

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MSc Psychosexual Therapy (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma Psychosexual Studies Postgraduate Certificate Psychosexual Studies NB. These are not clinical qualifications
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London Tavistock Relationships
Home Department/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Centre for Counselling
Location of delivery	Central London (in person)
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time (2 years) October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT)
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u> <u>England</u>	Not applicable.
Birkbeck Course Code	TMSPSYSX_C
HECoS Code	100254
Start date of programme	October 2026
Date of programme approval	October 2025
Date of last programme amendment approval	Not applicable
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Date of last revision to document	30.04.25

Admissions requirements

- A clinical qualification in psychotherapy, counselling, or counselling psychology from a nationally recognised training, such as UKCP, BACP, or BPS.
- Sufficient counselling and academic competencies demonstrating an ability to meet the demands of the course.
- Completed a minimum of two hundred hours of supervised clinical work with individuals or couples prior to applying to the course.
- Appropriate personal qualities (a high degree of reflexivity, capacity to make and maintain close personal relationships, ability to reflect on personal experience).

Successful applicants must have completed one hundred hours of personal therapy, either prior to or during the course. A minimum of 20 hours of therapy is required during training, with sessions starting in the first term. Additionally, at least twenty of those one hundred hours should ideally be conducted with a psychodynamic therapist.

Exceptional Entry:

- Applicants with other qualifications or assessed prior (experiential) learning may be considered for exceptional entry on their merits if the selection panel and the Assessment Board can be satisfied with their clinical and academic competence.
- **Clinical Competence:** evidence of a supervised, clinical caseload seeing adults (couple and/or individual) in talking therapy and a minimum of 200 clinical hours before applying for the course.
- **Academic Competence:** studied a relevant postgraduate degree or diploma or masters level specialist training.
- We require a completed application form and a portfolio demonstrating relevant prior learning and clinical experience. The referees stated on the application form must be able to confirm the applicant's clinical and academic attainment.

Course aims

Academic

- To provide students with the advanced theoretical knowledge required to become professional psychosexual therapists.
- To provide the academic requirements for training leading towards accreditation with the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT).

Clinical/Professional

- To develop the ability to practice psychosexual therapy with couples and individuals and complete 200 clinical hours on a placement during the course.

Self-development

- To develop an analytical understanding of self and other interpersonal dynamics via experiential learning and students' experience of personal psychotherapy.

Course structure

Year 1

Students will study the key psychodynamics of couple therapy, then integrate psychodynamic ideas as part of learning how to conduct an in-depth psychosexual assessment, understand the anatomy and physiology of sexual function and dysfunctions, recognise and diagnose DSM-V and ICD-11 sexual dysfunctions, compile and execute a treatment plan with psychoeducation and the therapeutic interventions required for a couple or individual with sexual dysfunctions and understand how to work clinically within diverse sexual, cultural, religious groups and with individuals who have maybe neurodivergent. Attend clinical skills seminars, where you can practice the techniques needed to work psychosexually and psychodynamically with couples and individuals. Personal development happens in self-reflective groups and their own personal therapy. Tutorials enable learning to be embedded and demonstrated in essays. At the end of the first term, students can apply for a clinical placement within an NHS setting or at Tavistock Relationships to commence clinical work at the start of year two. Students will complete, prior to starting their placement, two case assessments, two role-plays and two reflective commentaries to ensure their knowledge, skills, and competencies are sufficient to commence clinical practice as a trainee psychosexual therapist.

Years 2

Year two integrates the theoretical knowledge of year one into clinical practice within a placement. Seminars deepen clinical technique and research on sex through the life span, focusing on how to assist patients with the unexpected physical, emotional and relational aspects that influence their sex life, such as illness, disability, pharmacological interventions, STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections), fertility, miscarriage, abortion, menopause, vulval pain and ageing as well as how they might work with trans and non-binary patients. Clinical seminars, tutorials and personal therapy continue. Psychosexual therapy competencies and techniques are assessed with a written exam on medical interventions and diagnosis, psychosexual therapy role-play, and, as part of their research, students will present a sexual topic of interest and complete a detailed clinical case study. Students will generally be eligible to qualify as psychosexual therapy clinicians after the completion of 200 clinical supervised hours (a minimum of ten cases, five of which are couples) during the course and a portfolio of clinical work that includes the clinical case study and a summary of six psychosexual cases.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time – 2 Years					
Year 1					
7	SC02009S7	Thinking About and Working with Relationships	30	Core	T1-3
7	SC02010S7	Psychosexual Assessment, Diagnosis and Initial Treatment	30	Core	T1-3
7	SC02011S7	Working within Diversity and with Different Cultural Groups	30	Core	T1-3

Year 2					
7	SC02012S7	Sex through the Life Span	30	Core	T1-3
7	SC02013S7	Psychosexual Therapy Theory and Research	30	Core	T1-3
7	SC02014S7	Psychosexual Therapy Competencies and Clinical Practice	30	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

The organisation of learning and teaching is designed to achieve the course's learning outcomes, which are listed below. As a student, you are encouraged to actively engage in your learning, assume responsibility for it, and participate fully in all the materials and sessions provided for you.

The course comprises various modules. On the virtual learning site (Moodle, refer to the Academic Support below), you can access details about each module, including what to expect, assignments to prepare, reading list links, and information regarding assessment timing and methods.

Seminars, collaborative projects, independent study, evaluated written assignments, case presentations, group presentations with assessment, tutorials, presentation of seminar papers, experiential learning, and seminar papers are all included. Monthly readings of essential texts. Seminars and case discussion groups that introduce psychosexual and psychodynamic theories and advanced skills and techniques combining psychosexual and psychodynamic interventions for specific cases and sexual dysfunction presentations. In-depth discussions on key texts are encouraged.

How we will assess you

The course will incorporate multiple assessment methods. These assessments aim to improve your learning experience instead of just evaluating it. Most modules in this course will use the following assessment types.

Couple and psychosexual research and theory papers discussions, clinical practice and case evaluations and discussions, role-plays, case assessments, clinical supervised hours, a written exam (medical and therapeutic evaluations, interventions and diagnosis) and a clinical case study.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' specify the knowledge or skills you should possess by the conclusion of your course. Outlining these outcomes clarifies the expectations from your seminar leaders and the criteria on which your assessment will be based.

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

Knowledge

- Demonstrate an understanding of advanced psychodynamic theories of the couple relationship.
- Critically evaluate psychodynamic concepts and apply them to the couple relationship and the sexual dysfunction.
- Demonstrate an understanding of core concepts of psychosexual therapy, such as assessment, recognition and a provisional diagnosis of sexual dysfunctions, formulation of factors contributing to the dysfunction, and initial treatments.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the complex anatomy and physiology of arousal, the complexity of presenting critical psychosexual treatments, and their physical and psychological impact on the couple.
- Demonstrate an understanding of organic and medical factors presenting for psychosexual treatment and their physical and psychological impact on the couple or individual.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of intersectionality when working with sexual issues and how to work sensitively with different cultural and community groups, survivors of childhood sexual abuse, shame, trauma, sexual violence, chemsex, porn and sexual compulsion, and individuals and couples who identify as sexually diverse, Non-Binary and Trans.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of sexual health, the effects illnesses, STIs, and HIV have on sexual functioning and how to offer an appropriate psychosexual treatment plan.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to work sensitively with patients who have physical, neurological and psychological disadvantages or physical and biological life transitions – fertility, infertility, postpartum experiences and how these conditions affect sexual functioning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of medical, pharmacology and non-pharmacology interventions and their effects on the physical and psychological impact of an individual or couple's sexual relationship.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to conduct a psychosexual assessment and support the treatment and theoretical approach by researching the latest or foundational research and practice for a specific case.
- Demonstrate understanding of the ethical considerations and legal requirements needed for private practice and clinical placements, ensuring knowledge of the COSRT Code of Ethical Practice.
- Demonstrate a cohesive and critical understanding of learning, theory and practice of psychosexual therapy, treatment interventions, therapeutic relationships and the effect of the trainee therapist on patients.

Thinking skills

- Demonstrate an advanced ability to work with couples utilising appropriate theoretical frameworks and understand the differences when working with couples from a sexually diverse or culturally different background.
- Demonstrate an ability to operate in a clinical setting utilising knowledge of issues governing good practice.
- Demonstrate comprehensive awareness of the implications of working within the current COSRT Code of Ethics and Principles of Good Practice.
- Demonstrate understanding of working online, safeguarding, personal safety, and the legal requirements to practice safely and for the safety of patients.

- Demonstrate an evaluation and reflexivity in thinking when understanding, diagnosing, and treating complex sexual issues, including any contraindications to treatment.
- Identify and consider how to work with sexually diverse patients and those with a different cultural heritage, influence, and sexuality, and understand the context and background of the individuals and apply skills to working ethically with individuals or couples' relationships and their sexual concerns.
- Critically evaluate a presentation of those with a physical disadvantage or mental health concern and how to work sensitively with their condition that might be affecting their sexual function and how to apply skills to working with the individual or couple relationship to improve their sexual satisfaction.
- Independently research a psychosexual topic related to a psychosexual case, create a literature review for the dissertation, and demonstrate reflexive practice as a clinician and research practitioner.
- Creatively use skills, knowledge and experience to deal with complex and unpredictable situations that demand innovative professional thinking and action in practice and use of supervision.

Subject-based practical skills

- Demonstrate independent thinking about relationship issues from a psychodynamic perspective affecting sex in relationships.
- Demonstrate an understanding of learning through therapy, countertransference, and the use of a genogram in practice.
- Demonstrate independent critical thinking and capacity required for case discussions, reflecting on integrating theories through the assessment models and therapeutic interventions and treatment approaches.
- Demonstrate an evaluation and reflectiveness of their own biases – conscious and unconscious – and understand how this might affect the therapeutic approach and treatment of patients from a sexually diverse, culturally different background or for those who have experienced sexual trauma.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse the complexities of patients affected by ill health, dermatological conditions, disability, fertility issues, pregnancy, parenting, menopause, mental and sexual health concerns and how to work sensitively with these patients, offering appropriate psychosexual and behavioural treatments.
- Present and critically analyse a psychosexual case and hypothesis about the nature of a sexual dysfunction and discuss with others the complexity, psychodynamic interpretation and interventions and gain feedback from others.

Skills for life and work (general skills)

- Demonstrate integrated learning as preparation for work as a psychosexual and relationship therapist.
- Demonstrate independent research and critical thinking and capacity to present a psychosexual topic to the group and to compile information for a resource portfolio when working with patients and a multidisciplinary team.
- Critique self-reflective learning and unconscious influences from the course content and clinical experiences through clinical discussions, supervision and self-reflexive journal.
- Demonstrate the use of supervision to reflect on clinical practice, gain guidance, gain clinical and personal experience, and record the hours and items discussed.

Careers and further study

You will find psychosexual therapy graduates in the following roles:

- You will be equipped to work in either the statutory or voluntary sector and as a private practitioner in the field of psychosexual therapy.
- You will be eligible for registration with the College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists (COSRT)
- You will become part of Tavistock Relationship's alumni group, and take advantage of their high-quality CPDs and conferences, which will help you to keep on top of recent developments in the field and to develop your clinical practice further.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on the careers pages of our website: <https://www.bbk.ac.uk/student-services/careers-service>.

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 entire time as a student with us, including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

TR offers a range of CPD events that students can attend. These events connect them to TR's wider learning community and give them further exposure to cutting-edge ideas and clinical practice.

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 expectations 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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