



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
Faculty of Health

University of Plymouth

Faculty of Health

School of Psychology

Programme Specification

MPsych (Hons) Clinical Psychology (Stage 5)

Updated following Minor Change for implementation 2020-21

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Final award titles:

MPsych (Hons) Clinical Psychology

Henceforth abbreviated MPsych CP

JACS code: C8 Psychology

HECoS codes:

100494 Clinical 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 (Hons) CP forms part of four, interlinked programmes at level 7, which offer advanced training in the methods and application of psychological science, linked to advanced treatment of the psychological theories and methods in their chosen area of specialisation.

Students on the 'Clinical Psychology' (CP) awards will share training in foundational methods for psychological research, forming the basis for a professional career as a clinical psychologist in their role as scientist practitioner. Students will also practice core clinical skills and develop competencies that will prepare them for demanding clinical careers, and a highly competitive job market. MPsych students complete the same core modules as BSc (Hons) 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.

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. PT study is particularly relevant for students interested in clinical careers, and our structured PT routes will enable those returning from clinical roles (e.g. Assistant Psychologist), with the aim of progressing to the DClinPsy, to maintain a balance between study and practice/clinical experience.

We will use innovative and engaging techniques to provide practical training in key clinical skills and competencies. In addition to gaining foundational knowledge of the relevant clinical guidelines and regulations, students will learn within an environment which fosters the development of key attributes of clinicians. Students will be expected to demonstrate the principles of values based practice and to be governed by professional and regulatory codes of conduct and ethics. Reflective practice will be fostered through opportunities to engage in personal and professional development.

Students will work in an environment alongside other clinicians and clinical trainees, and be exposed to a wide range of clinical professionals, along with the DClinPsy trainees, who will provide a model for the attributes and qualities required of learners. Through the school's position in the faculty of Health and Human Sciences, students on the CP awards will also be encouraged to access a wide range of events which extend their learning, including research seminars in the health professions, Schwartz rounds, and other CPD-type events as appropriate to the students' stage and interests.

Through tutorials and reflective practice students will be encouraged to engage with personal and professional development so as to develop an identity as a professional clinical worker. This intensive approach to developing, reflecting on and documenting clinical competencies provides many advantages: students can engage with important clinical skills in a safe environment, with structured and intensive feedback on their performance, and without the complexities and limitations of trying to develop these clinical skills in the workplace, alongside the inevitable competing administrative and financial considerations. Our structured PT routes provide students wishing to gain clinical experience (e.g. to support a future DClinPsy application) at the same time as they study — providing flexibility and choice to students.

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 (Hons) CP 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 Clinical Psychology
PSYC750	0	Personal and professional development	*
PSYC794	0	Professional psychological practice	†
PSYC753	20	Data fluency	20
PSYC755	10	Advanced Interpretative methods	10
PSYC774	10	Supporting behavior change	10
PSYC791	10	Foundations of clinical psychology	10
PSYC792	10	Understanding clinical interventions	10
PSYC793	20	Core Competencies for Clinical Practice in Psychology	20
PSYC783	40	Applied clinical research	40
		<i>Elective credits to select</i>	0

† Note that PSY794 would only be taken by PT students, or those entering for PGDip or PGCert awards.

Module	Semester1	Semester2
PSYC750	X	X
PSYC753	X	X
PSYC755	X	X
PSYC774		X
PSYC783	X	X
PSYC791	X	
PSYC792	X	X
PSYC793	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) CP	PSYC750	(0)	PSYC753	(20)
	PSYC755	(10)	PSYC793	(20)
	PSYC774	(10)	PSYC783	(40)
	PSYC791	(10)		
	PSYC792	(10)		

Students studying CP routes PT (or on the PGCert/Dip routes) will also have the option of enrolling on the zero-credit Professional psychological practice module (PSY794) which will enable those who are working in a suitable clinical post (e.g. Assistant Psychologist) to have this professional practice acknowledged on their transcript (see the relevant module record for more details).

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 CP
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	
To provide a sophisticated understanding of the cultural, social, and regulatory context in which clinical psychology is practiced.	X
To provide students with concrete clinical competencies and experiences --- linked to those defined by relevant regulators --- that will distinguish them as they apply for clinical jobs and professional training.	X

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion, graduates of the MPsych CP 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
Employment 4	Understanding of the roles of psychological professionals in the mental health services. Awareness (and use) of relevant guidelines and standards regarding ethics, boundaries, and interacting with other professionals in an appropriate manner.	X
Knowledge 1	Thorough knowledge and understanding of the core techniques for quantitative enquiry in psychology, and theoretical and practical limitations of current approaches and understanding.	X
Knowledge 2	Understanding and expertise in the application of qualitative and interpretative methods central to much clinical research.	X
Knowledge 3	Broad knowledge and understanding of psychological theories related to current clinical practice and technique.	X
Knowledge 4	Understanding the principles of psychological formulation including the influence of social inequalities.	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
Practical 4	Professional behaviour, with evidence that the trainee conducts themselves in a manner consistent with the role of clinical psychologist, including ethical and values based reflective practice.	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	Understanding of the principles of safeguarding and risk management when working with vulnerable people.	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.

Statement of professional values

Students progressing to Stage 5 of the MPsych CP will also need to demonstrate that they adhere to the values and ethical conduct that is compatible with U.K regulatory bodies (e.g. Health and Care Professions Council, the NHS). Adherence to values and ethical conduct will be assessed via a structured personal statement, to be evaluated by the programme team.

Health and Enhanced Disclosures for CP programmes

Transfers to the MPsych CP are subject to occupational health clearance and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. Failure to meet DBS disclosure will result in the offer being withdrawn. If following an unsatisfactory occupational health assessment or the student reveals a change in health circumstance through the annual declaration, the Programme Lead will need to consult with the Associate Head of School (Teaching and Learning), the student, and the Head of School in order to determine continuation of the programme.

In addition to references, occupational health screening, and DBS checks, students are required to complete a self-declaration form annually regarding any change in their circumstances, on enrolment.

If in the process of the DBS check or students annual declaration, there is any disclosure of a positive criminal conviction, further advice will be sought from the Head of School, Faculty Professional Issues Committee and Associate Head of School (Teaching and Learning) School of Health Professions.

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. Students transferring to the MPsych CP will be required to submit a suitable personal statement and DBS certificate (as described above).

Although the changes to the MPsych 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.

10. Programme Specification Mapping (PGT): MPsych (Hons) Clinical Psychology

Module	Credits	C core E elective																					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		Yes	C1, P1 (Pass/Fail, Pass/Fail)
PSYC753	20	C			X				X								X				X		Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC755	10	C	X							X				X									Yes	C1 (100%)
PSYC774	10	C					X						X	X	X					X	X		Yes	C1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
PSYC783	40	C	X	X					X		X	X			X	X	X		X	X			No	C1, P1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
PSYC791	10	C			X		X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	Yes	C1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
PSYC792	10	C		X	X					X			X	X	X			X			X	X	Yes	C1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail)
PSYC793	20	C					X	X	X	X				X				X	X	X	X	X	No	C1, P1, A1 (100%, Pass/Fail, Pass/Fail)
Learning Outcomes 120 credits			X	X	X		X	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	X	X	X	X		

