

MSc Psychology (Distance Learning) Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/psychology-distance-learning/>

Academic Year	2024/25
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	Final and Interim Award(s)
FHEQ Level 7	MSc Psychology
FHEQ Level 7	Postgraduate Diploma Psychology Studies
FHEQ Level 7	Postgraduate Certificate Psychology Studies
Variants	12 months full-time/24 months part-time
Degree Awarding Body	University of Bradford
Faculty	Management, Law and Social Sciences
Partner, Delivery Organisation and/or Support Provider(s) <i>(if applicable)</i>	Not applicable
Accrediting Body <i>(if applicable)</i>	If applicable, if not, add not applicable
External Frameworks/ Reference Points <i>(if applicable)</i>	QAA subject benchmark for Psychology: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-psychology.pdf?sfvrsn=6935c881_15 https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Undergraduate%20Accreditation%20Handbook%202019.pdf
Date of Original Approval	June 23
Date of Publication <i>(see Review/Modification Schedule for any version updates)</i>	June 23

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

PROGRAMME AIMS

Aims/Outcomes

At the end of this programme you will be able to:

apply scientific principles generally, though specifically in understanding the mind, brain, behaviour and experience and the complex interactions between these.

present multiple perspectives and consider the inter-relationship of psychological knowledge in a way that fosters critical evaluation.

evaluate the role of empirical evidence in the creation and constraint of theory as well as how theory guides the collection and interpretation of data.

apply ethical principles and a range of research skills and methods to the investigation of experience and behaviour, culminating in the ability to conduct research independently.

critically evaluate theory, research findings, and recognise the transformative nature of psychology as well as its real-life applications.

apply employability-related and personal transferable knowledge and skills to be able to progress to further advanced study in psychology, psychology-related employment or to move into employment or further study that do not require psychology subject specific skills.

apply the principles of psychological literacy by demonstrating an awareness of self and others and developing the potential to become ethical, socially, and environmentally responsible participants in their communities/society, beyond university and employment.

This MSc Psychology (Distance Learning) programme is an innovative online learning addition to the Department of Psychology's existing campus-based portfolio. The Division of Psychology is located within the Faculty of Management, Law and Social Sciences and offers several programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Teaching excellence is a priority for the Faculty of Management, Law, and Social Sciences (FMLSS), and several divisions hold QAA subject review scores at the top of the ranking scales. Teaching is informed and supported by a commitment to research; the departmental staff consists of researchers who bring expertise from their ongoing academic studies to their teaching.

This MSc Psychology (Distance Learning) programme will appeal to students who want to achieve Graduate Membership to the British Psychological Society (BPS) to

further their career but cannot attend a traditional campus. Students who have a non-BPS accredited undergraduate degree (in any subject) can study the MSc Psychology (Distance Learning) programme and then apply for Graduate Membership of the BPS (If they achieve an overall pass mark of at least 50 per cent and at least 50 per cent in the dissertation module). This membership is currently a requirement for most postgraduate training in professional psychology (e.g., clinical psychology, educational psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, counselling psychology) and is highly regarded in many psychology related professions.

Students will follow a core syllabus in psychology set by the BPS and will take 180 credits of study over 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time). The programme will be taught asynchronously, so that students do not need to attend any live sessions and can study at a time that suits them. It will also consist of 'bite-size' learning units, so that students can engage with the materials as and when they have time. Thus, the programme will appeal to students who are working, and/or have a family or other caring responsibilities. Students will benefit from a personal study plan, which will map out their learning journey in advance. They will be part of a digital community and engage in group work and discussions with their peers. They will have a dedicated Programme Leader, Module Tutors, and Personal Academic Tutor who will support them personally and academically through their studies. They will experience innovative teaching methods and opportunities for formative feedback that will scaffold their progression through to their summative assessments. They will also have expert technological and administrative support to ensure clear and consistent access to learning materials. Students will carry out their final dissertation under the direct supervision of an experienced member of the academic team. All dissertation supervisors are research active, and students will have the opportunity to work on an ongoing research project in the supervisor's area of expertise. A graduate from the proposed programme would have a great starting point for a career in both science and the arts. Graduates would be equipped with many skills and have opportunities with a diverse range of employers. The scientific aspects of the programme, including the application of a reasoned approach, problem solving and manipulation of data, provide useful tools for careers in healthcare, law enforcement, finance, IT, and research. Knowledge of human behavior and motivation, ability to critically analyze a problem, formulate a considered response, create an argument, and generate new ideas lend themselves well to careers in the creative industries, the legal sector, government administration, and education.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this programme, students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following learning outcomes:

1. To be eligible for the award of Degree of Master at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to

2. Demonstrate a thorough and critical understanding of core subject areas, as defined by the British Psychological Society. Critically evaluate empirical evidence and published work in psychology.
3. Evaluate evidence from multiple psychological perspectives to develop contemporary an understanding of cross-cutting debates in psychology.
4. Apply qualitative and quantitative approaches appropriately and competently in research design and critically appraise the epistemological assumptions and limitations of these approaches.
5. Communicate complex ideas efficiently and clearly using a range and variety of formats, to different audiences.
6. Demonstrate high standards of digital literacy to identify, retrieve, critically evaluate, and synthesise relevant sources.
7. Work effectively with others to share ideas, problem solve, and convey information with clarity.
8. Demonstrate an awareness of future career opportunities and challenges in relation to academic and professional self-development.
9. Demonstrate critical understanding and application of professional standards relevant to the discipline of psychology (e.g., ethics and professional codes of conduct).
10. Demonstrate the ability to analyse, interpret, and use numerical, textual, and other forms of data.
11. Develop and present structured, coherent, evidence-based arguments, and deal with complex issues both systematically and flexibly.
12. Demonstrate autonomous learning, time management, self-reflection, and project planning skills.
13. Undertake self-directed study and demonstrate project planning skills, initiative, and the ability to make decisions in complex situations in order to meet desired objectives.
14. Independently design and conduct an empirical research project under appropriate supervision. and demonstrate advanced understanding of the final dissertation presentation. and communicate this to professional standards.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

The University welcomes applications from all prospective students and most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this programme.

This qualification is specifically designed for students if they have not gained a BPS accredited Psychology undergraduate degree. This conversion award enables students to demonstrate the core competencies required by the BPS and allows students upon graduation to access a career path in further professional psychology. However, the BPS is a British organisation, so this conversion qualification is not usually relevant for international students unless students intend to gain employment in a relevant field in the UK.

Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

- A degree (2:2 or above) which has not been accredited by the BPS (for the MSc)
- GCSE maths and English at grade 4 (old grade C) or above (or equivalent)

The current tariff and accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme, is published at <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/psychology-distance-learning>.

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or mature students (those over 21 years of age on entry) with significant relevant experience.

Recognition of Prior Learning If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme.

If students choose to study for the MSc in Psychology, they will undertake a total of 180 credits, including a 60 credit Psychology Masters Dissertation module (PSY7008-E). The MSc in Psychology confers eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership with the British Psychological Society provided the empirical project is passed and a minimum overall mark of 50% is achieved.

N.B. eligibility for interim/exit award will be determined on credit obtained only.

Stage 1

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credit	Study Period	Module Code
7	Research Methods and Ethics	Core	30	Sem 1	PSY7028-C
7	Social Psychology and Lifespan Development	Core	30	Sem 1	PSY7029-C
7	Cognitive Psychology, Psychobiology, and Neuroscience	Core	30	Sem 2	PSY7030-C
7	Clinical Psychology, Mental Health, & Wellbeing	Core	30	Sem 2	PSY7031-C
7	Dissertation in Psychology (F/T)	Core	60	Sem 3	PSY7032-E

Stage 1

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credit	Study Period	Module Code
7	Research Methods and Ethics	Core	30	Sem 1 23/24	PSY7028-C
7	Cognitive Psychology, Psychobiology, and Neuroscience	Core	30	Sem 2 23/24	PSY7030-C
7	Clinical Psychology, Mental Health, & Wellbeing	Core	30	Sem 3 23/24	PSY7031-C
7	Social Psychology and Lifespan Development	Core	30	Sem 1 24/25	PSY7029-C
7	Dissertation in Psychology (P/T)	Core	60	Sem 2 & 3 24/25	PSY7033-E

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY TEACHING & LEARNING APPROACHES

This programme has been designed with the University of Bradford's new Learning and Teaching Student Experience Strategy in mind. So, for example the programme will:

- Be an inclusive curriculum, that engages students in applying research and evidence throughout their career and promoting life-long learning.
- Incorporate universal design principles to engage students in learning material in a variety of different ways, with as many formats and options as possible.
- Provide an inclusive experience of online distance learning by allowing students a clear, supported, digital learning journey that they can access easily at a time that suits them.
- Integrate opportunities for formative feedback from both peers and tutors throughout all modules that build up to final assessments and include consideration of diversity in every assessment rubric.

- Establish an inclusive community by creating a series of induction events to create connections between staff and students; encouraging students to take part in discussions and forums to build the programme identity, and reflect on their own, and each other's progression.

Students will start their studies with a clear learning pathway to avoid confusion and reduce technological difficulties. A series of induction events will ensure that all students understand the 'what, why, where, and how' of their personal journey. Module leaders will create a timeline within their VLE using storyboarding, this will enable students to identify their position in the module timeline as soon as they log in to Canvas. The module tutor will also be able to see where each student is on their timeline, which students are struggling and why. They will give frequent feedback to the whole cohort, to groups that are working together and to individual students. In this way students will be able to 'place' themselves and their progress. The responsiveness of the module tutor will create a feeling of been seen and known which accelerates the learning and creates more positive engagement, and the process builds on itself. The idea is to build a virtual learning environment that is not a lonely, disconnected place.

Contact time will mainly be with the module tutors, as they will be facilitating the subject level learning and taking on the PAT role. Module Tutors will have weekly online office hours on Teams that students can book into and will also hold live drop-in sessions for each module. Module Tutors will also provide email support to students who cannot access office hours or drop-in sessions. The dissertation supervisor will also spend significant period of time working with the students on their final piece of research. There will also be contact time with the Programme Leader (e.g., during induction sessions and regular drop-in sessions) and if needed, contact with administrative support and technological support. Students will have access to the University of Bradford's online library, including academic databases. All core texts and reading materials for the modules will be provided as e-books and online resources that students can download. Students will receive training at the start of their programme in how to use the online resources and provided with support from the library throughout their studies.

Structured self-study will be integral part of the programme as students will be accessing all material asynchronously. Maintaining focus and being disciplined are the main concerns that students have around online learning. Therefore, every module will be comprised of 'bite-size' pieces that will be accompanied by an estimated time that the student is expected to spend on it. This will help students manage the learning alongside their everyday lives and allow them to achieve (e.g., they might listen to a 20-minute audio blog while driving to work; or spend 20 minutes watching a video, or reading a paper, while dinner is in the oven). The manageability of this approach will enable students to progress easily through their learning journey. At the end of each week, students will complete 'self-study reflection' activities on Canvas to gauge their progress. Module Tutors will also be able to evaluate students' progress this way and provide additional support if necessary.

Typical Study Week (Part-time students)

Module	Online Resources (5 hours)	Self-Study (15 hours)	Total Study Time
Research Methods & Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audio blog (1 x 20 minutes) - Bite Size Pre-recorded Lectures (2 hours: 6 x 20 minutes) - Video Instruction (1 x 20 minutes) - Pre-recorded Workshop Tutorials (2 hours: 6 x 20 minutes) - Reflection blog (1 x 20 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading (4 hours: 12 x 20 minutes) - Peer Discussion (1 hour: 3 x 20 minutes) - Online activities (3 hours: 9 x 20 minutes) - Writing drafts (4 hours: 12 x 20 minutes) - Q & A activity (1 hour: 3 x 20 minutes) - Self-Study Reflection (2 hours: 6 x 20 minutes) 	20 hours (minimum)

Opportunities for reflection will be embedded in every module. Every module will also use ‘touch points’ to facilitate reflection and help student's think about what they know and how their perspective has changed (e.g., at different points during the video or blog). Structuring learning around active research or case studies will also help bring ideas to life and students will be encouraged to reflect upon and share their own experiences on discussion boards and in group work.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND FEEDBACK

The programme assessment design has been specifically created to support distance learning students:

- Overall, there is an inclusive assessment strategy in place that anticipates the diverse needs and abilities of students, anticipating that many disabled students may choose to study via distance learning. For example, there will be a variety of online assessment methods, designed to develop and showcase a wide range of skills: posters, recorded presentations (individual and group); coursework; lab reports; case studies; video logs; open book time-limited exams; MCQs. Each module will include a pre-recorded session dedicated to assessment preparation as well as a live Drop-In session with the Module Tutor and a Frequently Asked Questions section on Canvas. Students will be given examples of work so they can understand what they are working towards. They will also be given guidelines on when to expect their assessment results and how to access their feedback. As recommended by Universal Design for Learning, there will also be assessment options wherever possible, so that students can choose an assessment method that best suits their aptitude and skills.

- Formative feedback will be a crucial part of this distance learning journey and will be embedded into every module to help students 'stay on track'. It will include a variety of different formats to give students the opportunities to reflect on their progress and development (e.g., asynchronous 'voice' boards, where students post audio messages, and their module tutors and peers reflect upon them with their own audio postings)
- In the form of summative assessments, students will receive prompt and helpful feedback about their performance in relation to assessment criteria so that they can appropriately direct their subsequent learning activities. Students will be given a standard feedback structure across all modules to provide continuity and avoid confusion. This will be comprised of detailed rubric responses plus a section of free text (e.g., three things that were done well and three things that could be improved upon next time).
- Where reasonable adjustments will be made for students with Learning Support Profiles (LSPs), these will apply to the process of assessment, and not to the learning outcomes being assessed. For example, a student with a learning difficulty such as dyslexia may have an LSP that allows them flexibility around deadlines.
- Students who face exceptional circumstances that affect their ability to complete assessments will have the opportunity to apply for extensions or Extenuating Circumstances. These evidence-based applications will ensure that students who have exceptional circumstances are not unfairly disadvantaged.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The aim of this programme is to allow students from all backgrounds to succeed and facilitate understanding of under-representative viewpoint within the field of psychology. Overall, the following EDI factors have been considered in the design of this programme:

Inclusive Teaching Practice
 Inclusive Curriculum Practice
 Student Engagement
 Inclusive Assessment
 Mental Well-being

The programme has also been designed with Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion as core principles. For example, modules such as Research Methods and Ethics in Psychology; Social Psychology and Lifespan Development; and Cognitive Psychology, Psychobiology, and Neuroscience, will critically examine core knowledge and practices in psychology, question the monolithic voice within the area, and investigate whose voice is not being heard. Importantly, these modules will explore *how* said voices can be brought to the forefront.

In anticipation of this, in every module the teaching, learning and assessment activities have been designed to allow **all** students to draw on previous lived experience, reflect on the experiences of others, develop skills required for future employment, and develop a course 'identity.' For example,

- The modules will implement a range of teaching approaches and learning activities that are accessible and encourage active participation of all students. The online nature of the programme offers opportunities to make full use of learning technologies to present information in different ways (e.g., the 'learning units' with each module will be built up from a mixture of video and audio recordings, blogs, vlogs, readings, Q&A sessions, voice boards, workbooks, and other peer activities). Student will receive training on the use of these technologies and will be provided with support throughout their studies.

- Students will be provided with opportunities for empowerment and engagement and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching approach(s) will include peer feedback and small group work to embed shared experiences and reflection into each module (these will be designed to be asynchronous so as not to disadvantage any students, though live contact between students will be possible). Support for students will be provided via peers, via their Personal Academic Tutor (from the additional hours allocated), and from the University's Academic Skills Advice team.

To ensure students understand the wider applications of the topics they are learning, students will be given opportunities to relate course content to their own experiences and share with their module tutors and peers (e.g., through text, audio, and video discussion boards), therefore, encouraging empathy towards diverse perspectives and interpretations. Students will also be encouraged by the Module Tutors to consider alternative viewpoints and experiences as part of every module, so that EDI is embedded throughout the programme. Finally, the programme leader will promote strategies for dealing with mental health crises or seeking support for personal difficulties so that the mental wellbeing of all students is at the forefront.

PLACEMENT/STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

N/A

REGULATIONS

This Programme conforms to the standard University Regulations which are available at the following link:

http://www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations

EXTERNAL FRAMEWORKS

QAA FHEQ Framework for HE Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies:
<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

QAA Subject Benchmark for Psychology:
<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-psychology.pdf>

British Psychological Society Standards for the Accreditation of Undergraduate, Conversion, and Integrated Masters Programmes in Psychology:
<https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Undergraduate%20Accreditation%20Handbook%202019.pdf>

REVIEW/MODIFICATION SCHEDULE

Date	Review/Modification Activity Since last Publication
April 2024	Annual changes for 2024 academic year