

# Ph.D. Programme in Psychology

The Department of Psychology at Ashoka University invites application for its PhD program in cross disciplinary research spanning different domains of psychology. Our faculty expertise spans social, developmental, biological, cognitive, clinical and counseling psychology. Methodologies span qualitative and quantitative, theoretical and experimental. Prospective students are requested to visit the faculty webpages to find out more about individual faculty research and contact faculty prior to their formal application. Please read through the instructions carefully before proceeding with applications.



Accepted students are expected to commit full-time to their PhD studies. They are not allowed to take on paid jobs outside their studies, unless it can be demonstrated that these jobs contribute to their research.



**The Psychology PhD program at Ashoka University seeks eligible candidates for its PhD program starting September 2023.**

**APPLY NOW!!**

- Are you passionate about psychological research?
- Do you want to understand human behavior better?
- Do you want to be part of an active and vibrant research community who aim to usher in new perspectives in psychology?

**Then come, join, learn, research and grow with us at Ashoka!**

We especially encourage applications from individuals from historically marginalized communities, e.g. individuals/ womxn/trans candidates from Dalit Bahujan and Adivasi backgrounds who fulfil the eligibility criteria. The PhD program in Psychology at Ashoka University is cross-disciplinary, with research spanning different domains of psychology. Our faculty expertise spans social, developmental, biological, cognitive, clinical and counseling psychology. Methodologies span qualitative and quantitative, theoretical and experimental.

## Vision and Mission statement

The Psychology PhD program at Ashoka University wishes to train a generation of psychologists from diverse backgrounds, irrespective of gender, caste, creed, orientation or religion. *We expressly seek individuals from marginalized groups and communities to be included in our program.* Our guiding principles are founded on imparting rigorous scientific training and building cross cultural awareness to

Study at Ashoka

The diagram illustrates the components of a research-based learning experience, organized into eight interconnected hexagonal modules:

- Broad based and topic specific knowledge** (Grey hexagon)
- Research** (Orange hexagon)
  - Coursework/ Research Practicum
  - Journal clubs / Graduate Research Seminar
- Thesis Research** (Black hexagon)
- Department/ program building** (Black hexagon)
- Mandatory Workshops** (Black hexagon)
- Graduate Research Seminars** (Black hexagon)
- Journal Clubs** (Black hexagon)
- Ethics/ Career Development** (Green hexagon)
- Writing, Presentation, Data analysis** (Orange hexagon)
- Pedagogy** (Yellow hexagon)
  - Teaching Practicum
  - Teaching Assistantships
- Methodology** (Blue hexagon)

- Learn from faculty with extensive research expertise and be a part of their worldwide collaborative networks
- Be part of a department with a diverse research culture emphasizing psychology as an empirical science within a liberal arts framework
- In-depth research methodology, statistics, ethics, pedagogy, and writing training opportunities, as well as programming skills.
- Fully funded PhD fellowships with a competitive stipend (currently INR 38,000 pm for JRF and INR 43,000 pm for SRF, subjected to annual review)
- Additional Annual Research Funding
- International travel funds up to 2 lakhs for Senior Research Fellows
- A thriving inclusive and multicultural academic community

Master's Degree or equivalent (M.Tech or MPhil) in Psychology, Neuroscience, Cognitive Science, Biology, Life Sciences, Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics, Economics, Social Sciences. Students with BTech degree are also eligible. All candidates need a minimum score of 55% in their respective degrees.

## Documents required

- The letters should be from current or former professors, academic/ professional advisors or supervisors who know your

academic work and/or are in a good position to assess your professionalism, aptitude towards research, individual strengths and weaknesses.

- Personal statement (1000-1500 words)

Prior to writing the essay, please visit the program website and faculty webpages to know what sort of research is being pursued in the department prior to writing your statement. In your statement, you should identify at least 2 faculty members whose work might interest you, and who could become your prospective thesis advisor.

Use this essay to state what draws you to research with emphasis on your reasons of interest in the Psychology PhD program at Ashoka University. In addition you might want to consider these questions: How do you think your academic background is related or ties into the research you want to conduct? What kind of research do you want to conduct, in broad terms at the Department of Psychology at Ashoka University? Who are the two faculty members who can become your prospective thesis advisor(s)? What skill sets and experiences do you have already that can help you attain your research goals? How can the program help you attain the goals, and what do you hope to learn?

In addition, you may give the admissions committee any information about your life, your long term and short term career goals or anything else that you deem crucial for the committee to know, in order to make a decision on your application.

- One original sample of academic writing

This can be your undergraduate or master's thesis, a project report, a term paper that you wrote for a course. The work has to be completely original, and will be checked for evidences of plagiarism. Any plagiarism detected can lead your application to be summarily rejected.

Prospective applicants are advised to consult these books before preparing their application materials:

American Psychological Association (Ed.). (2007). *Getting in: A step-by-step plan for gaining admission to graduate school in psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Keith-Spiegel, P., & Wiederman, M. W. (2000). *The complete guide to graduate school admission: Psychology, counseling, and related professions*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

## Process of selection and admission

Ph.D. admission will be based on a written test at the Ashoka University campus in Sonapat, followed by a personal interview.

The duration, number of questions and weightage of the sections included in the admission test will also be released at this time. Candidates are requested to carefully go through the syllabus and prepare accordingly.

Names of the applicants accepted for admission will be uploaded on the PhD page of the program website (accepted and waitlisted etc.).

When the name of the candidate appears on the website as selected, the candidate has one month to accept or decline the admission offer. The program will consider an offer declined if we don't hear back via email from the accepted applicant within one month. In case of a wait list, the program will then consider those applicants. Applicants will be expected to arrive and settle when Monsoon semester starts, which is usually in the last week of August.

### Structure of the admission test

The test will have two sections. The first section is mandatory for all applicants. It will test their general aptitude, basic analytical skills, understanding of academic integrity and ethical practices in research, and statistical literacy.

### Syllabus for the first section:

Numerical abilities: Grade 10 mathematics as per CBSE/ICSE/International school boards

Academic integrity and research ethics: What is academic integrity and why is it required?

What is plagiarism (including self-plagiarism)? Citing, summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting others' work.

<https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/>

Responsible conduct of research: For any epidemiological/intervention based/ investigative/observational studies involving humans: <http://www.who.int/ethics/research/en/>

For animal research: <https://www.aaalac.org/accreditation/RefResources/IGP2012.pdf>

Statistics: Empirical methods in science, constructs and their operationalization into variables, continuous and discontinuous variables, scales, reliability and validity, frequencies, distributions, central tendencies: Mean, median, mode; measures of dispersion; graphical representation of data; correlation and covariance; standard normal distribution; sampling error of the mean and standard error; hypothesis testing; Type I and Type II errors; t-tests; chi square test; ANOVA (all types, including post hoc tests and corrections); and regression (simple and multiple); non-parametric statistics; confidence intervals, power analysis, and effect size.

Rather than mathematical derivations and formulations, questions will test applied aspects of these statistical concepts. You will be tested on

1. Your ability to interpret graphical data
2. Spot data inconsistencies and errors on graphical representations
3. Understanding of errors than compromise reliability and validity of a study
4. How to operationalize constructs into variables
5. What sort of experimental designs merit which kind of statistical tests to be applied
6. Interpreting test scores and what can you conclude about experimental results from statistical testing of data

A good resource to prepare apart from any college level statistical course material: <http://onlinestatbook.com/>

Statistical skills involving latent variable modeling (in various forms), meta-analysis, and time series analysis will not be tested.

The second section will be grouped into five subsections out of which candidates will choose any three. Questions will be grouped according to the core domains in psychology: Biological, Developmental, Clinical, Social, Cognitive and Measurements and Methodologies. This section will follow the syllabus of the subject GRE test in psychology. Please use the following link to obtain the syllabus and sample questions.

[https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/practice\\_book\\_psych.pdf](https://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/practice_book_psych.pdf). The following textbook might provide a good starting point for preparation:

Passer, M. W., & Smith, R. E. (2004). Psychology: The science of mind and behavior (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

There are also several commercially available study guides which can help you prepare for this part of the test regardless of your academic background.

## General Structure of the PhD Program

The PhD program will include academic and research training as well as ethical and career development training. The first two years (one year, in case of M.Phil./ M.Tech. entrants) will be heavily tilted to coursework and professional development and career planning workshops. **Students need a minimum of 24 coursework credits to advance to PhD candidacy in year 3. To maintain good academic standing in order to receive your fellowship, all PhD students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 7.5 (i.e. A minimum grade of B- or above) for all coursework.**

From third year onwards, gradually the research components will start to predominate, and years 4 and 5 will be more or less research centric. Three activities will be suggested for all PhD students through their tenure at the Department of Psychology at Ashoka University.

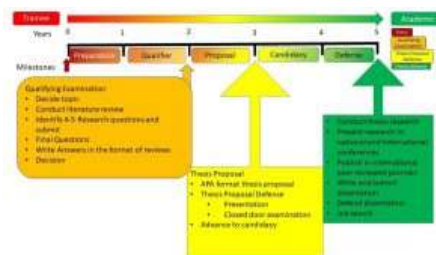
1. **Psychology Journal Club:** Every week a student will present a journal article. Attendance is mandatory for all PhD students. Senior students will present in the earlier part of the academic year for the newer entrants to learn from their peers
2. **Graduate research seminar in Psychology:** Every week two students will present their own research in front of the department. Attendance is mandatory for all PhD students and all faculty members are encouraged to attend the weekly GRS
3. **Teaching assistantships:** Each student will serve as graduate TAs in a course in consultation with the thesis advisor every semester starting from the beginning of second year. The particular arrangements will be worked out by the advisor and the department on a case by case basis.
4. **Individual Development Plan(IDP):** Every year, starting from the first year, students will submit an individual development plan to the PhD coordinator and the advisor by **October 1 of every academic year**. This will serve as a roadmap to the upcoming year for the student, and will be reviewed as part of their annual progress review. Further resources on how to think about an IDP is available online and some guidelines are provided below. The students will receive more guidance on this as they enroll in the program

**Duration of the PhD program:** For candidates with M.Phil or M. Tech, the duration of the PhD Fellowship is 4 years. For every other entrant, the duration of the PhD fellowship is 5 years. The PhD curriculum has been developed within this framework.

#### Major Milestones in the PhD program:

- Qualifying exam at the end of year 2
- Thesis proposal defense and advancing to candidacy year 3
- Thesis defense at the end of year 5
- If student/trainee is unable to clear the qualifying exam or the thesis proposal they will be asked to leave.

#### Elaborating the milestones briefly:



#### Between selection and enrollment

- After the students have been selected for admission, they will actively correspond with the potential thesis advisors and finalize this by a process of mutual agreement. This should be completed as soon as possible but no later than July 1, 20xx for a September 20xx admission.
- Familiarize yourself with the proposed project(s) you will be working on for the first two years of your PhD. One of these could potentially become your dissertation project.

- Using the time between selection and enrollment, the prospective student is encouraged to think and formulate a plan for their tenure at Ashoka University. Sample but not exhaustive pointers to think about could be
- What are your strengths? (academically, and non-academically) How will these strengths become complementary to your advisor's expertise for the project(s) discussed? How well do you fit in to the research group?
- What are your weaknesses? (academically and non-academically). How can you improve yourself in these areas using the resources and the PhD experience at Ashoka University?
- How well do you understand ethical issues for responsible conduct of research and academic integrity? If there are gaps, which areas do you need to address first?
- What are your short term and long-term goals? How can the PhD Program at Ashoka University help you attain those?
- What parallel skills can the program give you in addition to theoretical and technical expertise directly related to your PhD program?

All these will be essential in writing your Individual Development Plan (IDP) at the very beginning of year 1 and every subsequent years. This is a program requirement and cannot be waived for any student.

## Ph.D. Psychology Handbook

[Go to the 2022 Psychology PhD Handbook](#)

Applications are now open

Application Deadline : April 15, 2023

The entrance test and interviews are planned to take place between May and June, 2023

Please contact [phd.psychology@ashoka.edu.in](mailto:phd.psychology@ashoka.edu.in) for any further inquiries

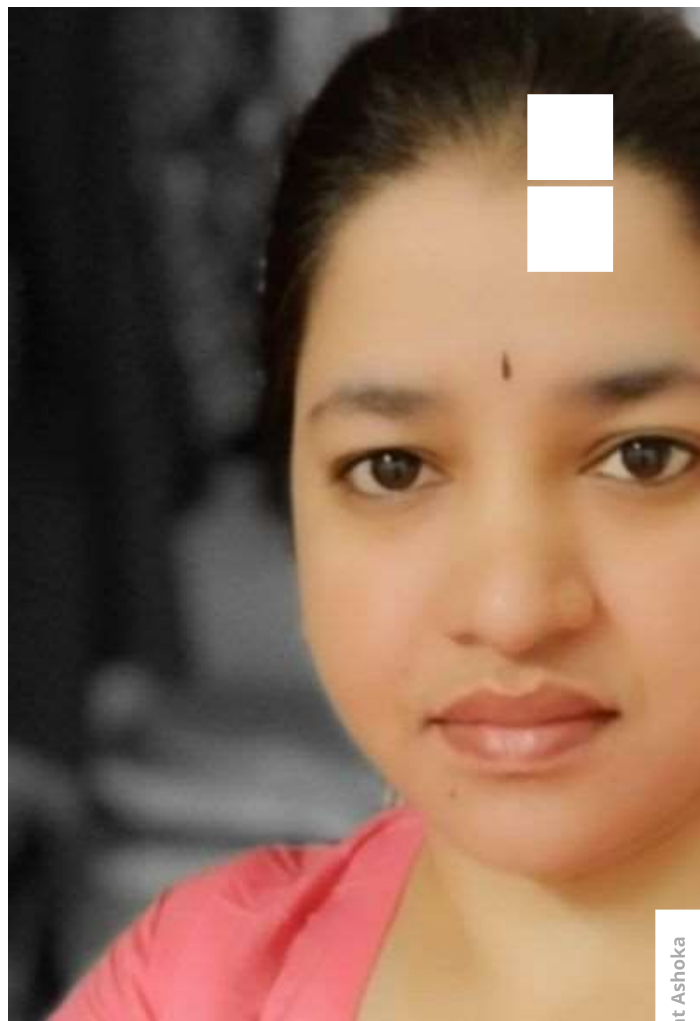
[Apply Now](#)

# Why Psychology?

Pursuing my Ph.D. program with the department is experience. It's great to have the best faculty, who are available all time.

**Rajitha Gopinadham**

Ph.D. student under the Psychology Department



Study at Ashoka

## 📍 Campus Location

Plot No. 2, Rajiv Gandhi Education City,  
National Capital Region P.O. Rai, Sonapat  
Haryana-131029 (India)

## 📍 Delhi Office

Ashoka University Plot no.222, Second  
floor, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase III,  
New Delhi-110020

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