

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

MSc Psychology

Managed by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Date approved:	September 2011
Applies to students commencing study in:	Sep 2019

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**
11/07/2018	Update course and module codes	New SRS codes
02/12/2019	Change to PG Cert module requirements	To enable students who only complete one semester, but achieve 60 credits, to receive a PG cert award

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University
Language of study:	English
Final award/s:	MSc Psychology
Programme title:	MSc Psychology
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	PG Dip Psychology PG Cert Psychology
Brookes course code:	MSC-PX (old code SS52)
UCAS/UKPAS S code:	P045760
JACS code:	C800
HECoS code:	
Mode of delivery: (Mode of Study given in brackets)	Face to face/on-campus (full-time) Face to face/on-campus (part-time)
Duration of study:	Full time 1 years Part time 2 years 5 years maximum for both
Subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Psychology2010.pdf
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	Students undertaking both single and joint honours degrees can qualify for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society (BPS) if they follow the approved program of study. More details of both the British Psychological Society and GBC can be found here: http://www.bps.org.uk/
Apprenticeship Standard:	n/a
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

2.1 Rationale for/distinctiveness of the programme

The *MSc Psychology* is a conversion programme designed to allow graduates in disciplines other than psychology, and psychology graduates whose undergraduate degree is not professionally recognised, to gain a qualification in psychology that confers eligibility for graduate membership of the British Psychological Society and, more importantly, the Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC) with the BPS. GBC is a pre-requisite for entry onto further postgraduate training to follow a career in applied areas of professional psychology such as counselling, clinical, educational, forensic, health, occupational and sports psychology.

The Psychology staff carry out international quality research in a range of subject areas within the scientific discipline of Psychology. Research interests are broad and cover all the main areas of psychology such as developmental, cognitive, abnormal, personality, social, biological and cross-cultural. Funded research projects on psychology related to language and literacy development, sleep, motor development, Parkinson's disease, visual perception & attention, autobiographical memory, eye gaze, deafness, autism and attitudes to motoring have recently taken place. Students on this programme have the opportunity to be taught by enthusiastic and active researchers with specific expertise in many different topics areas. See <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/psychology/about/staff/>

The modules reflect many of the staff interests and research expertise. Specialised modules on research methods in psychology give an opportunity for the detailed examination and hands-on experience of specific techniques for gathering data and observing behaviour including experimental work and the use of qualitative methods. The high point of the degree is the dissertation carried under the supervision of a member of staff who will be an experienced researcher. The dissertation provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate the skills and knowledge gained over the degree programme and show that they can successfully carry out research in psychology. Links between research and teaching are an important and distinctive feature of the programme, and the combined research experience and competencies of staff have shaped its design, content and delivery.

2.2 Aims of the programme

The programme aims to cover the BPS requirements for the study of psychology, offering a programme that confers eligibility for GBC. Within this, the aim is to develop understanding of the scientific underpinnings of mind, brain, behaviour and experience, and of the complex interactions between these and also a knowledge of a range of research methods and measurement techniques used in psychology. These aims are addressed within a framework that combines teaching in psychology with broadly-based research and transferable skills. The core of the programme is common to the PGDip and MSc awards and aims to develop the student to:

- demonstrate a good knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning and how they are conceptualised across the core areas in psychology
- demonstrate knowledge of a range of research paradigms, research methods and measurement techniques, including statistical analysis
- Reason scientifically and demonstrate the relationship between theory and evidence
Demonstrate competence in research skills through practical activities
- Reason statistically and demonstrate competence in a range of statistical methods

For the award of MSc the following programme objectives are additional to the general objectives outlined above:

- To give the student an opportunity to initiate, design, conduct and report an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

- Understand the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline;
- Demonstrate a good knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological function and how they are conceptualized across the core areas of psychology;
- Develop knowledge about a number of specialized areas and/or applications;
- techniques, including statistical analysis;
- Reason scientifically and demonstrate the relationship between theory and evidence;
- Adopt multiple perspectives
- Detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and experience;
- Recognize the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning;

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

- Demonstrate knowledge of a range of research paradigms, research methods and measurement techniques, including statistical analysis;
- Pose and operationalise research questions;
- Demonstrate competence in research skills through practical activities;
- Reason statistically and demonstrate competence in a range of statistical methods;
- Initiate, design, conduct and report an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision;
- Communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means;

- Interpret and use numerical, statistical and other forms of data;
- Approach problem solving in a systematic way;

3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

- Be aware of contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams;
- Communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means;
- Interpret and use numerical, statistical and other forms of data;
- Approach problem solving in a systematic way;
- Undertake self-directed study and project management in a supportive environment;
- Recognize the need to assess their own skills and to harness them for future learning;

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

- Gather, organise and deploy a variety of digital sources pertaining to Psychology
- Communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means;
- Select and use appropriate communication and information technology for the construction, retrieval, processing and presentation of information including primary and secondary sources of information (e.g., SPSS, Psychinfo, fOCUS)

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- Recognise the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning .
- Understand the ethical implications of psychological research and be aware of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct.
- Learn independently and in groups
- Collaborate effectively with others to achieve common goals

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module	M-level credits	Level	PG Cert (60 credits from ANY of the below)	PG Dip	MSc	Coursework: Exam ratio
PSYC7008 (P24119)	Cognitive & Social Aspects of Development	20	7	20	20	20	1:0
PSYC7002	Social Psychology	20	7	20	20	20	0:1

(P24108)							
PSYC700 1 (P24101)	Brain and Cognition	20	7	20	20	20	0:1
PSYC700 5 (P24111)	Experimental Design and Statistics for Psychology	20	7	20	20	20	1:0
PSYC700 6 (P24114)	Intelligence & Individual Differences	20	7	20	20	20	1:0
PSYC700 3 (P24109)	Personality and Psychological Disorders	20	7	20	20	20	1:0
PSYC700 4 (P24110)	Research Design Skills	10	7	-	-	10	1:0
PSYC700 7 (P24118)	Research-Based Dissertation (Project Report)	50	7	-	-	50	1:0
	TOTAL	180		60	120	180	

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

For MSc award all modules must be passed; for PG Dip award all modules apart from PSYC7004 (P24110) and PSYC7007 (P24118) must be passed; for PG Cert, 60 credits must be achieved from any of the modules (apart from PSYC7004 (P24110) and PSYC7007 (P24118)).

Completion of PSYC7007 (P24118) requires the successful completion of PSYC7004 (P24110) and PSYC7005 (P24111).

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In order for students to gain eligibility for the graduate bases for chartered membership (GBC) of the British Psychological Society (BPS) they must complete all of the modules listed in 4.1. Completion of the PG Diploma in Psychology or the PG Cert in Psychology does not allow students to gain GBC to the BPS.

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Strategy

A variety of teaching and learning methods are used across the programme. This ensures that students are exposed to a range of learning opportunities and helps to maintain student motivation and interest. Some of the key teaching methods we use are as follows:

- Lectures are designed to introduce students to the main themes, key theoretical approaches, and significant research findings relevant to the module content.

- Seminars and workshops encourage students to engage in discussion with tutors and peers in order to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the module content, apply ideas and develop a range of graduate attributes.
- Tutorials consist of one-to-one or small group conversations between tutors and students. The function of a tutorial can vary but it is likely to cover such things as advice on essay preparation, guidance on key readings, or return and discussion of assessed work.
- Library training sessions are provided to help students develop learning, research and IT skills.
- Computer & Statistics workshops enable students to obtain the hands-on experience necessary to use data analysis techniques as part of research methods training.
- Students are introduced to research methodology and statistics in the programme with the intention of providing students with a reasonably comprehensive introduction to the theoretical and practical aspects of research and enquiry. As these approaches and methods are integral to theory generation and knowledge, both the content and mode of assessment for each module are designed in such a way as to provide students with the opportunity to explore methodology in terms of the knowledge it generates and the contribution and impact it has had within the field.

The specific teaching and learning methods are described in the modular handbooks and their effectiveness is monitored and analysed by students and staff in the module feedback system and the Psychology Annual Review process. Most modules include 27-30 hours contact time and each 20 M credits is expected to take about 200 hours of student effort in total (including contact time).

Linking Teaching with Research

At postgraduate level the integration of research with teaching is key to the learning process and particularly so in a Masters programme. Tutors in this programme teach about topics on which they carry out research. All members of the MSc Programme Team are research active and teach in the area of their research interests. They use their refereed articles in the teaching process and encourage students to participate in their respective research interests. As a post-graduate programme, the integration between research and teaching is an essential part of the quality of the programme. Students participate in research assessment seminars and carry out a research-based dissertation.

Within our Programme a central theme is the integration of research across the whole Programme. Students are introduced to research methodology and statistics in the programme with the intention of providing students with a reasonably comprehensive introduction to the theoretical and practical aspects of research and enquiry. As these approaches and methods are integral to theory generation and knowledge, both the content and mode of assessment for each module are designed in such a way as to provide students with the opportunity to explore methodology in terms of the knowledge it generates and the contribution and impact it has had within the field.

Assessment Strategy

Both summative and formative assessments are incorporated into the programme. Methods of assessment are described in the module handbooks and monitored and evaluated using student feedback procedures and the Psychology Annual Review Process. The assessments are linked to the learning outcomes for the programme.

In devising the assessment strategy we seek to achieve the following aims and objectives:

- Use a range of assessment methods including exams, essays, individual and group presentations, critical reviews and portfolios. The variety in the forms of assessment ensures that students are exposed to different forms of learning and are given the opportunity to show their abilities across a number of different skill sets.
- Use formative and summative assessment methods to assess the learning outcomes of the subject.
- Provide students with transparent and detailed marking criteria, and ensure that assessment is seen as an integral part of their learning experience.
- Provide various structures to support assessment, including essay clinics and preparatory classroom based activities (e.g. exam workshops).
- Conform to the benchmark statement for Psychology, the National Qualifications Framework, quality assurance standards, and the Brookes Assessment Compact.

The Postgraduate attributes are addressed throughout all teaching, learning and assessment (see below).

- a) **Academic literacy** is inherent to the substantive content of all modules and encompasses disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills which enable students to understand the 'landscape' of Psychology. Module content and assessment practices are designed to help students become aware of the distinctive character of psychological knowledge and evidence in relation to other forms of understanding, such as other disciplines and everyday explanations.
- b) **Research literacy** enables students to understand the nature and appropriate use of research strategies and methods in gaining and critiquing psychological knowledge and is addressed in students' independent learning and resource retrieval for all assessments. The modules Research Design Skills and Experimental Design and Statistics for Psychology advance the students knowledge of how to conduct advanced research in psychology. The dissertation module provides an opportunity to conduct an in-depth piece of independent research.
- c) **Critical self-awareness and personal literacy** is exercised through student initiative and personal responsibility in their own learning and with all forms of assessment. Students develop

an understanding of the process of learning and the ability to assess the work of oneself and others. Group work in modules provides students with opportunities to work collaboratively in diverse settings. The dissertation is also a key assessment of this attribute.

- d) **Digital and information literacy** is achieved through the full use of online resources via the psychology web pages. Students are expected to use information technology both as a resource and research tool in all psychology modules. Library training sessions and computer workshops ensure that students develop the skills and practices necessary to become confident and agile users of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. The assessment of statistical methods and the production of research reports provide confirmation of this attribute.
- e) **Global citizenship** promotes an awareness of diversity and inequalities as well as the local and global contexts that shape these issues. These are central concerns of Psychology as a discipline, and they are addressed in all modules. They are also addressed directly in the subject matter inherent in psychology topic modules such as Intelligence and individual Differences. The detailed study of research ethics will also contribute to global citizenship through research methods teaching.

The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is also informed by the Brookes Assessment Compact, <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/aske/brookes--assessment-compact/> and modules provide general, individual and written feedback and other structures for support with assessment.

The programme conforms to the University's Postgraduate Taught regulations. These can be found at: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/b4/>

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must normally have the following qualifications:

- An upper second-class or first-class honours degree awarded by a recognised institution of higher education in the UK or overseas

Students will also be considered with:

- a lower second-class honours degree AND
- 60 CATS (Credit Accumulative Transfer Scheme) credits in Psychology. You must have achieved an average of 60% in these credits. Credits can either be gained through the Qualifying Certificate in Psychology at Oxford Brookes University or from a recognised institution of higher education.

Applicants with exceptional experience may apply for consideration of their portfolio by the admissions committee.

Applicants who, as a result of qualifications or experience or both, can demonstrate knowledge and capabilities equivalent to those possessed by holders of the qualifications listed above, may in exceptional circumstances be admitted with dispensation from the requirement to possess those qualifications.

Applications are considered on their own individual merits and depending on previous experience and prior subjects of study we may suggest or require that some students with an upper second-class or first-class honours degree achieve 60 CATS credits in Psychology (at an average of at least 60%) before entry onto the MSc Psychology course.

You should have English as your first language, or GCSE or O-level English Language, or an IELTS score of 7.0, or equivalent evidence of proficiency in English.

Please also see the university's [standard English language requirements](#)

6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

n/a

6.3 JOB ROLE/EMPLOYER PROFILE (DEGREE AND HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS)

n/a

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

The MSc programme confers eligibility for graduate basis for chartered membership (GBC) with the BPS. GBC is a pre-requisite for entry onto further postgraduate training to follow a career in applied areas of professional psychology such as counselling, clinical, educational, forensic, health, occupation and sports psychology. In addition, a clear grounding in psychology and the research methods involved may be needed for students wishing to pursue a PhD in research. Careers talks take place in the department and help is given to find opportunities for workplace experience in several domains.

Completion of an accredited BPS programme offers graduates a clear route to Society membership at the appropriate level, and therefore access to the full range of membership benefits, including a variety of services, publications, conferences, training and networking opportunities. Society membership also presents graduates with opportunities for developing and influencing the profession as leaders in their field in the future. For more information on the benefits of Society membership, see www.bps.org.uk/membership/benefits. The society also has details on the route to becoming a chartered psychologist.

The over-riding consideration in designing the MSc Psychology is to ensure that students are offered a thorough grounding psychological theory, research methods and techniques. This programme is

intended to prepare students for further training in or a career directly involving research skills in Psychology. All members of the programme team will attempt to provide the student with appropriate advice and guidance on promising opportunities as they develop their own plans.

The regular programme of departmental seminars gives students the opportunity to hear from and meet researchers and practitioners from different disciplines within psychology and from different educational institutions. This is valuable for those students considering a career in research.

Students are encouraged to attend the regular careers events, organised by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. We respond to student requests when compiling the programme of events and ensure a variety of talks and discussion sessions where there are opportunities to meet speakers from different professions including educational, health and clinical psychology as well as teaching and social care.

The regular programme of departmental seminars gives students the opportunity to hear from and meet researchers and practitioners from different disciplines within psychology and from different educational institutions. This is valuable for those students considering a career in research.