psychotherapy but how to think about psychotherapy in a more informed and critical manner.

COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE (PSYC4007)

Cognitive Neuroscience has its roots in many different disciplines that study various aspects of the structure and functioning of the brain and the nervous system. Disciplines such as neurology, neuropsychology and neurophysiology focus on the anatomy of brain structures and their influence on behaviour, whereas disciplines such as cognitive psychology, cognitive neuropsychology, and cognitive science focus on the functions of the brain and the mind. Recent advances in brain imaging techniques have prompted much research into the structures and functions of the brain and their effects on behaviour so that these are now being studied in a more integrated manner under the discipline of “Cognitive Neuroscience”. In this module, selected areas of human behaviour (such as memory, social and emotional functioning, and executive functioning) will be studied from an integrated perspective that unites neuropsychology and cognitive psychology.

Course structure: This takes the form of weekly seminars, with the first four presented by the lecturer or a guest lecturer. The remainder of the seminars is structured as group class presentations on selected topics. There are also several “class outings”, e.g., to observe a human brain dissection and to visit a neuroimaging centre.
Course assessments: There are two coursework assessments, i.e., a group seminar presentation, and an individual written paper. In addition, there are **two examinations** for this module – one which focuses on neuroanatomy and research methods in cognitive neuroscience, and the other which focuses on theoretical issues in the field. There is a prescribed textbook, and students are expected to read 1-2 chapters a week related to the forthcoming seminar. It is a demanding, but very interesting course.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: INTERGROUP RELATIONS (PSYC4046)

This module introduces students to intergroup relations, the part of social psychology that focuses on processes particular to social groups and their interactions with each other. Specifically, the course will consider such issues as (a) ways of understanding prejudice, asymmetries between social groups, and intergroup conflict; (b) the consequences and manifestations of prejudice; and (c) ways of reducing conflict and prejudice. Classical and

contemporary theories of intergroup relations, and the research underpinning these will be explored.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (PSYC4034)

This module will focus on the core theoretical issues of psychological assessment, particularly in the South African Context. This will include issues of the nature and use of psychological assessments, measurement integrity issues (e.g. different forms of assessment reliability, content validity, construct validity, criterion validity, predictive validity, and item analysis), types of assessments and their relationship to psychological theory (e.g. Assessing intelligence, assessing personality, computerised assessment, dynamic assessments), assessment practices (e.g. applicable norm groups, cross-cultural issues, appropriateness of assessments, etc.), ethics in assessment, and the development of questionnaires and scales.

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (PSYC4058)

This course aims to critically examine theory as it applies to the developmental context of contemporary society, by focusing on constructionist and socio-cultural theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget, and Bronfenbrenner, as well as psychodynamic theorists including Freud, Klein, Winnicott. In exploring the contextual nature of psychological development, the course attempts to enhance an understanding of theory as it applies to various contexts and issues of human existence. Developmental contexts and issues are explored under a range of themes such as orphans & vulnerable children (OVC), the legacy of apartheid, parenting, Socio-economic status, violence and trauma, child abuse & neglect etc. The course focuses on developmental theory in application to the South African context and across borders. The focus of this course is the childhood years of development, though not exclusively, as the lifespan approach is appreciated. **NARRATIVES OF YOUTH AND IDENTITY (PSYC4073)**

This module explores narrative approaches to understanding personhood, particularly focusing on the construction of youth identities or subjectivities. This framework is considered particularly useful in a dynamic context like contemporary South Africa where future possibilities are not readily entailed in the past and conventional taxonomic or stage theories have little explanatory power. The course will raise questions about the ways in which the stories (or texts) that we tell about our lives and those of others may work to construct particular histories and future possibilities. Contemporary critiques of these approaches will also be addressed, asserting the importance of material conditions, practice, and embodiment in the making of subjectivity.

EVERYDAY LIFE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION (PSYC4072)

This module will introduce students to a theoretical framework and analytic approach for studying everyday life and social interactions. The module is based primarily on materials (both classical and contemporary) from the phenomenological, ethnomethodological, conversation analytic, and discursive psychological traditions. It includes examination of a number of fundamental social scientific issues that underpin everyday life and interactions, including: 1) everyday (and scientific) “practical reasoning”, 2) the nature of intersubjectivity, 3) theories of social action, 4) the social constitution of knowledge, and 5) structures of social interaction.

These materials will be examined for their significance for an interdisciplinary social science of everyday life, with special reference to their implications for understandings of psychology.

GENDER IN PSYCHOLOGY (PSYC4074)

The focus of this module is on the construction of gender from various theoretical positions. The course aims to introduce students to a solid theoretical awareness of the nature of gender identity, sexuality, and various forms of gender difference. Given the wide scholarly literature in the field, the focus will be on the underlying epistemological and tenets of theoretical models; their points of contestation and convergence; areas of exclusion and admittance; as well as the consequences of these for a fuller understanding of knowledge production in gender studies. The course will focus on how gender is present in multiple aspects of human functioning and society, with a focus on the role of gender within sociohistorical contexts such as health, violence, family, education, crime, and mass media. Students will be encouraged to challenge and critically reflect on their own, others, as well as psychological constructions of gender so to adopt a specific position/s about gender.

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY (PSYC4032)

This course introduces students to psychoanalytic thinking and spans classical psychoanalysis, through object relations theory to intersubjective/relational psychoanalysis. The aim is to provide students with a thorough grounding in the psychoanalytic theory of normal and abnormal psychological functioning. The course reading is based on primary and secondary texts with the aims of reaching a theoretical understanding of the application of theory to practice (with reference to clinical and group/social settings). The course aims to contextualize psychoanalytic theory and research within the South African context and in relation to key social issues. The course aims to extend the application of psychoanalytic theory to practice by looking critically at both international and local psychoanalytic research studies.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT (PSYC4070)

The aim of this course is not only to introduce students to the South African context and the realities it holds for our children, but also to our education system and the impact thereof on practice. Although there are some educators and practitioners who believe that theory is not important and that one should focus on the practicalities of supporting children, I agree with Gander and Strothman (2005, as cited in Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012) that the more theoretical knowledge we have, the greater the variety of support strategies we can apply, the more diverse and detailed learner programmes we can develop, and the more equip we will be to face the challenges that haunt the South African education system and our children. Taking all of this into consideration, we will focus on developing a sound theoretical background that will not only assist us in understanding the South African education system and the notion of inclusive education which was adopted by the Department of Education in 2011, but also the more prominent barriers to learning and development faced by South African children today. Furthermore, as we will specifically be focusing on inclusive education within the South African context, it is important to also understand the current legislation and other informative documentation that drive inclusive education within this country. Also, as far as barriers to learning and development is concerned, our focus will not only fall on the South African context and the extrinsic barriers caused by realities such as poverty, but also on intrinsic

barriers to learning and development and the reality of being a child with a specific childhood disorder in a South African classroom.