

**The Concept of Education in the Field of Psychology  
With a General Academic Profile  
and  
the Profiles of Undergraduate, Graduate,  
and Uniform Integrated Master's Degree Program Graduates**

The concept of education in the field of psychology is consistent across all campuses of SWPS University. It was developed between 2018 and 2020 for comprehensive higher education in psychology, encompassing three levels and both modes of study, with instruction conducted in Polish and in English. Work on a uniform model of education for all faculties offering psychology programs was and continues to be in line with our strategic objectives for 2017-2023. These efforts underscore the role of our university as an important center for scientific research in the field of psychology, enhancing the quality of education within existing fields of study, and strengthening collaboration with the socio-economic environment. The resulting concept, which aligns with the requirements of the European Certificate in Psychology (also known as EuroPsy), implements a modern educational model. In this model, leading scientists ensure solid foundations, while experts demonstrate the practical application of knowledge. As a result, our psychology programs are centered around general academic education with a distinct emphasis on developing and enhancing skills that cater to the needs of an evolving job market. The educational process is oriented towards the skill of creating, applying, and evaluating interventions that are of proven value and *evidence-based*. This equips graduates with the ability to operate effectively in a professional setting.

Within the curricula of undergraduate, graduate, and uniform integrated master's degree programs, the synergy between mandatory and elective classes plays an important role. The former impart and deepen psychological knowledge, as well as the skills to formulate and solve research and practical problems. They also facilitate the development of the skills and tools necessary for a scientist. The classes prepare students for specialization courses and internships in graduate and uniform integrated master's degree programs. These focus on expert actions in the area of application of psychology, which addresses the needs of the job market and the direction it's developing in (aligning with SWPS University's strategy for 2017-2023; objective 1.b), while supporting students and graduates in entering the job market (objectives 2.a and 2.c). The curricula also enable the pursuit of life-long education (objective 1.c) and allow for the adaptation of learning paths to students' individual needs and abilities (objective 1.d). These objectives are accomplished, in part, through the provision of undergraduate programs. Completion of these programs offers students the option to either enter the workforce, continue their studies to obtain a master's degree in psychology, or pursue further education in graduate



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studies within the same or a different field. Undergraduate programs also enable graduates to continue their studies in graduate programs at foreign universities.

At each stage of a program, students have access to various development paths offered by the Office of Career Services, research centers, student organizations, and other units. By participating in research, social, and educational projects organized at the university, students enhance their social and personal competencies (objective 2.b), while developing their talents and passions, and becoming involved in social issues (objective 2.e).

The motto of SWPS University's strategy, "We, the University", emphasizes the empowerment of all members of our university community. The educational process at the University is inclusive and aimed at fostering a community of free individuals who are guided in their actions by the classic university values of truth, goodness and beauty, as well as the values of SWPS University: openness, courage, and responsibility.

Education in the field of psychology at the Faculty of Psychology in Warsaw of SWPS University is closely linked with the research activities of the academic teachers employed at the Faculty. Students have the opportunity to learn in an inspiring environment of scientists, and to participate in world-class scientific research.

Faculty employees conduct their scientific activity as part of the Institute of Psychology, which brings together academic teachers of SWPS University who engage in scientific endeavors in the field of psychology. The high quality of scientific research is supported through the creation of specialized research centers. At present, 23 centers operate within the Institute under the supervision of 11 Faculty members (for example, the DecisionLab, the OBO Eye Tracking Research Center, or the CACS Interdisciplinary Center for Applied Cognitive Studies). The Centers' activities address the most pressing research problems using innovative methods and tools. The results of these endeavors also form the basis of the curricular content of the field of study.

The concept of education was developed by teams of academic teachers representing all faculties of SWPS University that conduct studies in the field of psychology. Among them were renowned scientists and educators, authors of highly regarded textbooks on psychology. As a result, the learning outcomes, educational content, and teaching methods were selected in accordance with the latest scientific knowledge and global standards. In both uniform integrated master's degree studies and graduate studies, the specialization blocks available for selection are particularly focused on adapting the content and learning outcomes to the requirements of the socio-economic environment and the job market, while respecting the principle that we teach only what is scientifically proven (*evidence-based*). The study concept was also prepared in consultation with members of the Polish Psychological Association, employees of the Institute of Experimental Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as other experts. The offer of study programs was modeled after the curricula and methods of implementation explored by SWPS University staff members during foreign projects and teaching internships. The concept of education

also assumes constant adaptation of the curriculum in response to socio-economic changes. This is evidenced by the monitoring of societal needs and the job market.

In pursuing the University's strategic objective of preparing students for careers in a demanding international environment, and in creating the curricula for undergraduate, graduate, and uniform integrated master's degree programs, we were also guided by the requirements of the European Certificate in Psychology (also known as EuroPsy). The Faculty received its first certificate on May 10, 2021, for the curriculum that was implemented up to the 2020/2021 intake. The new curriculum was awarded its certificate on September 25, 2023. This applies to undergraduate and uniform integrated master's degree programs from the 2020/2021 intake, and to graduate programs from the 2023/2024 intake.

The concept of education primarily involves preparing students to adapt flexibly to new challenges. This is achieved by imparting knowledge that acknowledges global scientific achievements and developing skills in the field of critical thinking, project creation, and readiness to cooperate with others, including as part of interdisciplinary task teams.

The distinguishing features of this concept include:

- **The skills and tools of a researcher.** The aim of the curriculum, depending on the level of study being pursued, is to acquire or deepen the knowledge and skills necessary for designing and conducting research, as well as formulating the ensuing conclusions. Students can become involved in research projects implemented by lecturers or conduct their own research as part of academic clubs at any stage of their studies. Such involvement enhances students' sense of competence and effectiveness in this area, making them more willing to engage in activities related to research methodology, statistics, or psychometrics. They are cognizant of the role this knowledge and these skills play in professional practice.
- **Problem solving / a project-based approach.** The curriculum includes project-based activities (completed individually and in teams) whose primary aim is to integrate knowledge and skills through formulating and solving real research or practical problems, and developing meta-skills such as participating in task teams, formulating and accepting feedback, arguing for one's own position, resolving conflicts, and planning one's own work.
- **Internationalization.** The curricula align with the requirements of EuroPsy and provide opportunities to develop linguistic competencies in the field of psychology. The aim of the curricula conducted in Polish is to develop competencies necessary for utilizing English-language scientific literature. For more advanced students, the goal is to develop the ability to write scientific texts in English. The faculty also offers two-cycle studies in English. In addition, both the students who study in Polish, and those who study in English, can take advantage of international exchange opportunities (such as the Erasmus+)



program). Within the Erasmus+ framework, foreign students attend classes at the Faculty in programs where English is the language of instruction. As part of an international consortium, the Faculty also offers an international graduate program in English called Global Minds, which enables students to complete semesters at European partner universities. SWPS University is the lead institution in two of the three educational paths comprising that program.

- **Education path customization.** The design of curricula offers students numerous opportunities to tailor their education path to their needs by choosing: 1) the level of study from undergraduate, graduate, or uniform integrated master's degree programs, allowing students to plan their future education and career in different ways; 2) Polish or English as the language of instruction; 3) a specialization in graduate and uniform integrated master's degree programs to enhance knowledge and skills in a specific area of psychology, providing a competitive edge in the job market; 4) elective courses that align thematically with the students' interests; 5) a scientific or practical problem to solve as part of project-oriented courses and MA seminars; 6) lecture topics to broaden competencies in humanities; 7) the area and subject matter of internships.
- **Professional applications of psychology.** The primary goal of courses that develop the skills and tools of a psychologist is to build a professional identity in applied psychology. Therefore, students learn the specifics of selected sub-disciplines of applied psychology and its connections with other fields (e.g., medicine, technology, economics, humanities).
- **Interdisciplinarity.** The evolution of psychology as a science and its main application areas demonstrates that incorporating knowledge from other disciplines to solve theoretical and practical problems is an inherent feature of psychology. This means that student education should not be confined to expanding their knowledge and skills solely in the field of psychology. The inclusion of elective courses, which can be taught by experts from other disciplines, into the curriculum not only broadens students' knowledge and skills but also equips them with the crucial competence of being prepared to cooperate with experts from other fields in solving research and practical problems.
- **Taking into account social and technological changes, as well as challenges arising from local or global crises (migration, climate change, the pandemic, wars).** Social and technological changes, as well as those stemming from local and global crises, necessitate actions to enhance mental health, particularly focusing on the most vulnerable groups in society. The rapid pace of these changes has underscored the need to equip students with the skills to tackle problems whose emergence is difficult to predict. This also extends to the realm of occupational health and safety, where it is imperative for companies and organizations to continually transform themselves to provide improved and safer working conditions. The curricular content addresses these issues and furnishes students with universal skills and competencies, such as critical



thinking and the ability to diagnose and solve problems, enabling them to respond adequately in a changing world.

### **The graduate's profile and prospective employment opportunities** **Undergraduate studies: the profile of a graduate**

Upon completion of an undergraduate program in the field of psychology, the graduate obtains a full level 6 qualification as per the Polish Qualifications Framework, and is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and personal competencies associated with pursuing psychology as a science. The graduate is active and eager to independently seek and comprehend psychological knowledge supported by scientific research. They are prepared to work in an ethical and responsible manner, capable of utilizing modern technologies, searching for reliable sources of information, and updating their knowledge and skills. An individual who completes an undergraduate program has high personal and social psychological competence and is capable of defining and analyzing personal, interpersonal, and social problems, as well as actively contributing to their resolution in team efforts. In addition to psychological and social knowledge and skills, the graduate possesses a range of competencies expected in the modern job market, particularly soft skills. Graduates of undergraduate programs are not licensed to practice the profession.

The learning outcomes achieved in an undergraduate program open up broad prospects for further educational and professional development. Upon completion of studies, a graduate can:

- continue their education in a graduate program in the field of psychology or in another field, especially in the social sciences;
- continue their education in postgraduate studies, especially those that require a bachelor's degree in psychology;
- find employment as a research process manager, for example by joining an existing team or research center;
- find employment in any other role that requires basic psychological training, such as a moderator of in-depth group interviews or an assistant to a specialist in public opinion and market research companies, or in the service or creative sector (advertising, marketing, public relations).

### **Graduate studies and uniform integrated master's degree studies: the profile of a graduate**

Upon completion of a graduate or uniform integrated master's degree program in the field of psychology, the graduate obtains a full level 7 qualification in accordance with the Polish Qualifications Framework. The graduate possesses comprehensive knowledge in the realm of scientific psychology that has been honed in a specific area of applied psychology as a result of pursuing a specialization. The graduate is



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active and eager to independently seek and comprehend psychological knowledge supported by scientific research. They are prepared to work in an ethical and responsible manner, capable of utilizing modern technologies, searching for reliable sources of information, and updating their knowledge and skills. An individual who completes a graduate program possesses a high level of personal and social psychological competence. They are capable of defining and analyzing personal, interpersonal, and social problems both independently and in collaboration with other professionals, and can lead teams responsible for solving these problems. The learning outcomes achieved by the graduate open up broad prospects for educational and professional development.

Upon completion of a graduate program, the individual can:

- collaborate with teams in existing companies or find employment as a researcher or research process manager;
- continue their studies to broaden their professional competencies in specialized training centers;
- continue their studies at a doctoral school;
- join an existing research team or center.

**Graduates of uniform integrated master's degree programs are additionally** prepared to pursue a professional career as psychologists. They can work as psychologists in all types of health care institutions, including hospitals, hospices, crisis intervention centers, mental health clinics, rehabilitation clinics, addiction treatment clinics and centers, as well as public institutions such as the military and police. They can also find employment in educational institutions and centers, care and education centers for children and young people, foundations and associations, non-governmental organizations implementing psychoeducational programs, universities of the third age and assistance centers, as well as counseling centers for the education and upbringing of children and adolescents. Graduates can also apply for positions in human resources departments, employment agencies, recruiting or training companies, consulting and advisory agencies, advertising and public relations agencies, public opinion and marketing research centers, the media, and interdisciplinary teams working on projects. Professional activities such as conducting psychotherapy require further education.

In accordance with current legislation, all graduates of uniform integrated master's degree studies, as well as undergraduate programs followed by graduate programs in the field of psychology, may commence their practice as psychologists. Based on current projections, it is safe to assume that psychologists and psychotherapists will be in high demand on the job market in the coming years (data from the Employment Agency of the Capital City of Warsaw, 2023).