

Industrial Psychology as a Career

A workplace must operate smoothly and efficiently in order to foster success. In businesses where employees are happy and healthy, quality of life is a priority and the organizational infrastructure is strong. Conflicts, when they arise, receive swift and effective resolution.

Industrial-organizational psychologists can help with all of these tasks, and more. If you like the idea of applying the study of human behavior to the workplace, this could be the field where you thrive—while helping others to do the same.

What does an organizational psychologist do?

Industrial-organizational psychologists use psychological principles and research methods to solve problems in the workplace and improve the quality of life. They study workplace productivity and management and employee working styles. They get a feel for the morale and personality of a company or organization. And they collaborate with management to help plan policies, carry out screenings and training sessions, and develop a plan for the future.

On the job, industrial-organizational psychologists

- Apply psychological research to the workplace
- Work within human resources offices
- Help businesses hire more qualified employees
- Help train and motivate workforce
- Assess job performance
- Increase business efficiency
- Improve organizational structure
- Improve quality of life for employers and employees
- Ease transitions such as corporate mergers
- Study consumer behavior
- Work as a consultant

What education or certification will I need to become an industrial-organizational psychologist?

Like most psychology specializations, entry into the industrial-organizational psychology field requires extensive study. You will likely need to earn a master's degree in psychology, which will take one to two years to complete. Although some people who pursue their master's in psychology have earned their bachelor's in the field as well, you can have a bachelor's degree in another field and pursue a master's in psychology or social work.

What career paths can I take in industrial-organizational psychology?

As an industrial-organizational psychologist, it's never a dull day at work. You'll get satisfaction from helping to improve work processes and environments in a multitude of ways. Some typical job descriptions include working in consulting, consumer, engineering or personnel psychology.

Your client options are endless. In addition to working in typical psychology environments like schools, clinics and hospitals, you can apply your psychology skills to corporations, small businesses and anywhere improved performance and morale are goals.

To advance your opportunities in business and academia, earning a doctoral degree is an option. A PhD in psychology or a Doctor of Psychology degree will take a time investment of five to six years to complete. Programs in certain areas of professional psychology require a one year internship as part of the doctoral program. Those earning a PhD in psychology are required to complete a residency training program under a practicing clinician; this residency can take up to three years to complete.