

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Psychological Studies with Counselling (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE Psychological Studies with Counselling Cert HE Psychological Studies with Counselling
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year?	No
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home Department/other teaching departments	Psychological Sciences (home) Counselling Centre Birkbeck Business School Education Directorate
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years) October
Professional, statutory, or regulatory body	Not applicable
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for England</u>	Psychology Counselling
UCAS code	C804
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBAPSCO_C (3-years full-time) UBAPSYCO_C (4-years part-time)
HECoS Code	100497 100495
Start date of programme	Autumn 2026
Date of programme approval	Summer 2025
Date of last programme amendment approval	N/A
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Giusi Pollicina
Date of last revision to document	22/06/2026

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge, and previous work experience. However, to fully engage with the BA Psychological Studies with Counselling students need to demonstrate an appropriate level of preparedness:

For the part-time programme, we would normally expect applicants to hold a minimum of GCSE Grade 4 (previously Grade C) or Functional Skills Level 2 in Mathematics and English. Applicants who do not meet these qualifications will have the chance to take our in-house admissions test. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

For the full-time programme, applicants should have a minimum of 96 points (e.g. A-levels CCC). The UCAS tariff score is applicable to applicants if they have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides [a tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

Course aims

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychological Studies with Counselling is an undergraduate degree designed for students interested in exploring psychology and counselling from both an academic and applied perspective. This programme provides a comprehensive view of mental functioning, integrating key theories and practices from both disciplines.

While the degree is not specifically a training programme for professional practice, it serves as an excellent entry point for those interested in both psychology and counselling. For students who later decide to apply for professional training in counselling, such as the MSc Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy, this degree includes a foundation in counselling, equipping students with essential knowledge and skills should they choose to pursue this route.

The BA Psychological Studies with Counselling offers a strong foundation in academic psychology, covering topics such as learning, memory, decision-making, human interaction, and the relationship between the brain and behaviour. In addition, the counselling modules introduce students to core counselling approaches, such as psychodynamic counselling and the psychodynamic understanding of group and organisational processes.

In their final year, students will have the opportunity to develop an independent theoretical dissertation on a counselling-related topic of personal interest, working closely with academic staff.

With counselling and interpersonal skills increasingly recognised as key employability assets, this programme equips graduates with highly transferable skills applicable across a range of professions. The ability to actively listen, communicate effectively, and understand human behaviour is valued in human resources, marketing, social services, education, user experience, healthcare, and leadership roles. Additionally, those wishing to pursue professional training in counselling and psychotherapy can apply to continue their studies through one of our MSc Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy programmes without the need to complete a counselling certificate.

By offering a comprehensive understanding of psychological concepts and counselling approaches without the stringent requirements for future professional practice in psychology, this degree allows students to explore and excel in a wide range of fields and applications.

Additionally, the programme will help them to develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and emotional intelligence, making them well-suited for leadership and management positions across various settings.

The BA Psychological Studies with Counselling may be completed on a full-time (3 year) or part-time (4-year basis). Students who do not meet the entry criteria to join the full-time (3 year) undergraduate programme may be offered a place on part-time route to allow them a longer period within which to develop their skills and maximise their potential.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Status	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1 – All modules are compulsory, totalling 120 credits					
4	SCPS236H4	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS168H4	Understanding Research Methods for Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS187H4	Understanding Cognitive Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS237H4	Understanding Neuroscience	15	Compulsory	T2
4	SCPS190H4	Understanding Developmental Psychology	15	Compulsory	T2
4	SCPS188H4	Understanding Applied Social Psychology	15	Compulsory	T2
4	SCPS189H4	Understanding Individual Differences	15	Compulsory	T3
4	SC02008H4	Introduction to Counselling	15	Compulsory	3
4	SCPS235Z4	Psychology Study Skills	0	Compulsory	T1–3
Year 2 - students must take a compulsory 30-credit module in Counselling, along with 90 credits of optional modules totalling 120 credits.					
5	SC02005S5	Core Concepts in Counselling Practice	30	Compulsory	T1
Students choose a total of SIX option modules from the indicative selection below (subject to availability).					
At least FOUR from the following Psychological Sciences modules:					
5	SCPS160H5	Individual Differences	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC044H5	Neuroscience	15	Option	T1
5	SCPS180H5	Perception and Attention	15	Option	T1
5	SC12007H5	Psychological and Developmental Issues in Childhood and Adolescence	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC026H5	Developmental Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS163H5	Social Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS179H5	Cognition	15	Option	T3
5	SCPS004H5	Social Perspectives on Development	15	Option	T3
5	SC12008H5	Psychology for Personal and Professional Development	15	Option	T3
5	SC12010H5	Qualitative Research Methods	15	Option	T3
Plus up to a maximum of TWO from the options from other departments (subject to availability):					
5	MOMN047H5	Organizational Behaviour	15	Option	T1
5	BUOB091H5	Organizational Change	15	Option	T2

5	CASC001H5	Your Career Development	15	Option	T2 or T3
5	CASC002H5	Micro-placement	15	Option	T3
Year 3 – Students two compulsory 30-credit modules in Counselling and a compulsory 30-credit dissertation, plus 30 credits of optional modules from the indicative selection below (subject to availability).					
6	SCPS165S6	Theoretical Dissertation	30	Core	T1 - 3
6	SC02006S6	Psychodynamic Thinking and Practice	30	Compulsory	T1
6	SC02007S6	Psychodynamics of Groups and Organisations	30	Compulsory	T2
Students choose TWO from the indicative selection below (subject to availability).					
6	SCPS182H6	Clinical and Counselling Psychology*	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC069H6	Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC028H6	Family Studies	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC031H6	Health Psychology	15	Option	T1
6	SCPS001H6	Psychology in Public Policy	15	Option	T1
6	SCPS181H6	Attachment Theory: Introduction and Critique	15	Option	T2
6	PSYC019H6	Brain and Cognitive Development	15	Option	T2
6	SCPS238H6	Neurodiversity	15	Option	T2
6	SCPS227H6	Neuropsychology	15	Option	T2
6	SC12009H6	Psychology for Education	15	Option	T2
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	SCPS236H4	Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations of Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS168H4	Research Methods for Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS237H4	Understanding Neuroscience	15	Compulsory	T2
4	SCPS188H4	Understanding Applied Social Psychology	15	Compulsory	T2
4	SCPS189H4	Understanding Individual Differences	15	Compulsory	T3
4	SC02008H4	Introduction to Counselling	15	Compulsory	T3
4	SCPS235Z4	Psychology Study Skills	0	Compulsory	T1 - 3
Year 2					
4	SCPS187H4	Understanding Cognitive Psychology	15	Compulsory	T1
5	SC02005S5	Core Concepts in Counselling	30	Compulsory	T1
4	SCPS190H4	Understanding Developmental Psychology	15	Compulsory	T2
Students choose a total of TWO option modules from the indicative selection below (subject to availability).					
At least ONE from the following Psychological Sciences modules:					
5	SCPS160H5	Individual Differences	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC044H5	Neuroscience	15	Option	T1
5	SCPS180H5	Perception and Attention	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC026H5	Developmental Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS165H5	Social Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS004H5	Social Perspectives on Development	15	Option	T3
5	SCPS179H5	Cognition	15	Option	T3
5	SC12010H5	Qualitative Research Methods	15	Option	T3

Plus a maximum of ONE from the options from other departments (subject to availability):					
5	MOMN047H5	Organizational Behaviour	15	Option	T1
5	BUOB091H5	Organizational Change	15	Option	T2
5	CASC001H5	Your Career Development	15	Option	T2 or T3
5	CASC002H5	Micro-placement	15	Option	T3
Year 3					
6	SC02006S6	Psychodynamic Thinking and Practice	30	Compulsory	T1
Students choose a total of FOUR option modules from the indicative selection below (subject to availability).					
At least THREE from the following Psychological Sciences modules:					
5	SCPS160H5	Individual Differences	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC044H5	Neuroscience	15	Option	T1
5	SCPS180H5	Perception and Attention	15	Option	T1
5	SC12007H5	Psychological and Developmental Issues in Childhood and Adolescence	15	Option	T1
5	PSYC026H5	Developmental Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS165H5	Social Psychology	15	Option	T2
5	SCPS004H5	Social Perspectives on Development	15	Option	T3
5	SCPS179H5	Cognition	15	Option	T3
5	SC12008H5	Psychology for Personal and Professional Development	15	Option	T3
5	SC12010H5	Qualitative Research Methods	15	Option	T3
Plus up to a maximum of ONE from the options from other departments (subject to availability):					
5	MOMN047H5	Organizational Behaviour	15	Option	T1
5	BUOB091H5	Organizational Change	15	Option	T2
5	CASC001H5	Your Career Development	15	Option	T2 or T3
5	CASC002H5	Micro-placement	15	Option	T3
Year 4					
6	SCPS165S6	Theoretical Dissertation	30	Core	T1 - 3
6	SC02007S6	Psychodynamics of groups and organisations	30	Compulsory	T2
Students choose TWO options from the indicative below (subject to availability):					
6	SCPS182H6	Clinical and Counselling Psychology*	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC069H6	Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC028H6	Family Studies	15	Option	T1
6	PSYC031H6	Health Psychology	15	Option	T1
6	SCPS001H6	Psychology in Public Policy	15	Option	T2
6	SCPS181H6	Attachment Theory: Introduction & Critique	15	Option	T2
6	PSYC019H6	Brain and Cognitive Development	15	Option	T2
6	SCPS238H6	Neurodiversity	15	Option	T2
6	SCPS227H6	Neuropsychology	15	Option	T2
6	SC12009H6	Psychology for Education	15	Option	T2

Note: options should be selected to remain within the maximum credit loads of 60 credits per term for full-time students and 45 credits per term for part-time students. The optional modules shown above are subject to availability and may vary each year.

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*

* Note: Individual Differences (SCPS160H5) at level 5 is a pre-requisite to take Clinical and Counselling Psychology (SCPS182H6) at level 6.

How you will learn

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

The programme 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.

Teaching on this programme is a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

At level 4, the learning and teaching methods are student-centred with a creative approach to linking critical analytic thinking with psychology and counselling. Methods will include group work, case studies, discussions, student presentations and feedback alongside traditional lectures. You will be expected to engage actively in the process of learning, participating in discussions and presentations, group, and project work, where appropriate.

At level 5, students use the skills they have developed at Level 4 to engage with their selected topics more deeply, participating in discussions and participating in group and project work, where appropriate.

At level 6, the programme further includes seminars, small group work appropriate to the aims and objectives of individual modules. You will also complete a theoretical dissertation which offers you an opportunity to explore, in depth, the current position on a suitable agreed topic area.

How we will assess you

The programme will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. Although you will also have some examinations, for most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment: Short written exercises, essays which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress through your studies, quizzes and multiple-choice questionnaires, practical assessments (of your work in a lab, such as a lab report), case studies, presentations, in-class timed tasks, reflective reviews and a theoretical dissertation.

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

Subject Specific:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of all core areas of psychology and counselling.

2. Demonstrate a deeper knowledge of selected core areas of psychology, depending on options selected.
3. Apply multiple perspectives to psychological issues.
4. Integrate ideas and findings across multiple perspectives.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how empirical studies are planned, conducted, communicated, and critiqued when a range of experimental, quasi-experimental and qualitative methodologies are employed.
6. Demonstrate a basic understanding of data and data analysis.
7. Use and critique primary sources and demonstrate an understanding of their application in practice.
8. Use psychology databases.
9. Demonstrate ability to use and understand statistical software packages for the analysis of data.
10. Compare and contrast the main counselling modalities.
11. Demonstrate a deeper knowledge of the psychodynamic modality.
12. Consider the effectiveness of counselling interventions in context.
13. Evaluate a range of interpersonal situations using psychodynamic concepts.

Intellectual:

14. Demonstrate independent and critical thought and the capacity to critically analyse and evaluate ideas and findings.
15. Demonstrate numeracy and high levels of literacy.
16. Demonstrate problem analysis and problem-solving skills.

Practical:

17. Communicate ideas and findings by written oral and visual means.
18. Demonstrate high levels of computer literacy, including word processing and other software packages as well as a capacity to use specialised statistical software packages at a basic level.
19. Demonstrate the skills required to frame a research question; search relevant bodies of literature; manage search results; synthesise the research literature; and write an assessment of the literature that identifies what is known about the area of study; those questions the body of research does not answer; and further research questions important for that field of study.
20. Plan and conduct a review of relevant literature.
21. Apply basic listening skills ethically.
22. Analyse group and organisational dynamics.

Personal and Social:

23. Reflect on and to take responsibility for own learning.
24. Undertake self-directed study and project management.
25. Work effectively in teams.
26. Demonstrate the skills required to pursue post-graduate study and / or training.
27. Demonstrate an enhanced capacity for self-reflection.

Careers and further study

BA Psychological Studies with Counselling graduates will complete their studies with a set of valuable attributes that will support their employability and their preparedness to continue to postgraduate study, for example:

- Computer literacy, including the use of word processing and literature databases.
- The ability to critically analyse and evaluate material.
- Effective oral and written communication skills.

- Independent and critical thinking.
- Problem analysis and problem-solving skills.
- Enhanced relational capacities
- Active listening skills
- Research skills.
- The ability to take responsibility for and to manage own learning and development.
- The ability to work independently and as part of a team.

Psychology graduates are highly employable and can be found across a wide range of sectors and roles, including:

- human health and social work,
- education,
- public administration,
- administration and support service activities,
- the leisure and communications industries,
- the arts, entertainment, and other industries,
- Counselling-related roles and further professional training.

This programme has been designed to offer students a degree that maximises their employability. By offering all students a rigorous introduction to all areas of psychology and counselling at Level 4 and then enabling them to build on this according to their needs and interests, students can create a degree that is specific to their future career plans.

While Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students ([you can find out more on the careers pages of our website](#)), students will also benefit from school level events and guidance in choosing of their modules at Levels 5 and 6.

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.

Pre-requisites:

Clinical and Counselling Psychology – in order to be eligible to study this module, students need to have satisfactorily completed Individual Differences (SCPS160H5).

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. In your first year, you will be given structured support to develop the skills that you need to study effectively. The School of Psychological Sciences also has dedicated learning support staff who are highly experienced in supporting students' learning and who will be able to support you across every year of your studies.

Birkbeck also 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 the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor, have access to a Senior Tutor and will be provided with information about further learning support offered by the College. Please also 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.

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