PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	**MRes Psychology** (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	N/A
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	School of Psychological Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
[QAA subject benchmark group(s)](#) [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#)	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMRPSYCH_C
HECoS Code	100497 (psychology)
Start date of programme	October 2004
Date of programme approval	Summer 2004
Date of last programme amendment approval	May 2015
Valid for academic entry year	**2025-26**
Programme Director	Prof Denis Mareschal
Date of last revision to document	23/06/23

Admissions requirements

A second-class honours degree (2:2) or above in psychology or a relevant discipline.. In addition, they will normally be expected to have *already obtained* a range of advanced research methods skills relevant to research psychology through their prior postgraduate level training or work experience.

It is expected that some students, especially non-UK students, may enter into the MRes programme with the intention of transferring into the MPhil/PhD programme prior to completing the MRes. Thus, the ability or potential to carry out in-depth research, as well as the availability of suitable long-term supervision will be important considerations in deciding on admission.

Students registered on the School of Psychology MPhil/PhD programme may apply to transfer into the MRes programme. Such students will need to have completed or show the potential to complete all of the required MRes modules.

Course aims

The course aims to provide students with a range of specific and generic transferable skills necessary for conducting research at PhD level within a major area of contemporary psychology. These skills include:

- critically appreciating existing research and research methods
- formulating research questions and hypotheses
- conducting literature reviews
- designing and reporting experiments using one or both of quantitative and qualitative methods and
- general and subject specific IT skills

The course also aims to provide students with research experience through an extended supervised research project

Distinctive Features
- Combines Birkbeck's strengths in qualitative and quantitative psychological research methods
- Face-to-face teaching, with a part-time option
- The majority of taught Masters emphasise the teaching of a range of research methods. In contrast, the current programme emphasises the research component, allowing students to experience in-depth focussed research comparable to that undertaken in a PhD programme. It is ideally suited for students who already have a range of research method skills but want to undertake a focussed research project of shorter duration than a full MPhil/PhD. This is unique in psychology within the University of London.
- Particularly attractive to students wanting in-depth research experience but unable to commit to more than 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time study.

Course structure

The MRes Psychology comprises 2 compulsory modules of 15 credits each, 1 compulsory module of 30 credits plus a 120 credit Dissertation, totalling 180 credits. The programme may be completed in one year of full-time study, or through part-time study over two years.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory	T1
7	PSYC023S7	Critical Review of Research Methodologies	30	Compulsory	
7	PSYC109H7	Research Ethics	15	Compulsory	T2
7	PSYC024Q7	Dissertation MRes Psychology	120	Core	T1-3
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory	T1
7	PSYC023S7	Critical Review of Research Methodologies	30	Compulsory	
7	PSYC109H7	Research Ethics	15	Compulsory	T2
Year 2					
7	PSYC024Q7	Dissertation MRes Psychology	120	Core	T1-3

Core:　　　　　*Module must be taken and passed by student*
Compulsory:　*Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*
Option:　　　　*Student can choose to take this module*

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

The course includes a lecture and seminar based module, a tutorial and bibliographic-based module and a supervised project. The teaching styles will be matched to the content. Teaching of the first module will have small class sizes (10-20) to encourage student participation. The two later modules will involve individual tuition from the supervisor and course director tailored to the student's domain of research.

A first module (Generic Research Skills) will involve small group learning. Students will join the MSc in Psychological Research Methods and MPhil students in attending a lecture-based generic skills course that is already in place.

A second module (Critical Review of Research Methods) will involve one-to-one supervision with both the project supervisor and the course director. The students will have an opportunity to practice their bibliographic, essay writing, and critical analysis skills through writing a critical review of contemporary research method relevant to their chosen project.

A third module (Research Ethics) will involve one-to-one supervision with the project supervisor. The student will be required to reflect on the ethical implications of their research. In conjunction with the lessons on ethics received in the Generic Skills Module, they will be required to complete, submit and have approved by the departmental ethics committee and application for ethical approval of their proposed research. Approval by the committee will result in a pass mark.

The supervised research project will be carried out under the supervision of a member of academic staff with research interests in the area of the project. This will provide students with access to a specialist in their project area who can provide expert advice on all aspects of the research. The project will also ensure that taught skills are exercised within a constructive environment during the course.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. Assessment procedures will ensure that students develop a small portfolio of work over the duration of the programme, and feedback on coursework required for some of the modules will encourage personal development.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate:

Subject Specific:
1. Practical knowledge of all phases of developing, conducting and reporting a research project
2. Understanding of conventions in psychological report writing and the purpose of each section within a research report
3. Understanding and being able to evaluate the logical flow of a scientific research project
4. Understanding the relation between research questions and research methodologies
5. An understanding of a range of research designs and the conditions under which each is appropriate
6. Familiarity with psychological experimental software (e.g. E-Prime, N6, Nvivo) as relevant to their chosen domain of research
7. Knowledge of a range of statistical procedures and/or qualitative research methodologies, the conditions under which they may reasonably be applied, and how to interpret the results of the procedures as relevant to their chosen domain of research
8. Understanding the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society and ramifications of ethical practice

Intellectual
9. A critical appreciation of contemporary research and research methodologies as relevant to their chosen domain of research
10. Understanding alternative ways of addressing a research question and how to advance reported research
11. Critical thinking skills in relation to

- presenting and critiquing an argument
- reviewing and assimilating existing topic-specific literature and formulating a research question
12. An ability to apply research methodologies to wider work/life situations
13. The ability to formulate and test hypotheses
14. An ability to study a problem in-depth
15. Logical thinking (e.g. in relation to hypothesis testing)
16. Evaluation skills

Practical
17. Enhanced essay and report writing
18. Enhanced numeracy in relation to understanding numerical data s relevant to their domain to research
19. General IT skills (use of web browsers, email, Word, PowerPoint, EndNote)
20. Subject specific IT skills (e.g. familiarity with SPSS, E-Prime)
21. Ability to conduct literature reviews using electronic search tools, electronic journals and databases (PsycInfo)
22. Ability to summarise and assess contemporary research succinctly.
An ability to file for ethical approval of research projects
23. An ability to apply a range of research methods to specific research questions
24. Data collection and analysis skills
25. Ability to present data in a meaningful way, and to transform it into different presentational formats
26. Planning and organisational skills

Personal and Social
27. Ability to work independently
28. To effectively plan and organise a substantive, medium-term, project
29. Time management skills
30. To communicate effectively through both written reports and verbal presentations
31. An enhanced ability to appreciate (and formulate) a structured argument
32. An understanding of the relevance of scientific research as reported in the media to everyday questions
33. An increased awareness of ethical issues and ethical practice
34. The ability to manage self-directed learning activities

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue career paths in psychology, education, human resources and management. Possible professions include:

- clinical psychologist
- further education lecturer
- human resources officer
- counsellor
- careers adviser
- educational psychologist.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on the careers pages of our website.

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its Common Award Scheme Regulations and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).