

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there any way to avoid the precalculus requirement for the psychology major?

No. Waivers are never granted.

Why are psychology majors required to take precalculus?

Psychology is for the most part a data-oriented, empirical science that relies heavily on mathematical concepts. Even in clinical and counseling areas of psychology, the foundations of diagnosis and etiology involve some of the most complex statistical analyses. Good math skills are essential--and even if you do not plan a career in psychology, they will help you get a job!

Does a core course count if I get a D in it?

Yes, as long as your overall GPA in the major is 2.0 or higher. The only courses that have specific grade requirements are General Psychology and Quantitative Methods, which must have grades of C or better to declare the major in psychology. (Note: All courses taken elsewhere must have grades of C or better to be transferred in to Rutgers.)

Can Research in Psychology or Honors Research in Psychology be used to fulfill the lab requirement?

No. We strongly recommend these courses for qualified students, especially as preparation for graduate school. Your experience in these courses will be more valuable if you have already taken one or two lab courses to learn some of the formal skill of data collection, statistical analyses, and report writing.

If I enroll in Study Abroad program, will I be able to take courses there that will count toward my psychology major or minor?

In most cases, yes. Credits toward the required four electives are typically easily approved. It is sometimes more difficult to find courses that match the content of our core courses or lab courses, but even these may be found at major universities. In general, we believe that studying abroad is a valuable experience and we work with our students to assist them in completing the major as effectively as possible. You should stop in to see the psychology advisor before you leave to get courses pre-approved. Once on location, if the pre-approved courses are not available, the psychology advisor can often make substitutions via e-mail correspondence.

If I took psychology courses at a county or community college, will they transfer toward the major at Rutgers?

Some will, but there are limits. General Psychology typically transfers, and equivalent courses are often available for Precalculus and for Quantitative Methods in Psychology. Beyond that, only two electives may be transferred, and these courses are never considered as equivalent to core courses, even when the titles of the courses are identical.

Can a course in statistics be substituted for Quantitative Methods in Psychology?

Yes, but we tend to be fussy about which ones are allowed because psychological data often require specialized methods of analyses. We routinely accept Rutgers courses 960:111-112 and

960:401. When we do approve a course from a statistics or mathematics department, we require one additional 3-credit psychology elective be added to maintain the required number of credits in psychology.

May I apply credits from on-line courses to the psychology major or minor?

No. These courses may not be applied to either the major or the minor. To be considered for transfer, a course must meet on-campus, in classroom, and for a minimum of four calendar weeks.

May I apply winter-session courses to the psychology major?

Usually not. The longstanding policy of the psychology department is that we do not accept courses that meet for less than four calendar weeks. Some winter sessions meet this requirement, and those courses are eligible for transfer consideration.

If I do volunteer work or have a job in some area that is directly relevant to psychology, can I obtain credit toward the major as an internship?

No. All of our fieldwork and internship opportunities occur through our formal course offerings. We encourage our students to participate in these worthwhile outside activities, but do not give academic credit for them.

If I get a D or an F in a course and re-take it, does the new grade replace the old one, or do I receive the average?

That depends. For calculation of your GPA in the major, we use only the higher grade and ignore the other one. However, the individual colleges may have different rules depending on your academic status. You should consult with your college dean's office to learn how retaking a course will appear on your transcript.

Which grades are used to calculate the gpa in the major?

Only psychology courses (830 subject number) taken at Rutgers are used in this calculation. No more than 3 credits of non-classroom courses (research, fieldwork, etc.) may be applied to this calculation with the exception of Honors Research (6 credits are used). When courses are repeated, only the higher grade is used. If you have completed courses beyond the requirements of the major, Degree Navigator will not include them in calculating your GPA—graduate schools and employers probably will.

How many credits may I transfer toward the major in psychology?

A bit less than half. Of the 38 required minimum credits for the psychology major, seven of your 3- or 4-credit courses must be taken within the Rutgers New Brunswick Psychology Department.

Am I required to take a non-classroom course such as fieldwork?

No. You may use one these courses to count toward the major or minor as an elective, but there is no requirement to do so.