

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

College of Life  
and Environmental Sciences

# What do Birmingham postgraduates do?



## School of Psychology

*First destinations of postgraduates*

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- Analysis of first employment destinations for the College of Life and Environmental Sciences
- Employability data for Psychology postgraduates, 2007–11
- Illustration of the range of occupations undertaken by our postgraduates

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/psychology](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/psychology)

# Foreword

I AM DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE 'WHAT DO BIRMINGHAM POSTGRADUATES DO?' WHICH LOOKS IN DETAIL AT THE FIRST DESTINATIONS OF OUR PSYCHOLOGY POSTGRADUATES AND AT EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR ALL POSTGRADUATES WITHIN THE WIDER COLLEGE OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES.

In addition to providing accessible information on employment destinations of our postgraduates, this publication is also designed to give an insight into the kinds of employment sectors and jobs for which a postgraduate degree at Birmingham can prepare you.

Pursuing a postgraduate degree offers you the opportunity to explore your chosen area of interest in depth, as well as developing your knowledge and understanding in a subject area about which you are truly passionate. Beyond the transferable skills that you will take with you into the workplace, your postgraduate qualification will give you the chance to engage

in critical enquiry, to grow as a scholar and even to become an expert in your field.

Here, we show you how your postgraduate qualification can help you make that knowledge and expertise work for you after graduation. First of all, we give you an overview of the employability and first destinations of postgraduates across the wider College of Life and Environmental Sciences as a whole. Then for the school that is relevant to you (Biosciences; Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences; Psychology; or Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences) you will see a snapshot of the achievements of our postgraduates six months after graduation. All data is taken from the results of a 'Destinations of Leavers' survey issued to our postgraduates after this time.

You will be able to see, by department, how many of the postgraduates who replied to this survey successfully entered employment and/or further study within just six months, along with a range of the diverse and exciting



career opportunities that will be open to you after studying for a postgraduate degree in your chosen area.

Accompanying the data are case studies in which recent postgraduate alumni share their experiences of postgraduate study at Birmingham. Here, our alumni talk about the value inherent in postgraduate study, the knowledge and skills they developed during their degrees and where their qualifications have taken them since graduation.

I hope you find the information presented here useful and our alumni stories inspiring. We very much look forward to welcoming you to our campus soon.

Dr Ivan Sansom  
Director of Education  
College of Life and Environmental Sciences



## College of Life and Environmental Sciences

# Employability

The College of Life and Environmental Sciences spans an extensive breadth of disciplines, with expertise which aligns strongly with key international challenges, including lifelong health and wellbeing, food security, energy security and living with environmental change.

The College conducts internationally recognised teaching and research, hosts exciting initiatives in new fields of study, fosters effective collaboration between schools and has excellent research facilities.

The College uses training, fieldwork and its high quality facilities to enable students to gain generic and discipline-specific skills while studying exciting topics from ecology through to cancer research and forensic psychology.

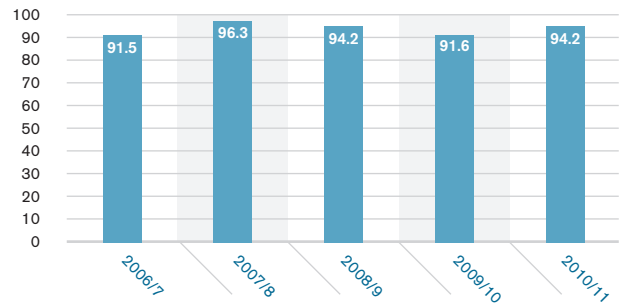
The College comprises four schools:

- School of Biosciences
- School Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES)
- School of Psychology
- School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences

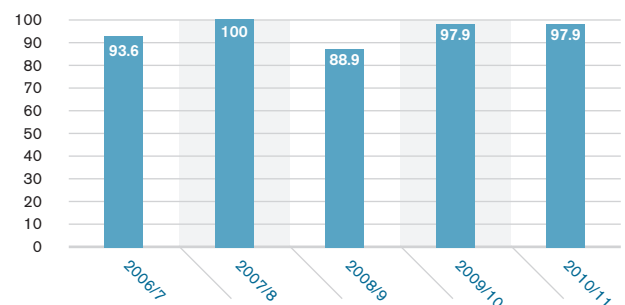
Over the last five years, 93.6% of taught postgraduates and 95.7% of research postgraduates from the College of Life and Environmental Sciences have been in work and/or further study just six months after graduating.

The two charts to the right show the breakdown of these statistics for each year, for taught postgraduate and research postgraduate respondents.

**Percentage of Life and Environmental Sciences taught postgraduates in work and/or further study six months after graduation**



**Percentage of Life and Environmental Sciences research postgraduates in work and/or further study six months after graduation**



SOURCE: *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions*, Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007–11



'I loved the campus and the facilities at the University and my time at Birmingham helped me to develop my skills as a researcher. I wasn't sure what to expect before I started my studies, but found

that I enjoyed doing research more than I had anticipated, which led me to become an academic myself. Doing a PhD in Psychology at Birmingham is a great experience; the research culture is inspiring and the campus has everything you could wish for in a university.

'In my current role, I continue to carry out research in areas that I am passionate about and am able to pass that passion onto my students. Since my PhD, my notable achievements include

becoming a chartered psychologist, having my work published and having the chance to do further training to become an accredited psychotherapist so that I can combine teaching and research with clinical practice. My PhD at Birmingham helped me develop a passion for research and for the area in which I completed my PhD, which has led me to develop an international reputation in this field.'

**Rebecca Knibb**, PhD Psychology, graduated 1999

*Rebecca's research project looked at the psychology of adverse symptoms attributed to foods and drinks. She is now Senior Lecturer in the School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University.*

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## College of Life and Environmental Sciences

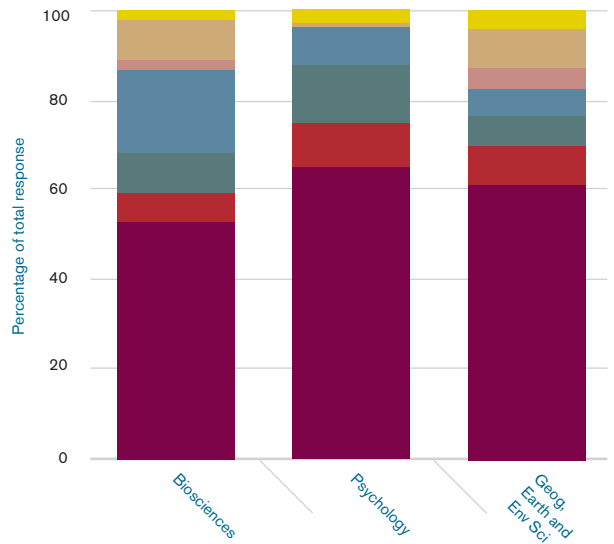
# Postgraduate destinations

### Taught postgraduate destinations\*

The chart to the right summarises the destinations of Life and Environmental Sciences postgraduates from the 2010/11 academic year, six months after graduation:

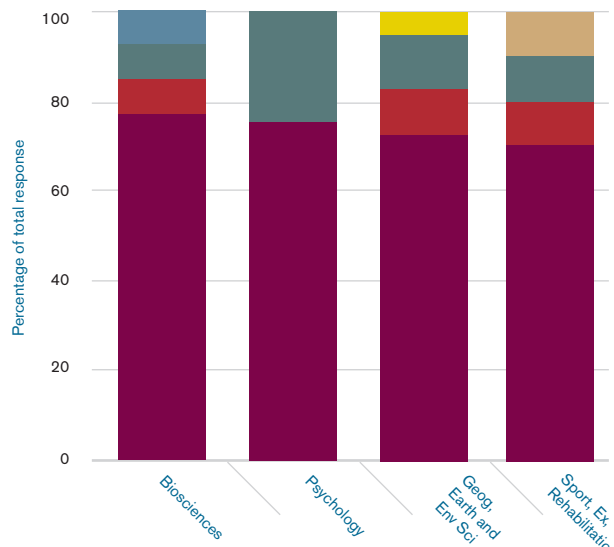


\* (The School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences began offering taught Masters degrees in 2012; as a result, no data is yet available for taught postgraduates)



### Research postgraduate destinations

The chart to the right summarises the destinations of Life and Environmental Sciences postgraduates from the 2010/11 academic year, six months after graduation:



SOURCE: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions, Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007-11



'The Computational Neuroscience and Cognitive Robotics (CNCR) Masters course was undoubtedly one of the best study experiences I have ever had. I was coming from a background in Psychology,

but wanted to increase my knowledge of neuroscience together with my mathematical and computational skills.

'The modules and research placements in Birmingham provided me with a great foundation and introduction to the field of computational neuroscience; I was given guidance on how to record and model neuronal oscillations to develop artificial neural networks in various computer scripting languages. In addition, I was involved in developing and programming behavioural psychophysics experiments.

'At every stage in the year, I felt as though I was being trained as well as having my opinions and suggestions nurtured. I would thoroughly

recommend the course as it has provided me with vital skills that I will continue to develop throughout my current PhD.'

**Tim Vivian-Griffiths**, Computational Neuroscience and Cognitive Robotics MSc  
*Tim is now studying for his PhD at Cardiff University.*

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# School of Psychology

## EMPLOYABILITY

Our Psychology postgraduates enter diverse occupations both within and beyond their area of study.

### Highlights:

- Over the past five years, a total of 96.9% of taught postgraduate respondents from Psychology successfully found work or further study within six months of graduation
- Over the past five years, a total of 97% of research postgraduate respondents from Psychology were in work or further study six months after graduation

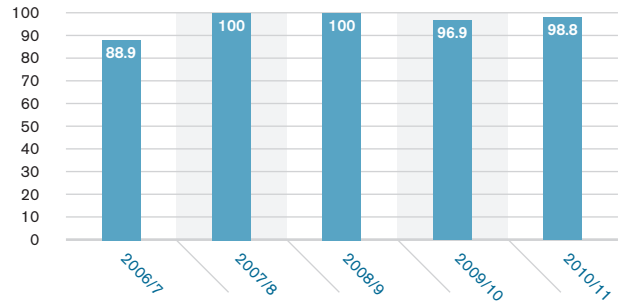
A postgraduate degree in Psychology at Birmingham will not only help you to develop your subject knowledge and research techniques, but will also allow you to develop a wide range of transferable skills in communication, numeracy and critical thinking.

A significant number of our Psychology postgraduates enter 'Psychology track' jobs in areas such as mental health support work and teaching assistant roles, as well as assistant psychologists. Often, these graduates enter their first job to gain the necessary experience to progress onto further study in order to pursue a psychology-related profession. Elsewhere, many of our postgraduates also use the transferable skills developed from their degree to enter a wide range of other careers, from retail or recruitment consultancy to finance.

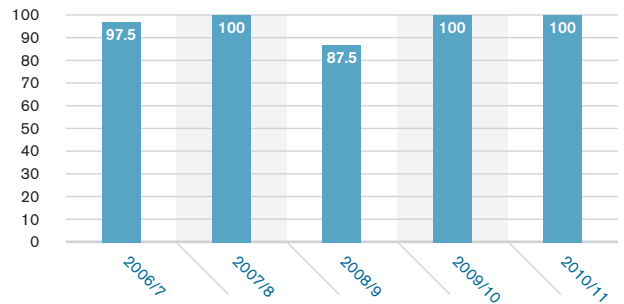
There has been an increase in numbers of Psychology postgraduates successfully entering further study. The majority of these students are pursuing psychology-related courses, which reflect the need to specialise further at postgraduate level for entry to applied psychology careers.

The charts to the right show results from Destinations of Leavers surveys for our Psychology postgraduates over the past five years.

Percentage of taught postgraduate respondents in work and/or further study six months after graduation



Percentage of research postgraduate respondents in work and/or further study six months after graduation



SOURCE: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Institutions, Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007–11

## RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS

Below is an overview of the kinds of employment sectors, organisations and professions that recent Psychology postgraduates have entered, based on responses to 'Destinations of Leavers' surveys conducted six months after graduation.

### Range of employment sectors

- Higher education
- Hospital activities
- Human health activities
- Justice and judicial activities
- Medical and dental practice activities
- Other social work activities without accommodation
- Regulation of the activities of providing health care, education, cultural services and other social services, excluding social security
- Research and experimental development in social sciences and humanities
- Scientific research and development

### Range of employers

- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health

- NHS Foundation Trust
- Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Birmingham Healthy Mind
- Cambian Group
- Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
- Goldman Sachs International
- HM Prison Service
- King's College, London
- Ministry of Defence
- National Health Service
- Rehab UK
- St Andrews Healthcare
- The Disabilities Trust
- University of Birmingham

- Wolverhampton City NHS Primary Care Trust

### Range of occupations

- Asset Servicing Analyst
- Assistant Clinical Psychologist
- Assistant Psychologist
- Care Officer
- Clinical Psychologist
- Clinical Studies Officer
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapist
- Criminal Justice Drug Worker
- Forensic Psychologist
- Practice Counsellor
- Probation Service Officer
- Psychological Therapist
- Research Fellow
- Substance Misuse Clinician