

Zurich University
of Applied Sciences

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School of Applied
Psychology

Psychological Institute

Study Programmes.
And Research

Strategic priorities of the Psychological Institute

Mental health and well-being

We study the effectiveness of psychotherapy approaches and counselling methods, the quality of diagnostic methods, and aspects of psychiatric and psychosocial services and throw light on new forms of health promotion.

This resource-oriented perspective extends the deficit-oriented approach. Therapy research, health services research and prevention research complement each other.

Our findings serve clinical institutions, psychotherapists, healthcare authorities, health management in companies and advisors in prevention.

Experience and behaviour in the context of social and technological innovations

We analyse the effects of mediatization, digitalization and flexibilization of all areas of life, examine the conditions for social innovation and develop methods and processes for analysing and developing them, and evaluate best practice methods.

For example, we offer analyses in the area of new technologies and media in distance counselling and in promoting media literacy in children and adolescents.

We also examine the shaping of framework conditions in the organization by human resource management, so that social sustainability can be made possible.

Our findings aid advisors, media professionals, youth media protection authorities, management, and technology providers and regulators.

Dealing with risks and decision making

The aim of our research is to identify risks, reduce risks or make them manageable, and make decision making more sound and secure.

Perception of risks and decision making in various areas of life is subject to psychological distortion and bias. In complex situations, people often do not judge or make decisions rationally or sustainably. The wrong decisions can have serious consequences – for individuals, organizations, or society as a whole – at the economic, environmental or political level.

With our know-how in information visualization and in the area of decision-making aids (nudging), we offer solution approaches for responsible handling of risks and for avoiding disadvantageous decisions.

Diversity of human development, forms of work and life

We contribute towards achieving social recognition of diversity and promote the integration of individuals in society.

We investigate new models and forms of work that include understandings of leadership in different cultures. With our analyses we contribute towards a differentiated understanding of generation dialogue and the developmental psychological characteristics of old age.

The findings benefit specialists in child and adolescent psychology, psychological life counselling, geropsychology, and intercultural cooperation in everyday life and work contexts.

A nexus between study and research

The ZHAW School of Applied Psychology combines two institutes under its roof. The Psychological Institute is responsible for study programmes and for research, and the IAP Institute of Applied Psychology focuses on continuing education and consulting/services.

In the interplay of study programmes, research, continuing education and services, the latest scientific findings and long years of experience in practice mutually enrich each other.



“We research passionately and examine issues that are scientific and practical at the same time.”

Prof. Dr. Daniel Süss
Director of Institute

Centre for Education

The Centre for Education is responsible for the organization of study programmes at the two levels (Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes). It is supported by the Administration Office team. The Centre for Education handles study programme information, advising, admission procedures and quality assurance. In close cooperation with the seven sections of the Psychological Institute, the curricula for the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes as well as the general conditions and the didactic forms are continuously further developed. Here we attach importance to a sustainable course of study that makes possible generalist studies at the Bachelor level and choice of specialization at the Master's level. In addition to promoting students' expertise and methodological competencies, we devote special attention to self-competence and social skills.

Study programmes in applied psychology prepare students for a variety of jobs in healthcare, social services and education, business and administration, and culture and communication.



“The focus of our work is to educate and train prospective psychologists in all competency areas.”

Prof. Dr. Barbara Schmugge
Director of Studies

Sections

Applied Cognitive Psychology

Head: Prof. Dr. Ester Reijnen

Cognitive processes such as perception, attention, memory, judgment and decision making are subject to limited cognitive resources, which can have disadvantageous effects on our daily behaviour. The Applied Cognitive Psychology section aims to develop methods – based on the latest findings of basic cognitive research – to make our behaviour more efficient (faster and with fewer errors). This includes, for example, designing pictograms for safer use of medications or designing food labels for healthier and sustainable eating behaviour.

Diagnostics and Counselling

Heads: Prof. Dr. Silvia Deplazes and Prof. Hansjörg Künzli

The Diagnostics and Counselling section investigates possibilities and factors in, and the effects of, counselling sessions. A special research interest is the use of new media in counselling. How can chat, e-mail, video conferencing, Internet-based communication platforms or user shared user interfaces and virtual worlds be used sensibly and effectively in counselling? For occupational, academic and career counselling, the section develops work means and diagnostic instruments.

Developmental and Family Psychology

Head: Prof. Dr. Beate Schwarz

The Developmental and Family Psychology section represents developmental psychology across the life span but in research focuses mainly on adolescence and adulthood. Here we often take a family psychology perspective and conduct research with a culturally sensitive approach. The section is currently focusing mainly on the development of people with a migration background.

Clinical Psychology and Health Psychology

Head: Prof. Dr. Agnes von Wyl

Together with partners in the world of practice, the Clinical Psychology and Health Psychology section studies the proven worth, suitability and effectiveness of therapy and diagnostic concepts and of interventions under real-life conditions. Today, an increasingly stronger focus is being put on criteria such as the efficiency and effectiveness of clinical psychotherapeutic services. Framing this discourse more rationally based on facts is a main objective of the section's research efforts. The section also develops and implements projects in mental health promotion.

Media Psychology

Heads: Prof. Dr. Daniel Süss and Gregor Waller, MSc

The Media Psychology section focuses on how people use media and what effects media use has on attitudes, motives and behaviour. For one, the section studies the conditions for productive use of media and the resultant media literacy. For another, it examines problematic aspects of media use like cyberbullying or media addiction. Further research areas are brand and advertising psychology and consumer behaviour.

Organization Development and Consulting

Head: Prof. Dr. Michael Zirkler

The Organization Development and Consulting section is researching psychological and social factors and processes to understand transformation of social systems and organizations. Outcome of the research is scientifically based knowledge as well as hands on know how for managers and change experts. For example, the section is currently examining what "good" management and leadership is, how social sustainable change processes could be designed, what new approaches and concepts for organization and management are viable for the future, and how intelligent organizations can be developed.

Traffic, Safety and Environmental Psychology

Head: Prof. Dr. Markus Hackenfort

The Traffic, Safety and Environment Psychology section studies the causes of unsafe, illegal, or environmentally unsound behaviour in the context of independent mobility. It clarifies how misjudgements relate to objective conditions and how research findings be utilized for effective and efficient prevention. Methodological emphases are analyses in the 3D/180° driving simulator laboratory using research-based traffic psychology-diagnostics methods and integrating mobile eye-tracking systems.

Applied Psychology

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