

Human Factors & Engineering Psychologist

Background –

Definition (APA 21): “Human factors and engineering psychologists use scientific research to improve technology, consumer products, energy systems, telecommunication, transportation, decision-making, work settings and living environments. The goal of their work is to bring a better understanding of what people expect and how people interact with these products and technologies to create safer, more effective and more reliable systems.”

Human Factors and Engineering Psychologists focus on the relationship between machines and people. They work to bring a better understanding of how people interact with machines and technologies and how people can interact with these tools to create safer and more reliable systems. Consulting with industry professionals is a key professional duty.

What can I expect to make in this career? Salaries vary widely based on the setting on which you work. Based on O*Net (2021), salaries in Michigan range from \$74,440 - \$111,890. Psychologists with a doctoral degrees and experience can get higher salaries, with the 90th percentile salary at \$130,00.

What classes at GVSU might help me in my career? Discuss with your advisor which courses among those on this list, along with other courses not listed here, and would best serve your career goals.

1. **PSY 300** – Research Methods in Psychology
2. **PSY 361** – Perception
3. **PSY 365** -Cognition
4. **PSY 400** – Advanced Research in Psychology
5. **EGR 447** Engineering Mechanics of Human Motion

What additional education is required? Generally, those working in this field search for programs are under “Applied Experimental & Engineering Psychology”. However, some places offer specialized programs in Human Factors Psychology & Ergonomics. Generally, programs have an emphasis on research methodology, statistics, computer skills, human performance functions (decision making, perception, attention, learning, etc.).

What are applicable skills for this career? Critical thinking, complex problem solving skills, active listening, and reading comprehension are all important skills for those working in this career field.

Employer Possibilities – Can work in a variety of settings (academia, industry settings, laboratories, governmental agencies). One common theme of work is human-computer interaction and information technology applications.

For More Information –

1. APA Division 21 <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-21/students/careers>
2. Human Factors & Ergonomics Society <https://www.hfes.org/home>
3. O*Net Human Factors Engineers and Ergonomists
<https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/17-2112.01>