Department: Psychology

Degree Objective: MA in Psychology

What can I do with this degree? What kind of jobs do people with this degree typically obtain?

The Master of Arts in Psychology (MA) is a research-based degree for students whose primary interest is in continuing their education in a doctoral program.

The MA program in psychology is particularly designed for applicants whose long-term goal is to complete a doctoral program in psychology. The program provides advanced course work in psychology, research methods, statistics, and other training in research that will help students gain a competitive advantage when applying to doctoral programs at other universities. Students who successfully go on to complete a doctoral program in psychology typically teach and lead a program of research at a university. Students who successfully complete a doctoral program in clinical or counseling psychology often combine research and practice once they complete their program (depending on the focus of their Ph.D). Students whose final degree is the MA in psychology work in various positions in fields relating to education and research. The MA degree will qualify a successful candidate to teach at a community college or a CSU campus. The degree enables candidates to obtain and possibly secure a permanent position at a community college, but is generally not sufficient for a tenure-track (permanent) job as a college professor. The MA in psychology will also qualify successful candidates to work as data collection coordinators or research associates at government or non-profit agencies.

Will this master’s program prepare me for a Ph.D. program?

Yes, the Master of Arts degree in psychology is a rigorous research program designed to develop analytical and conceptual skills as well as to provide experience in statistical analysis, for students whose primary interest is in continuing their education in a doctoral program.

How do I apply to your graduate program?

Please visit our admission website for application materials: http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych/MA%20grad%20program.html

Applying to the MA program involves a two-step application process:

1. Applicants must submit an online application to the University by February 15, 2019 through Cal State Apply: http://www.calstate.edu/apply. You should also submit one copy of official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended to the University Admissions Office:

   Office of Admissions and Recruitment Student Affairs 101 5151 State University Drive Los Angeles, CA 90032

2. Applicants must also submit a separate Psychology MA application directly to the Department of Psychology by February 15, 2019. The Master of Arts application must be printed, completed, and submitted to the department accompanied by: (a) A Statement of
Purpose, (b) Three letters of recommendation, and (c) One copy of unofficial transcripts from all colleges/universities attended. Department applications can be mailed or dropped-off in person to the following address:

California State University, Los Angeles
Department of Psychology
Attn: Graduate Programs Coordinator
5151 State University Drive, KH C3104
Los Angeles, CA 90032-8227

Does your program require the GRE?

The GRE is not required. However if your GPA is not very competitive (see below), you may consider taking the GRE to demonstrate your ability to engage in graduate-level work.

What are the GPA requirements?

Students are required to have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 to be eligible for the program, although a GPA of 2.75 is not considered to be very competitive. Students with a GPA below 2.75 will not be considered.

How many recommendation letters does your degree program require?

Each program application requires three (3) letters of recommendation, at least two (2) of which should be from academic sources. Make sure you print the Letter of Recommendation Form (found on our website) and have each of your recommenders attach their letters to this form.

From should I get the recommendation letters -- professors or employers?

Letters of recommendation should come from individuals who are familiar with your academic and your professional abilities, such as a professor, lecturer, or academic advisor. Each of the MA programs requires that at least two (2) of your letters be from academic sources. Applicants who have been out of college for more than five years may use either academic or professional recommendations.

Do you have any tips on how to write a statement of purpose?

Your statement of purpose should be 400 to 500 words (two pages, double-spaced, maximum) indicating your reasons for wishing to pursue a research degree, your particular areas of interest, and any experience relevant to your goals and interests. It is strongly recommended that you describe the area of specialization you are most interested in and that you indicate faculty members in the department with whom you would like to work. It may help to contact the faculty members with whom you wish to work, to ensure that they are accepting students into their research labs for the particular academic year for which you are applying. You can review the Faculty Areas of Interest or the list of faculty here: http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych/FT%20Faculty.html
When do you accept students into your graduate program -- Fall or Spring or both?

We only admit students in Fall.

What are the admission deadlines?

If you are accepted into the program the Department of Psychology will send you a letter of acceptance that specifies the deadline by when you will need to accept the offer of the department. Acceptance letters are sent around the third week of March, with a 2-week deadline for formally accepting the offer. You will be asked to notify the Department of Psychology, in writing, of your decision to accept or reject the offer by that date.

What is the cost to attend graduate school?

You can find information regarding tuition and fees on the Student Financial Services website at http://www.calstatela.edu/sfinserv/cashiers-office

Does your department offer any GA or TA positions? If so, what is the eligibility requirement to apply for a GA or TA position?

The Department of Psychology typically makes available a few Graduate Assistant positions each semester. These positions are generally reserved for students in the second year of their program. At the moment, the department does not offer any Teaching Associate positions. In general, graduate assistants work from five to twenty hours a week, assisting professors in laboratory classes or as graders in large classes. Research assistantships as well as graduate traineeships may also be available to graduate students, and information of their availability can be obtained by consulting the Department Coordinator or professors who are currently conducting on-going research.

Are students treated as a cohort?

Yes, we typically accept a cohort of 12-15 students per year into the MA in Psychology. Classes are planned and scheduled in order to ensure that that there will be available seats for all students in the cohort and that all classes will be filled and not canceled. Most students take all classes together as a cohort.

How long will it take me to complete the degree if I enroll in 3 or 6 units per semester?

A total of 31-32 units are required for completion of the MA in Psychology. Students typically take 3 classes (9-10 units) per semester in the first year and 2 classes (6 units) per semester in the second year. Students who follow the schedule recommended for their cohort graduate in 2 years. Those who take fewer than recommended take longer.

In addition to coursework, to obtain the MA degree students also must successfully complete a thesis. The thesis comprises a research project, a written paper, and thesis defense via a presentation. The research project will be designed under the supervision of the research mentor. The written portion follows the publication format of the American Psychological Association (APA), describing the results of an original research project developed by the student in collaboration with their mentor. The thesis culminates with a defense, where the student presents the findings of the research project before a committee of faculty.
How long will it take me to complete the degree if I enrolled in 9 or 12 units per semester?

Although students taking this many units per semester could complete their coursework in 2 years or less, they must also complete and defend the thesis in order to complete the degree. It is unlikely that a student will complete all their degree requirements in less than four semesters.

Do you offer any classes during Winter Intersession or during the Summer?

We do not offer any graduate-level classes during the Winter Intersession or Summer session.

When are your graduate classes typically offered? Are they offered during the day or at night?

The majority of our classes are scheduled during the hours of 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Very few graduate classes are offered in the evening hours. Typically, we schedule all classes for a single cohort two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays or Mondays and Wednesdays), so that students who work can do so on alternate days.

Whom can I contact in the department, if I have additional questions?

For additional questions, please contact the Graduate Coordinator, Marie Bruno at (323) 343-2272 or email her at mbruno@cslanet.calstatela.edu. Please copy any emails to: PSYMA.CSULA@gmail.com.

Are there any additional resources or funding opportunities for graduate students at CSULA?

For resources and funding opportunities, please visit the Graduate Studies webpage at: http://www.calstatela.edu/graduestudies/funding-opportunities.