# Behavioural science

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## Definitions

**Individual human behaviour**
Defined by Behaviour Change Intervention Ontology (BCIO)

**Scientific discipline**
Defined by Robert West et al.

*Formal ontological definition:* Behavioural science is a scientific discipline whose topic of study is individual human behaviour, group behaviour and population behaviour and factors that influence these.

*Comment:* Behavioural science is sometimes equated with behavioural economics but is in fact much broader and has a much longer history. As a scientific discipline it involves using systematic methods to gather data, develop models and theories, and use these to predict the behaviour of individuals, groups and populations under defined conditions. Its applications include developing and evaluating behaviour change interventions and predicting the outcomes of naturally occurring events and human activities on behaviour. The scientific disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, neuroscience, economics, communications science, marketing science, and many others contribute to it. Its data collection methods include direct and indirect observation, questioning, and physical measurement. Its study designs include laboratory experiments, field experiments, quasi-experimental studies, cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys and participant observation studies. Data are analysed using statistical and qualitative methods.

Behavioural science can be distinguished from 'behavioural sciences' which are any scientific disciplines that include the study of behaviour (e.g., psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, neuroscience etc.)