



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
Faculty of Health

University of Plymouth

Faculty of Health

School of Psychology

Programme Specification

MPsych (Hons) Advanced Psychology (Stage 5)

Updated following Minor Change for implementation 2020-21

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Final award titles:

MPsych (Hons) Advanced Psychology

Henceforth abbreviated MPsych AP

JACS code: C8 Psychology

HECoS codes:

100497 Psychology

Awarding Institution:	University of Plymouth
Teaching institution(s):	University of Plymouth
Accrediting body(ies)	British Psychological Society (Stages 1-4 only)

1. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

Stage 5 of the MPsych AP forms part of four, interlinked programmes at level 7, which offer advanced treatment of the psychological theories and methods in their chosen area of specialisation.

Students on the 'Advanced Psychology' (AP) awards will gain in-depth and highly specialised expertise with cutting edge theory and methods in their area of interest, using elective modules to tailor their path through the programme to their chosen specialty, undertaking novel research, and extending the boundaries of current knowledge under the guidance of experts. MPsych students complete the same core modules as BSc Psychology students in stages 1-4, and so gain from BPS graduate basis for registration on completion.

Further distinctive features of these programmes are described below:

A thorough, experientially-based training in psychological research methods.

Through core modules in advanced research methods students on all programmes will gain a secure understanding of the theory, application and limitations of quantitative statistical methods for experimental and observational data. Enhanced emphasis will be placed on fluency in data manipulation and visualisation, and in developing insight and understanding for the ways in which assumptions and theory form the basis on which statistics can be used for scientific inference. Specialist techniques (e.g. Bayesian inference, approaches to causal analysis in non-experimental data) will be offered as options, to ensure students can extend this conceptual understanding with practical experience applying specific techniques required in particular research domains. Advanced, training in theoretical and empirical advances in cognitive and brain science, behaviour change, or clinical psychology.

Through the "current issues" and "foundations of clinical psychology" modules students will develop awareness and understanding of new research questions, debates and findings in their chosen field. Elective modules will enable students to extend this knowledge, tailoring their learning according to their specific interests. These modules are cross-cutting in nature, designed to integrate multiple research perspectives and prove relevant in different combinations for a variety of students. For example, modules such as The Brain and its Disorders enable students to explore in detail current knowledge of specific conditions, providing a secure grounding in the neuroscience of clinical approaches to schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Deep and thorough conceptual understanding of chosen areas of study

All aspects of these programmes aim towards deepening conceptual understanding of the theoretical, empirical, and methodological advances in their field. Students' achievements on each module will be assessed entirely through coursework, which will provide a stimulus and opportunity for them to critically evaluate the material covered, to apply it to new problems, and to develop new ideas for future research.

Professionalism and professional identity For all programmes, we shall organise the academic year such that students are encouraged to think of psychological research and practice as an iterative, cyclical process involving: *enquiry, design, technique, communication, practice, and reflection.*

Students will be encouraged to reflect on their learning regularly throughout the year, and tutorial activities will ensure this is integrated within their own research practice. The work undertaken in all modules aims to develop students' critical understanding of research methodology, and apply it to the design of their own research projects.

A considered approach to PT study We have worked with timetabling to ensure that the current MPsych and Stage 5 and MSc PRM can be delivered within a 2-day timetabling footprint, and have been mindful to ensure this is also possible with these new awards. For students on the AP awards, PT study will allow some students to combine PT research assistant or similar work with study, again enhancing their skills and experience and increasing the chance of successfully accessing PhD funding or graduate-level employment on graduation.

As appropriate to masters-level study, students on the AP programmes will be expected to develop their own research ideas and hypotheses, based on a thorough review and understanding of the

relevant literature, and to develop methods and analyses with increasing autonomy, with the support and guidance of a project supervisor. The absolute proportion of students' contributions will necessarily vary depending on the complexity and familiarity of the methods used, but this contribution should be substantially greater than for an undergraduate project.

2. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

There is currently no relevant QAA benchmark group for psychology at masters level, see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects>

3. Programme Structure

The MPsych AP is a 4-year undergraduate masters programme. However, this document relates only to stage 5 of this programme. Stages 1 to 4 remain unchanged from the recent re-approval of the MPsych (Hons) Advanced Psychology that was linked to the new BSc (Hons) Psychology programme (2017). Stages 1-4 of the MPsych programmes confer students with graduate basis for registration (GBR) with the BPS, and are accredited by that body. Further details of BPS registration are included in the separate programme specification for stages 1-4, but we note that stage 5 of the degree does not interact with the BPS registration: students completing stages 1-4 of the MPsych are able to graduate with a BSc (Hons) Psychology, and gain BPS GBR in doing so.

Each column in the table below presents core and elective credits required of students within each programme (related level 7 programmes are also shown for comparison, to enable readers to see how our level 7 courses differ). A blank indicates the module is not available within the programme. The letter E indicates the module is an elective, and may be chosen to contribute the required number of elective credits (specified in the last row). A star represents a required but non-credit bearing module.

We offer a formal part time route in Stage 5 (see below). Because MPsych at stages 1-4 is not available as a PT route, we propose to enrol all students onto the FT MPsych programmes, and allow students to transfer to a PT route only at the end of Stage 4, or during stage 5 under exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the programme lead.

Code	Credits	Title	MPsych Advanced Psychology
PSYC750		Personal and professional development	*
PSYC751	10	Asking psychological questions	10
PSYC752	10	Advanced research design for psychology.	10
PSYC753	20	Data fluency	20
PSYC754	20	Advanced techniques for psychological research	E
PSYC755	10	Advanced Interpretative methods	E
PSYC756	10	Communicating psychological research	E
PSYC771	10	Issues in cognitive and brain science	E
PSYC774	10	Supporting behavior change	E
PSYC791	10	Foundations of clinical psychology	E
PSYC792	10	Understanding clinical interventions	E
PSYC781	60	Advanced Psychology Research Project	60
		<i>Elective credits to select</i>	20

Table 1. Proposed programme structures

Module	Semester1	Semester2
PSYC750	X	X
PSYC751	X	X
PSYC752	X	
PSYC753	X	X
PSYC754	X	X
PSYC755	X	
PSYC756		X
PSYC771	X	X
PSYC774	X	X
PSYC781	X	X
PSYC791	X	
PSYC792	X	X

Typical programme schedule, by-semester.

Arrangements for part time study

Students on the current MSc PRM have an option to study part time which we propose to preserve within these new awards. In contrast with current arrangements, we would strongly suggest that students take the options specified in the table below in each year of study (although alterations could be made with the agreement of the academic lead).

Award	Year 1	Year 2
MPsych (Hons) AP	PSYC750 (0)	PSYC781 (60)
	PSYC751 (10)	20 credits of electives
	PSYC752 (10)	
	PSYC753 (20)	
	20 credits of electives	

4. Programme Aims

These new programmes are designed to meet the descriptors of the QAA's (2008) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for level 7 Master's degree. The aims specific to the programme are presented in the table below (related programmes are also shown for purposes of comparison):

	MPsych AP
Develop a deep understanding and knowledge of specific specialist research areas, and research-informed areas of professional practice in psychology.	X
To equip students with the advanced intellectual, personal and technical skills necessary for their future gainful employment or advancement within their chosen research domain.	X
To develop students' professional ethos and identity within psychology, encouraging the consistent application of evidence-based thinking to novel contexts and problems.	X
To develop students' capability as independent researchers, capable of working autonomously to produce new psychological knowledge	X
To develop a deep and systematic understanding of research methods and techniques which cut-across many areas of psychological research, and to develop specialist expertise in methods that are at the forefront of the particular areas of psychological research.	X

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion, graduates of the MPsych AP should have developed knowledge, understanding, and skills in the following areas: Knowledge and understanding; Cognitive and intellectual skills; Employment related skills; Practical skills; and Transferable skills.

PLO		MPsych
Cognitive 1	Ability to apply specialist methodological knowledge to the design of supervised research.	X
Cognitive 2	Capacity to process and critically evaluate a research complex literature—which may include contradictory or incomplete findings.	X
Cognitive 3	The ability to synthesise ideas and techniques from multiple perspectives, demonstrating insight, understanding, and creativity in their work.	X
Employment 1	Insight and understanding of the value of psychology in the workplace, and the range of career opportunities available to graduates, especially those outside of traditional professional psychological training	X
Employment 2	Reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses, and take responsibility for personal and professional development.	X
Employment 3	Demonstrate expertise in problem solving with technology for different purposes	X
Knowledge 1	Systematic knowledge of the core techniques for quantitative enquiry in psychology, and the theoretical and practical limitations of current approaches and knowledge.	X
Knowledge 2	Understanding and expertise in the application of specialist methods related to the students chosen research and professional interests.	X
Knowledge 3	Advanced understanding of psychological theory and evidence within specialist topics in psychology, including cognitive and brain science, behaviour change, or clinical psychology. Understanding of the interconnectedness of psychological understanding across these loci of enquiry.	X
Practical 1	Fluency and precision in written English.	X
Practical 2	Clarity and confidence in oral presentation	X
Practical 3	Sophistication in manipulating, visualising, analysing and communicating insights from quantitative data.	X
Transfer 1	Explain complex ideas to non-experts, in plain English.	X
Transfer 2	Experience of group and team-working, and of developing and maintaining effective working relationships with supervisors and peers.	X
Transfer 3	Fluency and confidence in visualising and communicating insights from quantitative data.	X
Transfer 4	Capacity to act autonomously to undertake a sustained research project; insight into the nature of research impact and leadership	X

6. Admissions Criteria including APCL, APEL and DS arrangements

Applications to the MPsych are only possible in stage 1, and details are specified in the existing programme documentation, approved as part of the update to the BSc (Hons) Psychology in 2017.

Arrangements for transfer between BSc and MPsych programmes are documented in the Operational specification.

7. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Progression in stage 1-4

Progression arrangements within stage 1-4 of the MPsych are identical to those of the BSc (Hons) Psychology programme, and are defined in the programme specification of that award.

Transfer into the MPsych programmes.

Students may transfer from the BSc (Hons) Psychology or BSc (Hons) Psychology major joint honours programmes. Applications for transfer are welcome at any time during the year, in Stages 1, 2, 3 or 4. Applications must specify either the MPsych AP or MPsych CP. If places are not available for the student's chosen programme, a place on an alternative programme may be offered in its place.

Places will be allocated to suitably qualified students on a rolling basis throughout the year. At the start of each year, programme leads will have the option of reserving a proportion of places in Stage 5 for students demonstrating exceptional academic ability. These places will be offered after the summer panel, and based on applicants rank aggregate marks from Stages 2 and 4.

Students enrolled on a Major programme who wish to transfer at Stage 2 will maintain their enrolment on their Minor until the end of Stage 4, but be allocated a priority place on the MPsych for entry into Stage 5. The MPsych is not available as a top up award for graduates who have already been awarded a bachelor's degree.

Progression from Stage 4 to Stage 5

Students will be required to meet all the requirements of the BSc (Hons) Psychology or joint honours programme, and all of the relevant modules identified as contributing to accreditation by the BPS. Specifically, they must graduate from Stage 4 with an equivalent to a 2ii class award or better.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Students undertaking research dissertations involving members of the public (including patients recruited from the NHS or support groups) need to provide evidence of an up to date DBS check. This will be made evident at induction to Stage 5 to allow students to undertake DBS checks if required.

8. Non-Standard Regulations

Not applicable

9. Transitional Arrangements

Students currently on the MPsych (either via direct entry or transfer in stage 2) will be given the option to either remain on the MPsych AP, or transfer to the new MPsych CP as they prefer. These students also retain the option to graduate at the end of stage 4 with a BSc (Hons) Psychology.

Although the changes to the MPsych AP programme are substantial, the changes do not qualitatively alter the nature of the award and, for students now following the MPsych clinical pathway, substantially increase the depth and range of clinical experience on offer (see separate documentation on the MPsych CP award). Students on the MPsych behaviour change or cognitive pathways likewise have access to most of the same specialist modules available in 2018.

10. Appendix 1 Programme Specification Mapping (PGT): MPsych (Hons) Advanced Psychology

Module		C core E elective	Award Learning Outcomes contributed to (for more information see Section 8)																				Compensation Y/N	Assessment element(s) and weightings [use KIS definition] E1 - exam E2 - clinical exam T1 - test C1 - coursework A1 - generic assessment P1 - practical
			Cognitive & intellectual skills				Employment related skills				Knowledge & understanding				Practical skills				Key & transferable skills					
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
PSYC750	0	C					X	X			X					X			X	X	X		Yes	C1, P1 (Pass/Fail, Pass/Fail)
PSYC751	10	C	X	X	X						X				X								Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC752	10	C	X								X	X			X								Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC753	20	C			X				X		X					X			X				Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC781	60	C	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	No	C1, P1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
PSYC754	20	E							X			X					X						Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC755	10	E	X	X	X						X	X											Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC756	10	E					X	X							X	X	X		X		X		Yes	P1 (100%)
PSYC771	10	E		X	X		X					X	X										Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC774	10	E		X	X								X								X		Yes	C1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail)

PSYC791	10	E		X	X			X					X					X	X		Yes	C1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
Learning Outcomes 120 credits			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Confirmed Award LOs			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		