

## Programme Specification

1	<b>Awarding body</b>	University of London					
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Birkbeck College					
3	<b>Programme Title(s)</b>	<b>MSc Health and Clinical Psychological Sciences</b> <b>MA Health and Clinical Psychological Sciences</b>					
4	<b>Programme Code(s)</b>	TMSHACPS_C (MSc) TMAHACPS_C (MA)					
5	<b>UCAS code</b>	N/A					
6	<b>Home Department</b>	Psychological Sciences					
7	<b>Exit Award(s)</b>	PG Cert; PG Dip					
8	<b>Duration of Study (number of years)</b>	1 year FT; 2 years PT					
9	<b>Mode of Study</b>	FT	X	PT	X	DL	
10	<b>Level of Award (FHEQ)</b>	7					
11	<b>Other teaching depts or institution</b>	N/A					
12	<b>Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details</b>	N/A					
13	<a href="#">QAA Benchmark Group</a>	N/A					

14	<b>Programme Rationale &amp; Aims</b>
	<p>The aim of this programme is to offer an introduction to the methods and findings from contemporary health, affective and clinical (including applied neuroscience) psychological sciences, with an emphasis on mixed method approaches. The programme will support students to develop a cross-disciplinary lens and to explore how health and clinical psychological sciences can utilise similar methods and theoretical underpinnings. The programme will enable students from a variety of backgrounds to appraise research in these areas and carry out independent research projects appropriately.</p> <p>The principal educational aims are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an up-to-date grounding in the theories, concepts and empirical findings in health, affective and clinical (including applied neuroscience) psychological sciences</li> <li>2. Provide formal training in quantitative and qualitative research methods, so that students are able to evaluate, plan and conduct research.</li> <li>3. Equip students to apply the scientific and theoretical basis of their studies using a scholarly and critical approach.</li> <li>4. Enable students to disseminate psychological approaches.</li> <li>5. Enable students to develop an ethical approach to their work, so that they can recognise the applicability and limits of their own competence and the models and methods they use.</li> </ol> <p>The programme is designed to be accessible for graduates with a background in psychology, neuroscience and health sciences, and for both full-time students over 1 year and part-time</p>

students over 2 years.

Distinctive features:

- Access to world renowned researchers and facilities with broad international appeal
- Combines Birkbeck's strengths in health psychology, clinical neuroscience and mixed-methods
- Face-to-face teaching, with a part-time (day release) option
- A unique combination of theoretical approaches to studying health (health psychology, applied neuroscience, neuropsychology) that enables an overview of factors contributing to physical and mental health outcomes.

15 **Entry Criteria**

Candidates are normally expected to have a second-class honours degree (2:2) or above in psychology or a related discipline (e.g. neuroscience, nursing or health sciences)..

16 **Learning Outcomes**

***On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to demonstrate:***

**Subject Specific:**

- 1) Knowledge of the different theoretical positions and debates underlying a range of areas within health psychology
- 2) Understanding of the main psychological factors which can influence health, illness and healthcare delivery
- 3) Understanding of the psychosocial/cultural/socioeconomic contexts in which behaviours and healthcare take place
- 4) Knowledge of the main qualitative and quantitative techniques used to conduct research in health psychology and clinical neuroscience
- 5) Practical knowledge of all phases of developing, conducting and reporting a research project
- 6) Knowledge of a wide range of parametric and non-parametric univariate and multivariate statistical procedures, the conditions under which they may reasonably be applied, and how to interpret the results of the procedures
- 7) Understanding of conventions in psychological report writing and the purpose of each section within a research report

**Intellectual:**

- 8) A critical appreciation of contemporary research and research methodologies used across a number of areas within health, affective and clinical (including applied neuroscience) psychological sciences
- 9) Ability to critically evaluate research evidence and of the student's own work
- 10) Ability to formulate research questions and development of appropriate research designs
- 11) Ability to critically evaluate research within its methodological context.
- 12) Understanding of how to design theory based interventions how to evaluate the efficacy of health psychology interventions
- 13) Critical awareness of the similarities and differences in approaches utilised in health

psychology and clinical psychological sciences

**Practical:**

- 14) Effective searching, collating, summarising and reporting on relevant material from appropriate sources in health, affective and clinical (including applied neuroscience) psychological sciences.
- 15) General IT skills, including use of web browsers for research, email, Word, PowerPoint, referencing software
- 16) Subject specific IT skills (familiarity with SPSS)
- 17) Ability to conduct literature reviews using electronic search tools, electronic journals and databases
- 18) Ability to summarise and assess contemporary research succinctly
- 19) Data collection and analysis skills
- 20) Ability to present data in a meaningful way, and to transform it into different presentational formats
- 21) Planning and organizational skills

**Personal and Social:**

- 22) Ability to work with others in small groups on practical research tasks
- 23) Ability to work independently
- 24) Ability to effectively plan and organize coursework and project work
- 25) Effective time management skills
- 26) Effective communication through both written reports and verbal presentations
- 27) An enhanced ability to appreciate (and formulate) a structured argument and to appreciate the theoretical assumptions underpinning such arguments
- 28) An understanding of the relevance of scientific research as reported in the media to everyday questions
- 29) An increased awareness of ethical issues and ethical practice

17 **Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

The programme includes lecture-based theory modules, practical laboratory modules and either a supervised project (MSc) or a directed critical literature review (MA). The teaching styles are matched to the content, and class sizes are kept small or moderate (10–40) to encourage student participation, even in lecture-based modules.

One module (Generic Research Skills) involves small group collaborative learning. The class is split into smaller groups and each group will under the direction of the instructor explore solutions to generic organisational issues such as time management, IPR, organising large amounts of literature. It also involves presenting orally an outline of the student's possible research topic.

Two modules (Advanced Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Methods) feature lectures with laboratory/practical sessions. These provide students with hands-on experience of using statistical software practical experience of using qualitative methods in a relatively self-contained setting.

Five modules (Child Development in a Global Context; Current Challenges in Health; Neurocognitive Processes in Mental Health; Intervention design and evaluation; Neurocases and Clinical Assessment) feature lecturing as well as guided discussion led by one member of academic staff. Students are encouraged to also contribute to the discussion. This provides

	<p>students with an opportunity to raise questions about specific issues or debates.</p> <p>All modules involve self-directed learning in the form of self-paced reading and preparation for each of the sessions.</p> <p>For MSc students the dissertation – a supervised research project – is carried out under the supervision of a member of academic staff with research interests in the area of the project. This provides students with access to a specialist in their project area who can provide expert advice on all aspects of the research. The project also ensures that taught skills are exercised within a constructive environment during the course.</p> <p>For MA students, the dissertation (a directed critical literature review) similarly is supervised by a subject expert.</p> <p>Assessment procedures ensure that students develop a portfolio of work over the duration of the programme, and feedback on coursework for those modules that require it encourages personal development.</p>
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18	<p><b>Programme Description</b></p>
	<p>Students on this programme will complete the following modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generic Research Skills</b> (PSYC0062H7; 15 credits). This module is based on Research Council expectations for postgraduate training and includes topics such as utilising library resources, time management, conference presentation, writing literature reviews, research papers and funding applications. The module is assessed by an oral presentation.</li> <li>• <b>Advanced Quantitative Methods</b> (PSYC077H7; 15 credits). This module covers advanced statistical procedures as employed in experimental psychology. The module is assessed through a series of written worksheets.</li> <li>• <b>Qualitative Methods</b> (PSYC074H7; 15 credits). This course will give Introduce some of the main qualitative approaches now used within psychology and provide practical guidance on conducting qualitative research. Furthermore, it will give students opportunities to engage in practical work with qualitative methods. The module is assessed by a 2000-2500 word essay.</li> <li>• <b>Child Development in a Global Context</b> (SCPS220H7 ; 15 credits). This module covers child developmental from before birth to adolescence, with a focus on the role of environmental influences. As psychology reaches beyond the lab and beyond the WEIRD (white, educated, industrialised, rich, democratic) populations when investigating developmental trajectories, consideration of home, neighbourhood and global environmental influences becomes more and more important. This course will look at the effects of socioeconomic status (SES), resource-availability, social exclusion and poverty on development. There will be a combination of theory, research and interventions covered in this course. The module is assessed by one 2500 word essay</li> <li>• <b>Current Challenges in Health</b> (SCPS214H7; 15 credits). This module covers the role of health behaviours in disease risk and examines different patterns of risk across different sectors of the population. The module will explore the challenges in primary and secondary prevention of disease looking at issues surrounding health communication as well as methods to help people make more informed decisions about their treatment choices. It also examines some of the issues in relation to living with a chronic illness. The module is assessed by one 2500 word essay.</li> </ul>

- **Neurocognitive Processes in Mental Health** (SCPS216H7; 15 credits). This module teaches state of the art cognitive neuroscientific approaches to the understanding of psychopathology and mental health. It integrates the science underlying brain mechanisms of emotional processes and their application to clinical and mental health problems in adults and adolescents. The module is assessed by two 1500 word essays.
- **Neurocases and Clinical Assessment** (PSYC006H7; 15 credits). This module teaches students how lesion approaches can be used to advance the field of cognitive neuroscience. A series of case demonstrations will be given, each of a patient with a circumscribed brain lesion and associated functional deficit. The module is assessed by two 1000-1500-word essays.
- **Intervention Design and Evaluation** (SCPS215H7; 15 credits). This module covers the main theories and methods used in the design and evaluation of health-related interventions in both controlled and real-world situations. The module is assessed through a mini systematic review written up in the style of a 2500 word research article.
- **Dissertation** (PSYC078D7/ SCPS008D7; 60 credits). The final component of the programme is the 60 credit dissertation module. MSc students will be required to complete a research project in an area of health psychology or applied neuroscience and write this up as a report of 10,000 words. Due to issues with obtaining NHS ethics and approvals it is not possible to undertake an project requiring NHS data collection unless ethics/approvals are already in place. MA students will be required to complete a critical literature review on a topic related to health psychology or applied neuroscience and as agreed by their supervisor. This critical review should also be 10,000 words in length. In all cases, the dissertation must be supervised by an academic member of the Department of Psychological Sciences.

Full time students will normally complete the programme in one year and attend lectures on two days per week. It is expected that they will spend up to three days per week completing directed reading and coursework. Part time students will normally complete the programme in two years and attend lectures on one day per week. It is expected that they will spend similar time (pro rata) completing directed reading and coursework.

19	<b>Programme Structure</b>			
<b>Full-Time programme – 1 year</b>				
<b>Year 1</b>				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	PSYC074H7	Qualitative Methods	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC077H7	Advanced Quantitative Methods	15	Core MSc /Compulsory MA
7	SCPS220H7	Child Development in a Global Context	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS214H7	Current Challenges in Health	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS216H7	Neurocognitive Processes in Mental Health	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC006H7	Neurocases and Clinical Assessment	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS215H7	Intervention Design and Evaluation	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC078D7	MSc Dissertation (MSc only)	60	Core
7	SCPS008D7	MA Dissertation (MA only)	60	Core

<b>Part-Time programme – 2 years</b>				
<b>Year 1</b>				
<b>Level</b>	<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Status*</b>
7	PSYC074H7	Qualitative Methods	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC077H7	Advanced Quantitative Methods	15	Core MSc /Compulsory MA
7	SCPS220H7	Child Development in a Global Context	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS214H7	Current Challenges in Health	15	Compulsory
<b>Year 2</b>				
<b>Level</b>	<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Status*</b>
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS216H7	Neurocognitive Processes in Mental Health	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC006H7	Neurocases and Clinical Assessment	15	Compulsory
7	SCPS215H7	Intervention Design and Evaluation	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC078D7	MSc Dissertation (MSc only)	60	Core
7	SCPS008D7	MA Dissertation (MA only)	60	Core

**Status\***

*CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module*

<sup>20</sup>	<b>Programme Director</b>	Beth Grunfeld
<sup>21</sup>	<b>Start Date (term/year)</b>	October 2018 (MSc) October 2019 (MA)
<sup>22</sup>	<b>Date approved by TQEC</b>	Spring 2018
<sup>23</sup>	<b>Date approved by Academic Board</b>	Summer 2018
<sup>24</sup>	<b>Date(s) updated/amended</b>	Jun 2022 (for 2022/3)