MA Psychosocial Studies

Department of Psychosocial Studies (DPS)
School of Social Science, History and Philosophy (SSHP)
Birkbeck, University of London

Course Handbook
2016/17
Handbook Contents

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1. Introduction

1.1. Welcome to the MA Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck

Welcome to the MA Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck.

This handbook aims to contain all the information that you need to know about the programme this year. In addition to this handbook, each individual module has its own handbook that contains details of the content, reading and assessment for that module. You can find this information on the module Moodle page.

You will find an electronic version of the handbook on Moodle which may be updated as we proceed through the year.

1.2. Staff Team

Academic Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Margarita Palacios</td>
<td>Acting Programme director, Autumn</td>
<td>020-3073 8016</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.palacios@bbk.ac.uk">m.palacios@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convenor Core 2, Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Silvia Posocco</td>
<td>Programme Director, Spring-Summer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>020-3073 8066</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.aragon@bbk.ac.uk">m.aragon@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ben Gidley</td>
<td>IRM co-convenor and dissertation co-ordinator</td>
<td>020 7079 0664</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.gidley@bbk.ac.uk">b.gidley@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Bruna Seu</td>
<td>IRM co-convenor</td>
<td>020 7631 6359</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.seu@bbk.ac.uk">b.seu@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Magda Schmukalla</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant – postgraduate writing and study skills</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.schmukalla@bbk.ac.uk">m.schmukalla@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Francisco Calafate</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant – Independent Research Module</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:f.calafate@bbk.ac.uk">f.calafate@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Gail Lewis</td>
<td>Head of Dept</td>
<td>020 7631 6251</td>
<td><a href="mailto:g.lewis@bbk.ac.uk">g.lewis@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Amber Jacobs</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>020-3073 8015</td>
<td><a href="mailto:a.jacobs@bbk.ac.uk">a.jacobs@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative and Other Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Kezer</td>
<td>Acting Course Administrator</td>
<td>020-7631 6632</td>
<td><a href="mailto:a.kezer@bbk.ac.uk">a.kezer@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Paula Fortune</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>020-7631 6367</td>
<td><a href="mailto:p.fortune@bbk.ac.uk">p.fortune@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Wendy Lynwood</td>
<td>Subject Librarian</td>
<td>020-7631 6062</td>
<td><a href="mailto:w.lynwood@bbk.ac.uk">w.lynwood@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>020-7631 6878</td>
<td><a href="mailto:moodle@bbk.ac.uk">moodle@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3. Student Support

Each student will be assigned a personal tutor at the beginning of the academic year. Students usually meet with their tutors once a term in order to discuss any issues that arise in relation to your experience on the course. These might include particular aspects of the course curriculum that you want to discuss, or more general issues related to your experience of teaching and learning.

- Full-time students: your personal tutor will be Margarita Palacios until January 2017, after which it will be Silvia Posocco
- Part-time first years: your personal tutor will be Margarita Palacios until January 2017, after which it will be Silvia Posocco
- Part-time second years: your personal tutors will be Ben Gidley until January 2017, after which it will be Silvia Posocco

There are many other forms of support for students that are detailed in your Student Handbook and on the My Birkbeck website (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services), including disability support, extra learning support, the University counselling service, the Student’s Union and the Careers Service. Please speak with your tutor if you have difficulty accessing any of these services, or if you require other forms of support that are not detailed in this handbook.

1.4. Moodle

In keeping with many higher educational settings, we are using a Virtual Learning Environment called Moodle to support the learning and teaching of this course. You can use Moodle to communicate with staff and fellow students, to access some of the set reading, to submit assignment and receive feedback, and many more things besides. Please make sure you familiarize yourself with Moodle near the beginning of the course. If you experience any difficulties with Moodle please let a member of staff know.

1.5. Student-Staff Exchange Committee

The course committee meets once a term to ensure smooth running of the course, and to discuss any issues arising from the course, implements changes, etc. An extremely important function is considering the views of students and resolving problems as they arise, as far as is possible.

At the start of each term, two students (one full-time and one part-time) are elected by the student group as their course representatives. These representatives meet once a term with the Programme Director, Dr Margarita Palacios or Dr Silvia Posocco, for a Student-Staff Exchange Committee.

The meeting dates for the academic year 2016/17 are:

- Monday 14th of November 2016 – Dreyfus Room, 26 Russell Square
- Tuesday 8th of March 2017 – B01, 30 Russell Square
- Thursday 1st of June 2017 – 501, 30 Russell Square

All meetings will take place at 5.00 pm, before the teaching sessions.

Prior to the Student-Staff Exchange Committee, the course representatives are sent an email asking them to meet with the rest of their cohort to discuss any matters pertaining to the course they would
like raised. This can be done in the form of a meeting when students are attending the course and tutors will be willing to give over time for this, or via email. Once any issues have been identified, the course representatives should email Dr Palacios in Autumn or Dr Posocco in Spring/Summer with items for the agenda. Matters can be raised anonymously if appropriate.

For guidance, course representatives should encourage their co-students to identify strengths of the courses as well as any areas of concern. The following webpage gives information about Student-Staff Exchange Committees: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su/classrep/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su/classrep/). In addition, a Course Representative Handbook is available from the Birkbeck Student’s Union.

Matters discussed at the Student-Staff Exchange Committee are brought to the course committee which is attended by all the staff involved in the course.

### 1.6. Birkbeck Term Dates 2016/17

**Autumn Term:** Monday 03\(^{rd}\) October to Friday 16 December 2016  
**Spring Term:** Monday 4 January to Friday 18 March 2016  
**Summer Term:** Monday 18 April to Friday 1 July 2016

Note: Reading Week is in Week 6 for most courses in most terms. However, different programmes and departments may depart from this practice, especially when Reading Week does not coincide with school half term. Please check each module handbook for details. *In Autumn 2016, Theories and Sites, the Independent Research Module, and Interrogating Identities will have their Reading Week in Week 4.*

Note: The College and its library are closed briefly during Christmas and Easter. Check the College website for details: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/about-us/term-dates)
2. Course Structure

MA Psychosocial Studies can be taken full-time over one year or part-time over two years. Full-time students will attend the course a minimum of two evenings per week. Part-time students attend a minimum of one evening per week.

Core Modules

The following are the core module which all MA Psychosocial Studies will do. Independent Research Methods is a taught course in the Autumn, followed in the Spring and Summer by independent research, supervision and workshops.

- Full-timers do all three courses.
- Part-timers starting in 2016 follow core 1 and core 2 in Year 1, and Independent Research Methods in Year 2.
- Part-timers who are now continuing into Year 2 will be doing core 2 this year (in the Spring) as well as Independent Research Methods and one option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial (Margarita Aragon)</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon, 6:00pm-8:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Text and Interpretations (Margarita Palacios)</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tues, 6:00pm-8:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Research Methods (Bruna Seu and Ben Gidley)</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs, 6:00pm-8:30pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring/Summer Workshops (Weds in Spring, Thurs in Summer)</td>
</tr>
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Option Modules

Students take two 30-credit options.
- Full-time students are advised to take one in the Autumn and one in the Spring, but may prefer to manage their workload differently.
- Part-timers now starting Year 2 who have already taken one of their options should choose one option from the options booklet. We advise you to take an option in the Autumn, but may prefer to manage their workload differently.

One optional module must be chosen from the portfolio offered by the Department of Psychosocial Studies; the other can be chosen from a range of modules across the College, including those from our Department. In selecting your option modules, you should give careful thought to the structure of your degree and to developing a programme of study that best reflects your own interests. Some of the Psychosocial Studies options will be introduced at the Induction Day. For a full list of descriptions, please see the separate Optional Module Booklet. Please contact the Programme Administrator if you would like to take a module that is not listed.
2.1. Core Modules (Autumn Term)

- Core Module 1: Theories and Sites (30 credits, PSSL040S7)

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Margarita Aragon
Term, day and time: Autumn Term, Mondays, 6.00-8.30pm

The course provides an introduction to the domain of psychosocial studies. The emphasis is on a broad field of theory, analysis and critique that is concerned with understanding the relations between power and subjectivity. The aim is to introduce students to a plurality of interventions through which the psychosocial can be understood and combine a wide range of cutting-edge perspectives in social and cultural theory, notably contributions in feminist, postcolonial and queer studies, with readings of classic texts by, for example, Freud, Lacan, and Fanon.

Syllabus Overview
Week 1: Psychosocial Studies: An Introduction
Week 2: An Introduction to the Work of Sigmund Freud
Week 3: Reading Lacan: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and (touching on) the Real
Week 4: Reading Week
Week 5: Colonial Violence, Alienation and the Oppressed Psyche
Week 6: ‘Race’, Double Consciousness and the Psychological Wages of Whiteness
Week 7: ‘Hey, you there!’: Ideology, Interpellation and Subject Formation
Week 8: Discourse, Power and Subjection
Week 9: ‘History Incarnate in Bodies’: Habitus and the Classed Self
Week 10: Contested Foundations, Fantasies and Futures of Feminist Thought
Week 11: Black Feminisms’ Moving Subjects, Moving Objects

- Core Module 2: Texts and Interpretation (30 credits, PSSL039S7)

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Margarita Palacios
Term, day and time: Spring Term, Tuesdays, 6.00-8.30pm

The main aim of this module is to gain understanding of the different philosophical traditions which inspire research and interpretation within the field of psychosocial studies. Leaving behind metaphysical notions of truth and objectivity, this module explores different hermeneutical traditions which acknowledge the centrality of contexts, power structures and subjective/discursive positions in the process of meaning formation and production of knowledge. Key concepts to be discussed in this module are language, discourse, meaning, context, desire and power.

Syllabus Overview
Week 1: De-colonising knowledge: power, context and the idea of interpretation
Week 2: De-colonising knowledge II
Week 3: De-colonising knowledge III
Week 4: Dialogical Approaches: Hermeneutics, Pragmatism and Phenomenology
Week 5: Dialogical Approaches II
Week 6: Reading Week (no class)
2.2. Independent Research Module/Dissertation

The dissertation is part of the Independent Research Module (60 credits, PSSL007D7). It gives you the opportunity to undertake a piece of supervised independent research of your choice in the field of psychosocial studies. It allows you to test and develop your knowledge and understanding of the field gained in the prior core and optional modules and represents the culmination of your learning.

The topic of your research must be relevant to Psychosocial Studies. You can undertake either a piece of qualitative empirical research or a theoretical research project. Students undertaking empirical research will need to submit an ethics form for approval by the ethics committee prior to undertaking any research.

Students will be assigned to a supervisor at the end of the spring term who will expect to see them individually three times. See the Appendix at the end of this document for College guidelines on the role and responsibilities of dissertation supervisors.

Submission deadline for final dissertation: Monday 11th September 2017. See section 4 of this handbook for more information.

2.3. Study Skills

There will be two workshops, each repeated twice, for all MA/MSc students in the department. These are specifically aimed at full-timers and first year part-timers, but second years are encouraged to go if they think it will be useful.

- 'Academic Writing Workshops' in the field of Psychosocial Research
  Co-ordinator: Magda Schmukalla m.schmukalla@bbk.ac.uk
  Term: Autumn and Spring Term
  Participants: Open to all full-time and first year part-time students of all MA courses of the Department of Psychosocial Studies.

Aim: The aim of the Academic Writing Workshops is to improve academic writing and research skills. The sessions introduce general requirements needed to produce essays and texts on Master's level but will also focus on particular questions regarding writing and developing arguments in the field of Psychosocial Research more specifically.

Organization of the Sessions:
There will be two sessions, one in autumn term and one in spring term. Each session will be held twice and students can choose which day they want to attend.

First Session: We will be looking at each step involved in the process of writing an essay, from understanding the essay question to writing the first draft. We will talk about literature
research, the general standards of academic writing and the different ways of how to develop an argument. Students will also learn about different forms of referencing and issues of plagiarism.

*Second Session:* This session is set up as group surgery and will be an occasion for students to explore and discuss their autumn term essays. Students can bring issues that have come to light for them when they received their feedback or report on issues they experienced when writing their first essays. The aim is to help the students understand and adjust to general academic standards introduced in the first session while still develop their own style and voice as writers and researchers. In this sense, we will explore together how essays could have been improved as well as how particular essay questions could have been developed in different ways.

**Session Outline:**
1st Session 'Writing at Master's level' – Autumn Term:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Skills Workshop 1: Sat</th>
<th>5th Nov 2016 11:00-13:30</th>
<th>Malet St, MAL B04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills Workshop 1: Tue</td>
<td>1st Nov 2016 18:00-20:30</td>
<td>Malet St, MAL B18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2nd Session 'Exploring and Improving Writing' – Spring Term:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Skills Workshop 2: Wed</th>
<th>8th Feb 2017 18:00-20:30</th>
<th>Malet St, MAL G16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills Workshop 2: Sat</td>
<td>25th Feb 2017 11:00-13:30</td>
<td>Malet St, MAL B04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also other resources on study skills available at Birkbeck. Please see [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support) for further information.

**2.4. Summer Programme: Film Screenings and Psychosocial Studies Annual Lecture**

During the summer term, students will attend Dissertation Support Sessions followed by a series of film screenings and panels organised by Dr Ben Gidley, as well as the Psychosocial Studies Annual Lecture to be given by a distinguished invited guest.
3. Additional Academic Events

There are a range of additional, optional academic events that are held throughout the year at Birkbeck. This is a provisional list of events you might be interested in, but please do visit the Birkbeck website regularly for updated information about other events.

Follow the department on Twitter (@bbkpsychosocial) to get information on these events, and check the Birkbeck events calendar (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/events-calendar/). For the department’s own events, our EventBrite page is at http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/department-of-psychosocial-studies-6231425763.

3.1. Visiting Professor: Professor Judith Butler

Judith Butler continues this year as our Visiting Professor on the MA Psychosocial Studies. Details of her visit will be confirmed later in the year.

3.2. BISR, BIH and BIGS

There are numerous other opportunities for learning in the College, including seminars and public talks run by the Birkbeck Institute for Social Research (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bisr/), the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/bih/), the Birkbeck Institute for Gender and Sexuality (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/ce/research/bigs/) and the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/arts/research/birkbeck-institute-for-the-moving-image). Details of these programmes will be provided at the beginning of each term. In addition, please check the webpages of these institutes regularly for updates of their programmes.
4. Dissertations and dissertation support

The dissertation is an independent research project composed of an advanced analysis of particular theoretical and political debates in a specific subject area. It allows students to apply and develop theories, concepts and methodological tools garnered from different modules over the duration of their Masters and complete an independent research project over a particular period of time. Students can undertake either an empirical dissertation or a theoretical dissertation.

Following completion of the taught element, students will work towards the completion of a research-based dissertation. Students will be asked to complete a short dissertation topic form (p.17 in this Handbook) by 30 January 2017 in advance of a Research Proposal Workshop on Thursday 16 February 2017, about the scope of dissertations and the development of research proposals.

Based on their dissertation topic form, students will be allocated supervisors to support the development of their dissertation proposal and then will pursue research for their dissertations over terms 2 and especially term 3 of full time, or terms 5 and 6 of part time study. Students will be expected to liaise with allocated supervisors to arrange supervision times. Supervisors will comment on a draft dissertation proposal, including on any ethical issues, before the submission of the 2000-word dissertation proposal at the end of term (17 March 2017).

In term 3 (or term 6, if part time), students will attend four 2-hour Dissertation Support Workshops. These workshops will also offer students the chance to present their work in progress to staff and peers, and so gain valuable feedback before completing their dissertations.

4.1. Dissertation supervisor

Once you have submitted your 500-word provisional dissertation proposal (please see dissertation proposal form below), you will be allocated a dissertation supervisor. Their role is:

- to help you clarify your dissertation topic,
- to focus it into a project of an appropriate scale,
- to suggest any further reading or lines of library research,
- to advise you on research methods,
- to support you in ensuring that you have given full attention to any ethical issues the dissertation will involve,
- to read some draft chapters of the dissertation and to provide feedback prior to final submission.

After allocation of a supervisor, you will be expected to submit a 2000-word full dissertation proposal, to be submitted by the end of term 2.
You are responsible for arranging appointments with your dissertation supervisor and for agreeing a date for submitting a full draft for comment. You are entitled to have three one-hour meetings with your dissertation supervisor. The first should be as soon as possible in the second term, to get guidance on the full proposal form and on ethics.

Please remember that you need to have completed a substantial amount of work before the summer break. Dissertation supervisors are not normally available during the summer. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have received feedback on a draft of your dissertation from your supervisor, and to ensure that you have given them the draft early enough for them to be able to give you feedback.

Please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/get-ahead-stay-ahead/writing/dissertations/pg/role-of-the-supervisor for further information on the role of your dissertation supervisor.

The role of the supervisor is to assist the student by providing advice and guidance on how to prepare, produce and improve their dissertation. It may include giving advice on choosing a suitable topic; drawing up a suitable preliminary bibliography; planning the primary and secondary research the student will need to do for the dissertation; using suitable research methods; methods of improving the presentation of the dissertation; sources of information, advice and guidance in undertaking the dissertation and other general academic advice. The supervisor should be available to advise the student on approach, coverage, questions to be asked and the outline structure and research design.

More specifically, the supervisor is expected to:
- assist the student in the definition and organisation of the project in the early stages of preparation
- advise the student on the feasibility of what (s)he plans to do
- approve the dissertation proposal

The supervisor is under no obligation to:
- find the student a suitable topic for the dissertation
- read preliminary drafts of the student’s work
- offer the student guidance or assistance after the end of the summer term proof read the final draft

It is not the role of the supervisor to direct the research or ensure that a dissertation is of sufficient quality to pass; this is the responsibility of the student. Any opinion expressed by the supervisor relating to the quality of the work should not be taken to represent the opinion of the relevant sub-board of examiners.

Responsibilities of the Student

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate contact with their dissertation supervisor once the supervisor has been allocated. Students should contact their supervisors within 10 working days of the supervisor being nominated, to agree a date for an initial meeting or other working methods.

The student and supervisor should agree a timetable at the outset for completion, which should normally include provision for at least two meetings in advance of submission.
Students are responsible for providing their supervisor with drafts of work to be discussed, as agreed with the supervisor, and no later than five working days before any meeting.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

Once a timetable for submission of drafts and for supervision meetings is agreed, supervisors should ensure that appropriate feedback is provided on submitted draft work at supervision meetings. Where written feedback is agreed this should normally be provided within a reasonable time from the agreed date for submission of draft work.

The student should normally have up to three meetings with their supervisor. These could be, for example:

- an initial discussion identifying the topic, questions and methodology and sketching out an initial action plan and bibliography
- an intermediate meeting to assess progress on the dissertation and discuss the likely structure of the first draft
- a final 'trouble-shooting' meeting.

Many dissertations are carried out when staff may be on leave or otherwise unable to meet with the student. Where a supervisor will be out of contact for a period of longer than four weeks then they, or their department should ensure that an alternative supervisor is available to cover during this period.

As stated above, it is not the role of the Supervisor to ensure that a dissertation is of sufficient quality to pass. Supervisors should refrain from commenting on the likely outcome of assessment, and focus solely on advice on how to improve the dissertation.

4.2. Ethics

If you are doing any field research, you will need to get clearance from the department’s ethics committee. Full guidance is online at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures The ethical approval form you will need to fill in, “Proposal To Conduct Research - For Ethical Approval”, is here: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures/SSHP%20Ethics%20Form%20revised%202015.docx You should submit this form to your supervisor when you complete the full dissertation proposal. Sign the approval form, and pass it to your supervisor to sign. Submit your form to the Department's Ethics Committee on Moodle. You may need to re-draft the form or address specific concerns raised by the department’s ethics committee, especially if the proposal is “Non-Routine”, and you will not be able to start fieldwork until this has been signed off. Please be aware that this process may take time; thinking through your project in advance can prevent delays in starting your dissertation research. The department’s ethics officer is Ben Gidley, and the administrator supporting the ethics committee is Andrea Kezer.

4.3. Submission


The dissertation should be 10,000 – 12,000 words. The word count does include footnotes but does not include the bibliography or appendices. Material should not be included in an appendix that has not been referred to in some detail nor quoted from in the main text.
### 4.4. Dissertation Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks/Submission Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 January 2017</td>
<td>(Full-Time and Year 2) students to submit dissertation proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Term 2017</strong></td>
<td>1st supervision meeting (to discuss dissertation proposal, to set up a timetable of work and to discuss ethics approval if undertaking empirical research) for both full-time and Year 2 part-time students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 February 2017</td>
<td>Dissertation proposal workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 March 2017</td>
<td>Ethics workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 March 2017</td>
<td>Submission of full dissertation proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Term 2017</strong></td>
<td>Writing and review of whole draft of dissertation by full-time and Year 2 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 April 2017</td>
<td>Dissertation support workshop: Literature review and fieldwork planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 May 2017</td>
<td>Dissertation support workshop: Work in progress presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 June 2017</td>
<td>Third dissertation support workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 June 2017</td>
<td>Fourth dissertation support workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 September 2017</strong></td>
<td>Dissertation Submission Deadline for Full-Time and Year 2 students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Assessment Guidelines and Deadlines

Each module is assessed separately. You must pass the set assessment in order to complete the module.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Submission Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Module 1</td>
<td>4000-word essay</td>
<td>Monday 9(^{th}) January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Module 2</td>
<td>4000-word essay</td>
<td>Monday 18(^{th}) May 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPS Optional Modules</td>
<td>See individual Options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Research Module</td>
<td>Essay 10,000-12,000 word dissertation</td>
<td>Monday 9(^{th}) January 2017, Monday 11(^{th}) September 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Optional Module has its own assessment which is described in the handbook for that module. Students must pass the assessment of two optional modules in order to complete the course.

Students with disabilities and dyslexia may be eligible for special arrangements for examinations e.g. extra time, use of a word processor, amanuensis, enlarged examination papers etc. In order to receive special arrangements students must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologist’s Report if you are dyslexic) to the Disability Office. You are however, strongly recommended to contact the Disability Office well before this date, preferably soon after starting the course.

5.1. Submission Guidelines

All course work needs to be submitted electronically on Moodle via Turnitin, where it will be checked for plagiarism and word count. In submitting any work, whether on paper or electronically, you agree to abide by the College's regulations on plagiarism. You also undertake that the work is all your own, that you have properly acknowledged and cited all materials used from the published or unpublished works of others, and that the work has not previously been submitted for any other of your modules. You also agree, in submitting the work, that the College may take steps to authenticate the material submitted, including (but not limited to) submitting the work to a plagiarism checking service and copying the work to another member or members of staff.

Essays must be word-processed using double line spacing throughout on A4 sized paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
The title page should state the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Psychosocial Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. With the exception of the dissertation, **never put your name on any coursework**.

5.2. Word count

All text in the main body of the dissertation including long quotations, abbreviated references (author, year, page number), footnotes, endnotes, captions, etc, are included in the word count but the bibliography, figures, tables or appendices are not. (NB. Footnotes and endnotes are explanatory notes to the main body of text and bibliography is the full list of references at the end of your dissertation).

Meeting the word count is considered an important part of academic practice and will be a factor in assessment. It requires planning ahead, designing a structure, prioritising between arguments and evidence, and being concise. Standard word processing software offers tools for doing word-counts (in MS Word under Tools). Exceeding the maximum word count may lead to the deduction of marks. The markers may also return the dissertation to you for shortening. If the word count for your assignment is below the target, the mark for the dissertation is likely to be negatively affected because of a lack of substance.

5.3. Deferral of Examinations

Permission to defer any part of the examination, including submission of the dissertation, may be granted for reasons judged adequate in the particular case by the Examination Board and the College. Subject to such exemption being granted, candidates will be informed of the marks they obtained in those elements in which they have been examined and the examiners may determine the exemptions which will be allowed on re-entry. Successful completion of the course involves attaining a pass in all elements of the examination. Normally, candidates who have been granted a deferment of entry to one or more elements of the examination will be expected to complete the course in the next academic year.

In order to obtain permission for a deferral, you must make an application to the Programme Director, Dr Silvia Posocco. A copy of this application should go to the Course Administrator, Andrea Kezer. Where appropriate, you should supply documentary evidence supporting your application for deferral.
Candidates who do not attend an examination or who do not submit written work without being granted permission to defer or withdraw their examination entry shall be deemed to have failed the examination on that occasion.

5.4. Mitigating Circumstances

The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how boards of examiners will treat assessment that has been affected by adverse circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your performance in assessment. This should not be confused with long term issues such as medical conditions, for which the College can make adjustments before assessment (for guidance on how arrangements can be made in these cases please see the College’s Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements).

A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:

a. the late or non-submission of assessment;
b. non-attendance at examination(s);
c. poor performance in assessment.

For a claim to be accepted you must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:

a. have detrimentally affected your performance or will do so, with respect to a, b and c above;
b. were unforeseen;
c. were out of your control and could not have been prevented;
d. relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.

Documentation should be presented, wherever possible, on the official headed paper of the issuing body, and should normally include the dates of the period in which the circumstances applied. Copies of documentary evidence will not normally be accepted. If you need an original document for another purpose, you should bring the original into the Department Office so that a copy can be made by a member of College staff. (Where a photocopy is made by a member of staff they should indicate on the copy that they have seen the original).

Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.

You are encouraged to submit your claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is normally 1 week after the final examination unless otherwise stated by your School. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form (available from your School office) which should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your School. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

You should be aware that individual marks will almost never be changed in the light of mitigating circumstances. Assessment is designed to test your achievement rather than your potential; it is not normally possible to gauge what you would have achieved had mitigating circumstances not arisen. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, and it is judged by an examination board that these
circumstances were sufficiently severe to have affected your performance in assessment the usual response will be to offer you another opportunity for assessment without penalty, at the next available opportunity.

Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules/mitcircspol.pdf; you should note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that each case will be treated on its merits by the relevant sub-board or delegated body.

5.6 Break in Studies

Students may apply for a break in studies for a maximum of two years in total during their programme of study and this will normally be for a period of one academic year. Requests for breaks in study must be made in writing to the Programme Director, Dr Margarita Palacios. More information can be found on the following webpage: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/break-in-studies.

5.7 General Marking Criteria

Essays will be marked in accordance with content, structure, clarity and quality of analysis. Source of quotations should be indicated. A list of all references should be included at the end of the essay. The number of words in the essay should be stated. Essays significantly over length will incur a penalty.

5.8 Assessment Grades

There are four grades for assessed work: Distinction (70-100%, divided into ‘High Distinction’ [80%+] and ‘Distinction’), Merit (60-69%), Pass (50-59%) and Fail (0-49%). The following table gives an indication of what is expected for each range of marks.

<p>| 80-100% High Distinction | Marks in this range indicate an exceptionally high level of scholarship and outstanding performance in terms of all of the dimensions outlined. While work at this level exhibits scrupulous completion of the requirements of the assignment, it will also exhibit a high degree of initiative, high quality of analysis, academic sophistication, comprehension and critical assessment, making a novel contribution to psychosocial studies. |
| 70%-79% Distinction | Marks in this range indicate high levels of scholarship, and high performance in terms of all of the dimensions outlined. Comprehensively argued writing of interest and originality which is also well organized and presented exhibiting a sound, critical and analytical grasp of the relevant literature(s) and drawing on an extensive range of relevant academic sources. The work will display an excellent understanding of underlying theory as well as employing appropriate analytical techniques, resulting in an argument of interest and significance. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60%–69%</td>
<td>Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work that demonstrates a good command of the subject and relevant literature(s) as well as a sound grasp of critical issues, with evidence of independent thought and a high standard of argument as well as good presentation. Work towards the bottom of this range may have occasional weaknesses and flaws but will nevertheless show a generally high level of competence. Work towards the top of this range will be highly competent on all dimensions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%–59%</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks in this range indicate general capability, but with moderate levels of weaknesses on one or more dimensions indicated above. Work in this range may contain inaccuracies, the arguments may lack clarity or rigour, or there may be a lack of critical understanding. It will however be coherently structured and presented, showing a sound command of the subject, some awareness of critical debate, and the ability to construct a generally coherent argument.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%–49%</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks in this range do not quite meet the minimum standards for a pass, with considerable levels of weaknesses on one or more dimensions. Work in this range may suffer from flawed arguments, weak structure and presentation, an inadequate command of course materials, or a serious failure to reflect on those materials. It will however demonstrate a basic understanding of psychosocial studies and show evidence of reasonable attention to the course materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%–39%</td>
<td>Low Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks in this range display major levels of weaknesses on two or more dimensions. The work may be reliant on a minimal range of reading and reflection with poor attention to detail. Work in this range may be characterised by assertions lacking supporting evidence or argument, or by seriously flawed understanding of key concepts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%–29%</td>
<td>Very Low Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks in this range indicate general incompetence, with highly serious levels of weaknesses on two or more dimensions. Work in this range will either fail to present any real argument or opinion, or fail to engage at all with the topic in question. Work may quote heavily from a small number of sources, but fail to integrate them and provide little or no narrative to explain their relevance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5. Late Submission of Work for Assessment and Resubmission of Failed Work

Work to be considered for formal assessment that is submitted late is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50%, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the ‘real’ mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late.

5.6. Failed Essay and Resubmission

If your assessed essay fails to meet the minimum criteria for a pass mark (50%), the exam board will decide if you will be able to re-submit your essay. Re-submission would normally be during the summer before the following academic year. A 50% cap is placed on any student re-submission - except where mitigating circumstance have been accepted on the failed assessment when the
student will be permitted to re-submit without penalty.

Students may request mitigating circumstances by providing written evidence, medical or otherwise, as to why their work was submitted late. This should be made on the standard pro forma and submitted to the Course Director, Dr Silvia Posocco, and the Course Administrator. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel. If no such documentation is received prior to the meeting of the Exam Board, the ‘real’ mark will not be considered and the penalty mark will stand. If the case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the ‘real’ mark to stand.

If you have failed a piece of work you will be given one opportunity to resubmit your work in order to try to pass the module. You will be given detailed written feedback from the module co-ordinator indicating what you need to do in order to pass the assignment. If the work is awarded a mark lower than 40% students must re-take the module.

Unless otherwise agreed with the Course Director, resubmission deadlines are as follows:

- Core Module 1: Monday 13th March 2017
- Core Module 2 & Term 2 DPS Options: Monday 5th June 2017
- Dissertation: Monday 11th September 2017
6. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the most common form of examination offence encountered in universities, partly because of the emphasis now placed on work prepared by candidates unsupervised in their own time, but also because many students fall into it unintentionally, through ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism. Even if unintentional, it will still be considered an examination offence.

This section of the Course Handbook is intended to explain clearly what plagiarism is, and how you can avoid it. Acknowledgement is made to guidance issued by the USA Modern Language Association (MLA, 1998).

Plagiarism is the publication of borrowed thoughts as original, or in other words, passing off someone else’s work as your own. In any form, plagiarism is unacceptable in the Department, as it interferes with the proper assessment of students’ academic ability.

Plagiarism has been defined as “the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own” (Lindsey, 1952, p2). Therefore, using another person’s ideas or expressions or data in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarise.

6.1. Borrowing others’ words, ideas or data without acknowledgement

It is acceptable, in your work, to use the words and thoughts of another person or data that another person has gathered but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creation. This includes essays, practical and research reports written by other students including those from previous years, whether you have their permission or not. It also applies to both ‘hard-copy’ material and electronic material, such as Internet documents. Examples include copying someone else’s form of words, or paraphrasing another’s argument, presenting someone else’s data or line of thinking.

This form of plagiarism may often be unintentional, caused by making notes from sources such as books or journals without also noting the source, and then repeating those notes in an essay without acknowledging that they are the data, words or ideas belonging to someone else. Guard against this by keeping careful notes that distinguish between your own ideas and researched material and those you obtained from others. Then acknowledge the source.

6.1.1. Example 1

Original source:

To work as part of a team, to be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most important, to take on board both care for the individual and the community, are essential aspects of a doctor’s role today.

Plagiarism:

The essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community.

Acceptable:

One social writer believes that the essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community (Greengross, 1997).

6.1.2. Example 2

Original source:

The binary shape of British higher education, until 1992, suggested a simple and misleading, dichotomy of institutions. […] Within their respective classes, universities and polytechnics were imagined to be essentially homogenous. Their actual diversity was disguised. […] The abandonment of the binary system, whether or not it encourages future convergence, highlights the pluralism which already exists in British Higher Education.


Plagiarism:

Prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading.

Acceptable:

Peter Scott has argued that prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading. (Scott, 1994)

In each revision, the inclusion of the author’s name acknowledges whose ideas these originally were (not the student’s) and the reference refers the reader to the full location of the work when combined with a footnote or bibliography. Note that in the second example, the argument was paraphrased – but even so, this is plagiarism of the idea without acknowledgement of whose idea this really is.

In writing any work, therefore (whether for assessment or not) you should document everything that you borrow – not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas. There are, of course, some common-sense exceptions to this, such as familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge.
But you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If in doubt, cite your source or sources.

For further information particularly with regard to Birkbeck procedures when plagiarism is suspected, please make sure you look at the relevant Birkbeck Registry web page:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs/assmtoff.

When submitting coursework you will need to sign an Academic Declaration form, stating that you have read the sections on plagiarism in this Handbook and confirming that the work is your own, with the work of others fully acknowledged.

6.2. Copying material verbatim

Another example of plagiarism is the verbatim copying of chunks of material from another source without acknowledgement even where they are accepted facts, because you are still borrowing the phrasing and the order and the idea that this is a correct and complete list. Also, you might be infringing copyright (see below).

6.3. Re-submission of work

Another form of plagiarism is submitting work you previously submitted before for another assignment. While this is obviously not the same as representing someone else’s ideas as your own, it is a form of self-plagiarism and is another form of cheating. If you want to re-work a paper for an assignment, ask your lecturer whether this is acceptable, and acknowledge your re-working in a preface.

6.4. Collaboration and collusion

In collaborative work (if this is permitted by the lecturer) joint participation in research and writing does not constitute plagiarism in itself, provided that credit is given for all contributions. One way would be to state in a preface who did what; another, if roles and contributions were merged and truly shared, would be to acknowledge all concerned equally. However, where collaborative projects are allowed, it is usually a requirement that each individual’s contribution and work is distinguishable, so check with your lecturer. Usually, collusion with another candidate on assessed work (such as sharing chunks of writing or copying bits from each other) is NOT allowed.

6.5. Copyright infringement

Finally, you must guard against copyright infringement. Even if you acknowledge the source, reproducing a significant portion of any document (including material on the Internet) without permission is a breach of copyright, and a legal offence. You may summarise, paraphrase and make brief quotations (as I have done from my sources), but more than this risks infringing copyright.

References:

6 Guidelines for References

It is important to include the following details in your list of references, and it may save time if you get into the habit of recording all these details as you do your reading rather than have to hunt them out at the end.

6.6 References in the Body of the Essay/Dissertation

References in the body of the essay or dissertation (as distinct from the Reference section) can occur in different contexts. Fundamentally, whenever reference is made to a published article or other source (e.g. the Internet) details should be given in the text in the form of the name(s) of authors and the date of publication. For example: ‘recent writing on hysteria (e.g. Mitchell, 2000) discusses…’. Or: ‘Mitchell (2000) claims that…’. If a quotation is given, it should conclude with the name of author, date of publication, and exact page number. For example:

By recognising our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. (Kristeva, 1988, p.192)

Note here that a quotation is often presented indented in the text. An alternative, when the quotation is of one sentence or less is to simply put quotation marks around it. For instance, there has been much discussion of the experience of otherness in psychoanalysis: as Kristeva (1988, p.192) comments, ‘By recognising our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside’.

If a text has two authors, both should be given (e.g. Elliott and Frosh, 1995); if more than two authors use the convention et al after the first author’s name: e.g. Pattman et al, 1998. All the authors should be listed in the references at the end of the essay/dissertation.

6.7 References at the End of the Essay/Dissertation

At the end of the text, all references should be gathered together in a standard format, in alphabetical order. There are basically three relevant ways of presenting a reference, depending on whether it is to a book, a chapter in a book, or a journal article.

6.7.1 Books

Authored:

Name, initial. (date) Title Place of publication: Publisher


Multi-authored:

Name1, initial., Name2, initial. and Name3, initial. (date) Title Place of publication: Publisher


Edited

As with books, but with (eds) added after the authors.

6.7.2 Chapter from a Book

Name of author(s) of the chapter, Initial. (date) Title of chapter. In Initial. Name of editor(s), Title of Book, Place of Publication


6.7.3 Journal articles

Name of author(s) of the article, Initial. (date) Title of article. Journal title in full, volume: start page number – end page number


All authors should be listed for jointly written books, chapters and articles.

6.7.4 Referencing from Secondary Texts

If your only source for a reference is from another text, this should be acknowledged in the references as: Full reference of original, quoted in, full reference of secondary source.

6.7.5 Internet Resources

As with books or journals, but with the internet address appended.


Remember: a reference list should be a complete list of all sources actually referred to in your essay/dissertation. It is different from a bibliography, which lists sources drawn on but not necessarily explicitly referred to.

7. Complaints

Where a student considers that their supervision is not adequate then they may request a change of supervisor by writing to their Programme Director or Assistant Dean of the relevant Department. Any change will be at the discretion of the relevant Assistant Dean. Formal complaints about supervision should be submitted in accordance with the College’s Student Complaints Policy.
8. Support for students with Disabilities, Dyslexia and Mental Health Needs

At Birkbeck there are students with a wide range of disabilities, specific learning difficulties, medical conditions and mental health conditions (hereinafter referred to as disabled students). Many of them have benefited from the advice and support provided by the College’s Wellbeing Centre. The Wellbeing Centre is located in G26 on the Ground floor of the Malet Street building.

All enquiries should come to the Wellbeing Centre (tel. 0207 631 6316), who will determine the appropriate referral to specialists in the Disability and Dyslexia Service and Mental Health Service. They can provide advice and support on travel and parking, physical access, the Disabled Students’ Allowance, specialist equipment, personal support, examination arrangements, etc.

On enrolment you need to complete a Study Support Plan (SSP), which will set out the reasonable adjustments that we will make with physical access, lectures, seminars, assessments and exams. After you complete this and provide disability evidence, we confirm the adjustments you require and then your department, examinations office, etc. will be informed that your SSP is available and adjustments can be made. You should contact the Wellbeing Service if any of your adjustments are not in place.

8.1 Access at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks and teaching venues have induction loops for people with hearing impairments, and we have large print and tactile signage. Accessible parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops can all be arranged by the Disability & Dyslexia Service.

8.2 The Disabled Students’ Allowance

UK and EU (with migrant worker status) disabled students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The DSA provides specialist equipment including computers with assistive technology and training, personal help (e.g., study skills tutors, mentors and BSL interpreters) and additional travel costs for students who have to use taxis. It provides thousands of pounds worth of support and all the evidence shows that students who receive it are more likely to complete their courses successfully. The Wellbeing Centre can provide further information on the DSA and can assist you in applying to Student Finance England for this support. From September 2016, new students will receive their note-taking support from the University rather than the DSA.

8.3 Support in your Department

Your Department is responsible for making reasonable adjustments in learning and teaching and assessment, including permission to record lectures, specialist seating,
extensions on coursework, etc. Whilst we anticipate that this support will be provided by the Programme Director, tutors and Programme Administrator in the Department, they will also have a Disability Lead. If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the Department then they may also be able to assist you. They may be contacted through the Programme Administrator.

8.4 Support in IT Services and Library Services

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes an Assistive Technology Room, which may be booked by disabled students. We have software packages for dyslexic students (e.g. Claroread and Mind view), screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments available in our computer laboratories, specialist scanning software, large monitors, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs, etc. We have an Assistive Technology Officer, who can be contacted via IT Services.

The Library has an Assistive Technology Centre, where there is also a range of specialist equipment, including an electronic magnifier for visually impaired students, as well as specialist orthopaedic chairs and writing slopes. The Disability and Dyslexia Service Office refers all students with disabilities to the Library Access Support service, who provide a comprehensive range of services for students with disabilities and dyslexia.

8.5 Examinations and Assessments

Many disabled students can receive support in examinations, including additional time, use of a computer, etc. In exceptional circumstances, students may be offered an alternative form of assessment.

8.6 Specific Learning Difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)

Mature students who experienced problems at school are often unaware that these problems may result from their being dyslexic. Whilst dyslexia cannot be cured, you can learn strategies to make studying significantly easier. If you think you may be dyslexic you can take an online screening test in the computer laboratories – the instructions for the screening test are available on the Disability Office website. If appropriate, you will be referred to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. Some students can receive assistance in meeting the cost of this assessment, either from their employer or from Birkbeck.

8.7 Further information

For further information, please call the Wellbeing Centre on 020 7631 6316 or email disability@bbk.ac.uk.