

**Relevant Experience Opportunities in the Psychology Department**

* **PSY 491. Academic or Psychological Counseling Experiences (3) Cr/NC  
  Option 1: Academic Counseling Experience**
  + **Unit Worth:** One year commitment (two consecutive semesters), 3 units per semester.
  + **Prerequisites:** Minimum 3.0 GPA.
  + **Description:** Academic Counseling Experience is a one year commitment consisting of one semester of training and one semester of peer advising in the Psychology Undergraduate Advising Office. Academic counselors are trained to declare psychology majors and minors, submit academic petitions, counsel individuals on academic matters (such as psychology course selections and graduate school preparation), and make appointments with Dr. Turner and Dr. Sadler. This is a great opportunity for those interested in working with people, networking, and educating themselves. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** An application is necessary for entrance into this program. Applications are available in the middle of the semester at the Psychology Undergraduate Advising Office.

**Option 2: Psychological Counseling Experience (Peer Educator)**

* + **Unit Worth:** One year commitment (two consecutive semesters), 3 units per semester.
  + **Description:** Psychological Counseling Experience is a one year commitment during which students serve as peer educators within the Counseling & Psychological Services department. The Peer Education program offers students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience working in the mental health field with an emphasis on valuing and respecting diversity among individuals. The primary focus of their work is on outreach and educational activities that will provide programmatic support for the department. Peer Educators are also given training in general counseling skills and ethical issues that are used in their interactions with student groups. They are supervised by professional staff. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** An application is necessary for entrance into this program. Application materials are available at: <http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/peer-educators.aspx>

**Option 3: Introduction to Campus Activities and Networking (ICAN)**

* + **Prerequisites:** Mentors must be upperclassmen with at least one year of attendance at SDSU.
  + **Description:** Remember what it was like to be the newest or youngest member of a group or at a school? Wouldn't it have been nice to have an experienced fellow student and a faculty member knowledgeable about the facilities and activities on campus serve as "mentors"? This is what the weekly College of Sciences' Introduction to Campus Activities and Networking Program offers. ICAN mentors assist freshman and community college transfer students in locating campus resources, linking them with departmental advisers, identifying tutors in science courses, and encouraging students to participate in workshops. ICAN mentors are assigned protégés and meet with them for one hour a week, in addition to two hours of class time. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** An application is necessary for entrance into the program. For an application, contact Dr. Estralita Martin at (619) 594-1204 or [esmartin@sdsu.edu](mailto:esmartin@sdsu.edu)

* **PSY 494. Techniques for Teaching & Tutoring in Psychology (2) Cr/NC**
  + **Prerequisites:** Consent of instructor.
  + **Description:** Practical knowledge and experience in psychology instruction and advanced content in a specific area of psychology. Those interested in obtaining teaching experience and creating relationships with psychology professors and students should consider this opportunity. The work involved depends on both the course and the professor. Generally, a teacher's assistant grades tests, takes attendance, tutors students, and lectures. Maximum credit four units.
  + **Procedure:** Interested students need consent of the chosen instructor (before the add/drop deadline) who will provide them with a schedule number for registration.
* **PSY 495. Field Placement in Psychology (3) Cr/NC**
  + **Prerequisites:** Psychology 350 (Abnormal Psychology) and three units from Psychology 230 (Developmental Psychology), 340 (Social Psychology), or 351 (Psychology of Personality).
  + **Description:** This is a service-learning course that places students with selected community-based agencies where they volunteer as interns to earn course credit. Students are supervised by both the course instructor and an agency site supervisor. This course is designed for students interested in becoming clinical psychologists, social workers, therapists, counselors, special education teachers, or other human services professionals. It provides a unique opportunity to gain valuable field experience by helping others. Each week, students are required to attend class for 50 minutes and to work at their field placement as an intern for 4 hours. By the end of the semester, interns are expected to have completed 40 hours at their field placement. They will serve as assistants to an individual or individuals at a community agency throughout the semester, and will facilitate the goals of both the client and the agency. They will observe and learn about the agency and the people that it serves, and submit course deliverables based on the course content, class discussions, presentations, observations, and field experience. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** SDSU registration. There may be additional costs for this class. Depending on your agency placement, you might be required to pay for fingerprinting and a tuberculosis skin test.
  + **Special Note:** Students who have successfully completed Psychology 495 and would like to continue their service learning experience can sign up for a special section of Psychology 495. Rather than 40 hours, they will be required to complete 80 hours at their field placement, complete a journal entry, and a final. They are not required to meet for a weekly class. Students interested in doing so should contact the Psychology Department's Service Learning Coordinator Donalene Berger via email at [dberger@sdsu.edu](mailto:dberger@sdsu.edu)
* **PSY 497. Senior Project (1-3)**
  + **Prerequisites:** Twelve units of psychology and consent of instructor.
  + **Description:** Individual investigation and APA-style report on a research project. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** Interested students need consent of the chosen instructor (before the add/drop deadline) who will provide them with a schedule number for registration.
* **PSY 498. Undergraduate Honors Thesis (6)**
  + **Unit Worth:** One year commitment (two consecutive semesters), 3 units per semester.
  + **Prerequisites:** Psychology 410 (Advanced Research Methods Laboratory), 3.5 overall GPA and/or 3.75 GPA in major, consent of Dr. Sadler (honors thesis coordinator), and consent of instructor.
  + **Description:** An independent research project to be completed over the course of two semesters and supervised by an instructor in the Psychology Department.
  + **Procedure:** Honors thesis application materials will be distributed through Blackboard Homeroom for Psychology Majors in late summer each year. Application materials are due near the beginning of fall semesters.
* **PSY 499. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC**
  + **Description:** Students may earn credit for working in one of San Diego State University’s psychology professors' laboratories. In order to receive three units of credit, students usually need to work 8-10 hours per week. Every lab is different and every professor decides how his or her lab is run. This opportunity is especially recommended for those interested in obtaining research-oriented graduate degrees in the future. Maximum credit six units.
  + **Procedure:** Apply to work in a professor’s lab through RAAP (research assistant application program) or direct contact with a professor (see the last page of this packet for specifics). If accepted into a professor’s lab, students and professors will complete a 499 contract (available to professors on the faculty Blackboard Homeroom). Professors maintain copies of the form and provide a schedule number for students to register for the course (before the add/drop deadline).

**Steps to Becoming a Psychology Research Assistant**

There are 2 ways one can go about applying to become a research assistant: official and unofficial. You may choose to use both of these methods at the same time to increase your chances of being accepted into a lab; however, this is not necessary. First, you need to find a lab.

Finding a Lab

* At the beginning of each semester, a list of open labs will be posted under "RAAP" and/or "Announcements" links in the Psych\_homeroom found on Blackboard.
* On SDSU's Psychology Department website, under "People", all the faculty areas of research are listed along with a description of their lab: <http://www.psychology.sdsu.edu/people/faculty-by-research-area/>
* You may want to consider applying to a lab of a professor that you already know from previous coursework, although this is not necessary.

**Official Method:**

1. The RAAP Application will be available from the beginning of the semester until **one week before the add/drop deadline.\*\***
2. Select 1-3 labs of interest. Applying to more than one lab will increase your likelihood of being accepted into a lab.
3. Tailor your application to fit the lab you are applying to. If you are applying to multiple labs **(maximum of 3 labs through RAAP),** you will need to submit individualized applications.
4. After a thorough review, the RAAP administration will send your application to the professor(s). From there, the rest of the process is between you and the professor(s).

\*\*The RAAP application can be found here: <https://goo.gl/forms/CipWu9N5Hgmtz8Kb2>. It can also be found under the “RAAP” link in the Psych\_homeroom found on Blackboard.

**Unofficial Method:**

1. Select 1-3 labs of interest.
2. E-mail the professor(s). In these e-mails, you need to professionally introduce yourself and express your interest in their lab and why. You will need to ask if they have openings in the semester you are interested in. You will also want to ask them if they want you to fill out the RAAP application (Word document version), provide a CV/resume, and/or provide an unofficial transcript.
3. From this point, you should wait up to 2 weeks to hear back from the professor(s). If they don't respond, you should send a follow up e-mail.
4. If they respond and are interested, you should set up a meeting with the professor(s).

Helpful Hint: When evaluating your application, many professors heavily weigh the grades you earned in Statistics and Research Methods courses, such as PSY 280, PSY 281, PSY 301, and/or PSY 410.