

## Programme Specification

### Masters, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate in Child Development, Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience, Psychology and Health Inequalities, Applied Social and Political Psychology

This programme specification applies from September 2021 onwards.

Information for students: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It is reviewed and updated every year as part of Keele's Annual Programme Review process. The document aims to clarify to potential and current students what you can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.

<b>Names of programme(s):</b>	MSc Child Development MSc Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience MSc Psychology and Health Inequalities MSc Applied Social and Political Psychology
<b>Mode of study:</b>	Full time / part time
<b>Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award:</b>	7
<b>Duration:</b>	One year full time / two years part time / up to five years modular

Details of professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) (if appropriate):

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/courseaccreditedbyprofessionalbodies/>

This course is not part of a system of professional accreditation.

External Examiner(s) names: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/>

## 1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

All our psychology MSc programmes are designed to prepare you for a PhD in Psychology and other psychology-related careers. You will have the opportunity to specialise in your chosen area as well as engaging in general research methods training and becoming familiar with contemporary issues in psychology.

Awareness of one's own progress and learning is a central aspect of the programmes, and reflexivity is assessed by the Skills Audit in PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design (which is completed twice, to stimulate further reflection) and the Reflective Blog for PSY-40037 Contemporary Issues in Psychology. The ability to reflect on your own position in their work is a central element of the PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods module and is part of the Research Report for PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship module.

The modules are intended to link together and complement each other. For example students are assigned a Research Apprenticeship on the basis of their formative Skills Audit which forms part of PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design. This helps to ensure the Research Apprenticeship helps students address the personal skills development needs. Students can focus on areas that interest to them in their PSY-40045 Dissertation work and when choosing topics and methods for PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods and PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods. This help to bring strong coherence across the programmes. However, the principle of work not being assessed twice either across and within modules is important so that work from other modules does not overlap with material presented in the final PSY-40045 dissertation itself.

Specialist psychological training provided by research-active tutors is a defining feature of all of our Psychology MSc programmes. The modular structure has been in place in the School since 2004 with new programme specialisms being introduced on a flexible basis to account for changes and developments in staff expertise and in the discipline more widely. We include more traditional areas of psychology (Child Development and Cognitive Psychology), as well as emerging areas of psychology (Psychology and Health Inequalities, Applied Social and Political Psychology, and Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience).

The programmes have been designed to ensure students can focus on their specialist interests and tailor their studies to suit their research interests and development goals in as many modules as possible:

- Advanced Study Modules in Child Development, Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience, Health Inequalities and Applied Social and Political Psychology modules give all students a double-weighted intensive module in semester 1 dedicated to exploring current theory and practice in their chosen specialism. These modules are taught in small groups to stimulate debate and discussion with research-active staff who are experts in their field.
- In semester two students can choose which research methods module is most suitable for developing their research interests and skills (PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods or PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods).
- Within the Qualitative Methods Module, students can choose to explore different types of qualitative analysis depending on their past experience and topics and methods they wish to learn more about. Each student conducts research that is similar in scale but is based on a topic aligned with their research interests, using approaches and skills they are keen to develop.
- Within HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis, once students have covered the basic statistical tests they can choose which, of a selection of advanced tests, they would find most relevant to explore in further detail.
- PSY-40045 Dissertation research will vary in terms of topic, theory and method across different routes and areas chosen, and while the final dissertation report conforms to the same basic structure its contents and precise format may vary. Students will select their topic, in consultation with their supervisor, based on their specialist research interests.
- In PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology students work with members of staff as part of their research teams on active research projects. They are allocated to an apprenticeship based on the specific skills or areas they have identified for personal development. These will complement and extend their areas of specialist knowledge and interest.

The programmes are taught mainly by members of the School of Psychology. Through a combination of subject-specific and broad-based modules, students are trained in research methodologies and in transferable employment-related skills. The overall aims of the programmes are as follows:

- To equip you to formulate and conduct psychological research projects;

- To develop your knowledge of different theoretical perspectives, philosophical traditions and methodological approaches to psychology;
- To enable you to understand the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods and different forms of data, and to evaluate their appropriateness for different research problems;
- To enable you to define and formulate research questions and testable hypotheses, and to design appropriate research to answer these questions using relevant methods of data collection, consistent with British Psychological Society principles of ethics and research governance;
- To provide you with knowledge of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and data analysis techniques;
- To provide you with a range of opportunities to engage with advanced research in substantive areas relevant to their own research topic and to the discipline of psychology;
- To provide you with opportunities to enhance and develop your written and communication skills, independent learning skills, and critical reflection and evaluation skills.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

The psychology MSc programmes are intended to facilitate learning and development across four broad categories: knowledge and understanding of applied psychological research; subject-specific skills pertinent to each specific MSc programme; more general intellectual skills commensurate with a higher university degree; and transferable skills such as would be required across a broad range of careers. Specific intended learning outcomes are listed below. Unless otherwise stated the learning outcomes apply to all programmes.

### A. Knowledge and understanding of psychological research

- A1. Key theoretical issues in psychological research
- A2. Empirical methodologies used to explore key issues in psychological research
- A3. Core concerns of contemporary researchers in psychology
- A4.a. The range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that inform research in Applied Social and Political Psychology
- A4.b. The research evidence relevant to advanced scholarship in Child Development research and practice
- A4.c. The range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that inform research in Psychology and Health Inequalities
- A4.d. The research evidence relevant to advanced scholarship in Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience

### B. Subject-specific skills

- B1. To evaluate particular methodologies in relation to research questions
- B2. To conduct a literature review of a chosen topic within the specialist field of Applied Social and Political Psychology, Child Development, Psychology and Health Inequalities, or Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience.\*
- B3. To develop a set of research questions or hypotheses for investigation
- B4. To design a method for addressing a set of research questions or hypotheses
- B5. To carry out an empirical study in psychology
- B6. To apply appropriate analysis of data collected
- B7. To report the results of an empirical study, applying skills of presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings that are appropriate within the field of Applied Social and Political Psychology, Child Development, Psychology and Health Inequalities, or Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience. \*

\* As appropriate for each MSc programme

### **C. Intellectual skills**

- C1. To identify and evaluate different theoretical approaches to practical problems in psychological literature
- C2. To critically evaluate research literature in psychology and relate research issues to real life problems
- C3. To use scientific research principles to develop research questions or hypotheses
- C4. To use scientific research principles to select appropriate techniques of experimental design and analysis to research questions or hypotheses
- C5. To show appropriate intellectual and personal reflexivity through the evaluation of research experiences and by identifying strengths and weaknesses for future development

### **D. Transferable skills**

- D1. Communicate effectively using appropriate verbal, visual, graphic, IT and written means depending on the audience
- D2. Demonstrate the ability to learn independently, using a range of information sources and approaches
- D3. Manage time effectively and work to deadlines
- D4. Use digital and electronic communication techniques, hardware and software, including word-processing, spreadsheets, email and internet
- D5. Work in teams, either as a leader or as a member of a team
- D6. Employ scientific methods and the analysis of evidence in the solution of problems
- D7. Learn to improve work based on written feedback from tutors on drafts
- D8. Sort and manipulate data
- D9. Present data in a variety of ways

### **Keele Graduate Attributes**

Engagement with their chosen programme will enable students to further develop their intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Whilst you undoubtedly will have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to develop further as a well-rounded postgraduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in during and after your studies at Keele. We outline below how these attributes are developed in the Keele Psychology Masters Degrees.

*An open and questioning approach to ideas:* Keele staff are renowned for our friendliness and openness. Masters teaching is carried out mostly in small groups or via one-to-one supervision. This means that meaningful group discussions can be had where students aren't intimidated to speak out. It's all about ideas, curiosity and clear thinking. It's what University was meant to be.

*Appreciating the value of your chosen subject:* Psychology is a diverse discipline, and this is illustrated by the range of psychology masters programmes available at Keele. These are the MScs in Child Development, Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience, Psychology and Health Inequalities, and Applied Social and Political Psychology. Psychology also is very readily applied to life and work. As you get to grips with current research topics in these areas you will appreciate how psychology can be applied to diverse challenges like applying for a job, conflict resolution, parenting, problem solving, and many others.

*Information literacy:* 21st century life comprises a cacophony of competing information. Completing psychology assignments will greatly develop your information literacy. These include essays, where you discuss thinking and ideas; research proposals where you suggest methods of developing current thought; research reports where you present research that directly informs contemporary debates; and presentations where you make use of presentational software. Studying psychology at Keele will make you a knowledgeable citizen with the ability to locate, evaluate and synthesise large amounts of frequently conflicting information, ideas and data.

*Problem solving:* Psychology is a hands-on discipline and problem solving is at the forefront of the psychology masters programmes. The MSc dissertation module, where you carry out a piece of original psychology research, the Research Apprenticeship modules where you experience working with a member of staff acting as a research mentor, and the Research Methods modules all encourage students to solve problems creatively using a range of different approaches and techniques. Importantly, they also allow you to practice deciding which techniques are appropriate for any particular issue at hand.

*An appreciation of the implications of your studies:* Clearly studying does not take place in a vacuum. The choices that you make in what and where you study will impact on others. Keele takes this subtle aspect of university life seriously. Keele has developed a policy to reduce environmental impacts, including waste minimisation and energy management. Psychology, being the study of people, has its own responsibilities to ensure that any research carried out treats human participants with respect and dignity throughout. The School of Psychology has its own Research Ethics Committee overseeing student research. As a Keele Masters student you will be introduced and closely guided through this very important aspect of Psychology.

*The ability to communicate clearly and effectively:* To become effective agents in both professional and personal life, it is crucial that Keele graduates are able to go out into the world with the skills to be able to communicate clearly and effectively in written and verbal forms for different purposes and to a variety of audiences. As a Psychology Masters student at Keele you will make verbal presentations to an audience of peers in the Dissertation module, and will be guided in producing around ten pieces of written work throughout the programme.

*Developing knowledge, skills, motivation and self-confidence:* That knowledge and skills develop as a consequence of doing a Masters almost goes without saying; certainly these have been covered in the earlier sections of this document. We enjoy seeing our students' self-confidence grow as they meet the challenges that are set throughout the Masters programme in the shape of the regular assignments. This climaxes when you spend the summer working solely on the research dissertation. This is a piece of original psychology research that you will choose and develop yourself, under the close one-to-one supervision of a member of academic staff with appropriate expertise. Developing and owning your research project promotes students' motivation and self-confidence.

*Responsible participation in one's communities:* We make it very clear as part of the student induction process that Masters level study requires you to be an active learner. Academic staff are presented as resources that the student must decide how best to use rather than as teachers dictating what and how learning should be. Students quickly catch on to this and, in so doing, become responsible participants in the university community. It is empowering and eye-opening when the students begin to see academic staff as like themselves – very knowledgeable in some areas and less so in others – but always ready for the challenge of exploring new frontiers. This sets the students up with the ability and motivation to participate responsibly and collaboratively as active citizens in the communities in which they go on to live and work.

*A professional and reflective approach:* The tutors on the MSc psychology programmes strive to set a good example for professional life that our students can follow. As psychologists, we are fascinated by people and know very well the importance of treating others with empathy, care and respect. Our code of ethics,

enforced by the School of Psychology research ethics committee, exposes the students to these personal qualities. As future professionals it is important that our students graduate with qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity and self-regulation. Opportunities for you to participate on Student Staff Voice Committee, Programme Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee, as well as roles around organising social events ensure that all psychology Masters students have the opportunity to develop these attributes.

*Flexibility:* If there's one certainty in life it is that uncertainty usually is not far from us. Therefore it is crucial that our graduates have the flexibility to thrive in rapidly changing and uncertain external environments and the ability to update their skills and knowledge as circumstances require. Teaching psychology at Keele we recognise the importance of research methods skills by including both a qualitative and a quantitative research methods module in the programme. This ensures that our students become empowered to evaluate new information and ideas, so you can keep up with contemporary issues in psychology, and more widely, throughout your careers and lives.

The Graduate Attributes have been developed to reflect current practice at Keele and you may find them useful to draw on when you have completed the programme in preparing applications for jobs or further study.

## **2. How are the Programmes taught?**

Across the programmes, students experience a range of different learning and teaching methods. Each module has different prescribed learning activities, including formal lectures and seminars, discussion and consultation with staff and laboratory and practical work. Full time and part time students all study together for the taught/seminar/class discussion elements of the programmes, but in certain modules part-time students have more extended deadlines to enable them to complete work without placing too much burden on them. Attendance is compulsory at all teaching sessions.

The most common form of teaching and learning is one-to-one supervision, which forms the basis of the Dissertation module and is involved in other modules. This is supported by a range of different group sizes and teaching methods so that students can benefit from different teaching and learning contexts in the rest of their programme. For example, the Research apprenticeships involve students working either one-to-one or in small groups with a staff member, perhaps as part of a wider research team which might include other Psychology staff, staff from elsewhere in the university or external collaborators, research assistants, research students and undergraduate students. The research methods modules (Advanced Research Skills and Design, Qualitative Research Methods, Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis and Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods) bring students from across our MSc programmes together to explore new ways of working and learn advanced skills. This enables practical activities to form a central part of teaching and learning on these modules.

Our students gain valuable hands-on expertise of design, critical reviewing, planning, analysis and interpretation with a combination of tutor-led lectures, group discussions, practical activities and individual feedback. For example, in Contemporary Issues in Psychology students attend research presentations by School staff and external visitors as if they were at a conference, participate in guided discussions on the work they have heard, and blog individually on their experiences and reflections as a result of being exposed to a breadth of traditions and approaches. We see students as a valuable resource for one another so teaching and learning involve discussing, working closely with and listening to other students in many modules. Students will also be involved in independent study involving identifying and reading literature and published research from textbooks, academic journals and other relevant sources.

The philosophy of MSc study is to encourage students to develop independent and critical thinking skills that can be applied flexibly to a range of situations, culminating in their independent research for their Dissertation. The programmes begin with more structured modules such as the Advanced Study modules and Contemporary Research in Psychology where regular meetings encourage ongoing processes of reflection, and expose students to a range of material such that they are able to identify and evaluate different approaches to psychological problems. Group work fosters students' abilities to work in teams, manage their time effectively and communicate effectively. Block teaching in long sessions helps enable students to focus on core topics in depth, and workshop activities in the methods modules provide the subject specific skills identified in section B of the Intended Learning Outcomes above which students then apply in the Dissertation module.

The programmes are taught by highly qualified staff with specialist qualifications in Psychology, and Teaching Fellows who provide learning support. All members of academic staff have doctorates (PhDs or the equivalent) in psychology or closely related areas and most hold (or are completing) qualifications in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Membership of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) is encouraged in the School; several members of staff are currently either Fellows or Senior Fellows of the Academy and one staff member is a Principal Fellow.

All Psychology staff are active researchers and scholars whose work has been widely published in books, research monographs and leading international journals. This research and scholarship informs the teaching that takes place in the School. More information about Psychology Staff Members is available on the School website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/psychology/people/>

### 3. What is the Structure of the Programmes?

All the programmes follow a modular structure. Part-time and full-time students will complete the same modules, but over a different time period.

Most modules are shared by students across all MSc Psychology programmes. This structure is designed to foster a vibrant and heterogeneous peer culture amongst our MSc students. It enables students to engage with the pluralistic nature of the psychology and the wide range of specialisms found in most academic Psychology departments. However, we also recognise the importance of helping our students develop the advanced specialised skills they will need to pursue careers in their chosen fields. Within the shared modules, students are supported and encouraged to focus their work to help them conduct in-depth explorations of their specialist subjects. For example, assessments in Dissertation, Qualitative Research Methods and Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods modules all require students to choose their own topics to study in detail. In addition, each programme has a unique 'Advanced Study' module in which students study contemporary research and scholarship relevant to their chosen field.

**Full time:** In order to obtain an MSc degree, students are required to obtain 180 M level credits, including a 60-credit dissertation. Full time students complete the course in 1 year (51 weeks). Credit value for each module is given in brackets.

<i>Semester 1 - Sept to Jan</i>	<i>Semester 2 - Feb to May</i>	<i>June to Sept</i>
PSY-40045 Dissertation (60 credits)		
PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology (15 credits)		
PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology (15 credits)		

PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design (15 credits) + HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis (15 credits)	<u>Either:</u> PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods (15 credits)  <u>Or:</u> PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods (15 credits)	
PSY-400XX Advanced Study module (45 credits)		

\* Students take an 'Advanced Study' module specifically designed for their chosen programme:

*PSY-40071 Advanced Study in Child Development*

*PSY-40075 Advanced Study in Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience*

*PSY-40079 Advanced Study in Health Inequalities*

*PSY-40077 Advanced Study in Applied Social and Political Psychology*

Part time: In order to obtain an MSc degree, students are required to obtain 180 M level credits, including a 60-credit dissertation. Part-time students complete the course in 2 years (103 weeks), taking 90 credits in each year within the modular structure.

Year 1 – 90 credits

<i>Semester 1 - Sept to Jan</i>	<i>Semester 2 - Feb to May</i>	<i>June to Sept</i>
PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology (15 credits)		
PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design (15 credits)	<u>Either:</u> PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods (15 credits)  <u>Or:</u> PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods (15 credits)	
PSY-400XX Advanced Study module (45 credits)		

Year 2 – 90 credits

PSY-40045 Dissertation (60 credits)		
PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology (15 credits)		
HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis (15 credits)		

Modular registration is also available, spread over a maximum of 5 years with students taking modules as and when availability permits. A Postgraduate Certificate is available for students who have completed 60 credits of their programme and a Postgraduate Diploma is available for students who have completed 120 credits of their programme. There are no restrictions on which modules need to be passed.

The table below details how the Intended Learning Outcomes for the MSc programmes map onto the different modules that are available.

# - Learning outcome addressed in full or in part depending on the nature of the apprenticeship undertaken

Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment used to assess ILO
<b>A. Knowledge and understanding of psychological research</b>		
Key theoretical issues in psychological research	PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology PSY-40045 Dissertation	Reflective diary Dissertation
Empirical methodologies used to explore key issues in psychological research	PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods PSY-40045 Dissertation PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Research Methods	Reflective diary Skills audit Research report Dissertation
Core concerns of contemporary researchers in psychology	PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods PSY-400XX Advanced Study in XX (area of specialism)	Reflective diary Skills audit Research report Presentation Essay
The range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that inform research in <u>Applied Social and Political Psychology</u>	PSY-40077 Advanced Study in Applied Social and Political Psychology PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research Proposal Presentation Dissertation
The research evidence relevant to advanced scholarship in <u>Child Development</u> research and practice	PSY-40071 Advanced Study in Child Development PSY-40045 Dissertation	Essay Dissertation
The range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that inform research in <u>Psychology and Health Inequalities</u>	PSY-40079 Advanced Study in Health Inequalities PSY-40045 Dissertation	Essay Dissertation
The research evidence relevant to advanced scholarship in <u>Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience</u>	PSY-40075 Advanced Study in Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods PSY-40045 Dissertation	Essay Research Proposal Dissertation
<b>B. Subject-specific skills</b>		
Evaluate particular methodologies in relation to research questions	PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods	Reflective diary Research report Exercises
Conduct a literature review in a chosen area of interest	PSY-400XX Advanced Study in XX (area of specialism)	Essay Research Proposal Presentation

	PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Dissertation
Develop a set of research questions or hypotheses for investigation, design a method, carry out an empirical study in psychology	PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Proposal Dissertation
Apply appropriate analysis of data collected	PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40045 Dissertation PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods	Research report Exercises Open book examination Dissertation
Report results of an empirical study, applying appropriate skills of presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings	PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Dissertation
<b>C. Intellectual skills</b>		
Identify and evaluate different theoretical approaches to practical problems in psychological literature	PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology	Reflective diary
Critically evaluate research literature in psychology and relate research issues to real life problems	PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-400XX Advanced Study in XX (area of specialism) PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Essay Dissertation
Use scientific research principles to develop research questions or hypotheses, and to select appropriate techniques of experimental design and analysis to research questions or hypotheses	PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Open book examination Exercises Research proposal Dissertation
Show appropriate intellectual and personal reflexivity through the evaluation of research experiences and by identifying strengths and weaknesses for future development	PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods	Skills audit Research report
<b>D. Transferable skills</b>		
Communicate effectively using appropriate verbal, visual, graphic, IT and written means depending on the audience	All modules	Research reports Proposals Dissertation
Demonstrate the ability to learn independently, using a range of	PSY-400XX Advanced Study in XX (area of specialism) PSY-40045 Dissertation	Essay Dissertation

information sources and approaches		
Manage time effectively and work to deadlines	All modules	Every assessment type
Use digital and electronic communication techniques, hardware and software, including word-processing, spreadsheets, email and internet	All modules	Every assessment type
Work in teams, either as a leader or as a member of a team	PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology	Research report (reflective section on contribution to the work)
Employ scientific methods and the analysis of evidence in the solution of problems	PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Proposal Exercises Open book exam Dissertation
Learn to improve work based on written feedback from tutors on drafts	PSY-400XX Advanced Study in XX (area of specialism) PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology PSY-40045 Dissertation	Skills audit (formative) Research report Dissertation
Sort and manipulate data	HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods PSY-40045 Dissertation	Exercises Dissertation
Present data in a variety of ways	PSY-40038 Research Apprenticeship in Psychology # PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis PSY-40045 Dissertation	Research report Proposal Exercises Open book exam Dissertation

The university regulations on taught postgraduate masters degrees are given as:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulation2a/>

#### 4. How are the Programmes assessed?

The diversity of assessment is included in order to ensure that students get the opportunity to develop skills across the board within the MSc. Most modules have at least one substantial piece of assessment to enable focus and concentration rather than spreading effort thinly. For example, students generate a research report for their Research Apprenticeship, Qualitative Research Methods and Dissertation modules. However the variety of assessments used across the programmes is extensive:

- Exercises and open book examinations (HLT-40002 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis, PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods),
- A reflective skills audit (PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design),
- A research-council inspired research proposal (PSY-40077 Applied Social and Political Psychology, PSY-40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods),
- Writing for non-specialised audiences (e.g., newsletter in PSY40077 Advanced Study in Applied Social and Political Psychology and the reflective blogs in PSY-40037 Contemporary Research in Psychology)
- Critical essays (e.g., PSY-40073 Advanced Study in Health Inequalities, PSY-40079 Advanced Study in Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience and PSY-40071 Advanced Study in Child Development)

For the first piece of work assessed at Level 7 and for any unfamiliar or novel forms of assessment in the programmes, students are given a formative attempt at the work or the opportunity to seek feedback on drafts. For example, in PSY-40039 Advanced Research Skills & Design, students submit two versions of the Skills Audit, the first at the outset being formatively marked while the second at the end of the first semester is marked summatively. Similarly, in PSY-40036 Qualitative Research Methods, students are able to bring their analysis to class for feedback from a tutor expert in the method they have chosen. In addition to formal formative assignments, students are encouraged to seek staff input on student work at earlier stages of completion and drafts of dissertations are read in their entirety and formative feedback given, to agreed deadlines.

## **5. What are the typical admission requirements for the programmes?**

These programmes are open to graduates with a first or upper second-class degree in psychology (or a relevant discipline) or equivalent. MSc Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience is also open to graduates with a first or upper second class degree in Neuroscience. International students are very welcome. We accept IELTS 6.5 overall with 6.0 in each subtest. This ensures that students have the requisite skills in basic research, including design, analysis, and interpretation as well as the breadth of knowledge in the discipline to inform the more advanced work they do in the Masters. In exceptional cases this requirement may be waived if there is evidence of substantial relevant prior expertise as part of degrees in other subject areas, such as Education, Childhood Studies, Sociology, Medicine and related fields, or if students have extensive practical experience in the area of their programme (e.g. practising as a teacher, nutritionist, or therapist). All applications are carefully considered.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) applications are considered on a case-by-case basis for students that have already studied at Level 7, depending on the ability of the applicant to demonstrate that they have already met specific learning outcomes at an appropriate level. The Programmes Director reviews such cases. As the programmes are academic in nature it is extremely unlikely that students would have gained relevant experience appropriate to be accredited towards their MSc outside a university setting.

## **6. How are students supported on the programmes?**

The MSc Programmes Director is responsible for the following:

- Overseeing the general operation of all the programmes and chairing the Programmes Committee, preparing the Examination Boards;
- Representing the MSc programmes at other School committees such as the School Education Committee;
- Strategic issues to do with the programmes, resources, facilities and so on;
- Giving general advice on problems or personal difficulties at any point during the programme;

- Approving extension and extenuating circumstances requests if programme leads are unavailable;
- Advice on future academic and career options.

Constructive suggestions on any aspect of the course are also welcome.

The programme leads (one for each specialist route) are responsible for:

- Handling admissions and enquiries;
- The overall operation and coherence of each programme;
- Giving guidance and general advice on any aspect of the programme overall (with the exception of module-specific information where the module leader should be consulted);
- Agreeing extensions for assessed work due to extenuating circumstances.

The module leaders are responsible for:

- Organisation, delivery and assessment of the module;
- Ensuring that written feedback is given on written work (and informal verbal feedback if required);
- Being available for student consultations.

All staff are available to see students during advertised weekly office hours and at other times by appointment.

Students will be allocated a Personal Tutor, normally their Programme Lead or the Programmes Director. The Personal Tutor is available to discuss academic progress in the MSc and to deal with matters of general welfare advice and guidance.

All modules are supported by learning materials that are accessible to students online via the Keele Learning Environment (KLE). The School supports the University's policy on module support on the KLE. In addition the School Teaching Fellows design and run study support workshops in each semester and are available to students by appointment for one-to-one advice.

Students with disabilities or medical problems will meet with a member of the University's Disability Services Department and the School of Psychology Disability Liaison Officer where appropriate, at the start of the programme to discuss any special requirements they may have. Procedures will then be implemented according to the nature of the student's disability or medical problem. These procedures can range, for example, from allowing extra time in examinations to allocating additional support staff in classes.

In addition to the University's central careers service there is a designated School of Psychology careers tutor. Students are encouraged to consult with the careers tutor for any assistance in deciding upon postgraduate research, funding opportunities, career options and for assistance in applying for jobs and placements. Briefing sessions are organized for students interested in continuing to a PhD or a doctorate in clinical psychology. The Psychology Noticeboard on the KLE also contains a 'Careers' folder with a range of resources for students.

## **7. Learning Resources**

Almost all of the teaching in Psychology is carried out in the same building, which contains three lecture rooms, two teaching laboratories and a number of seminar rooms. These rooms may be arranged either in traditional lecture format or more informally to allow students to work together in small groups. All of the rooms are equipped with computers, internet access and electronic whiteboards or projection equipment. There is a psychology Learning Resources room with computers and internet access which is available to postgraduate students for independent study and also a number of student project rooms and research laboratories that are available to be used to carry out project work.

Other learning resources available to students on the MSc Psychology programmes include:

- Academic Support tutors who run learning support workshops (e.g. essay-writing, statistics support, revision sessions) outside of the planned curriculum. The Academic Support tutors are also available by appointment to provide students with one-to-one support.
- Technical support from the team of technicians in terms of access to equipment that might be required for research (e.g. audio and video recording, stopwatches).
- Students can access the undergraduate Research Participation (RPT) Scheme if they need undergraduate student participants for their research (for research apprenticeship and dissertation). This is a scheme where all undergraduates are required to participate in a certain amount of research to gain experience of different approaches. There is an RPT co-ordinator who has to approve access to the scheme, and full information is provided on how to access this in the Programmes Handbook.
- The Keele Learning Environment (KLE) which provides easy access to a wide range of learning resources and support materials in electronic format.

Students also have the opportunity to hear from, and talk to, a range of guest speakers who are invited by the School to present the findings from up-to-date research they are currently carrying out in their own area of psychology. Students will join the research group for their route which will hold informal research meetings at which they can hear about other staff and student research and give presentations of their own work.

## **8. Other learning opportunities**

All MSc Psychology students have extensive opportunities to engage with the research life of the School of Psychology. For example, many of our Research Apprenticeships are also offered as extra-curricular volunteering opportunities, students can attend research groups meetings relevant to their interests, and staff are always keen to support students to write the research up for publication where appropriate.

We are also keen to help our MSc students integrate with our postgraduate research students and students from other schools. For example, PSY40036 Qualitative Research Methods module and PSY40053 Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience Research Methods are available to PhD students and university staff on a CPD basis. We encourage joint social events between PGT and PGR students.

## **9. Quality management and enhancement**

There is an MSc programmes committee which meets three times a year, chaired by the Programmes Director and including all staff teaching on the MSc programmes as well as student voice representatives. This committee discusses issues relating to course design and delivery, future course directions, strategic and practical issues.

The MSc Student Staff Voice Committee provides a forum for discussion between student representatives and staff about programme issues and are held three times in the academic year. The meetings are chaired by one of the student representatives and act as the principal means for staff to be made aware of the collective opinion of students.

Every module on the MSc is evaluated every year as part of an ongoing process of reflection. A summary of formal feedback is discussed at the Student Staff Voice Committee and at the Programmes Committee. We also welcome informal feedback on any module at any stage, which should be directed to the module leader or the Programmes Director. All forms of evaluation and feedback are carefully discussed at the

Programmes Committee and feed through into our internal quality audit procedures. The Programmes Committee and the Student Staff Voice Committee provide the main formal mechanism for considering module evaluations and actions taken as a result of them and guarantee a constant process of reflection and accountability.

## 10. The principles of programme design

The MSc programmes have been developed with reference to the following benchmarks and statements:

*UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx>

*QAA Subject benchmark statement: Psychology*, QAA, 2019:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-psychology.pdf>

*Keele University Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2020*:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/aboutus/strategicplan/learningandteachingstrategy/>

*University code of practice on assessment*, Keele University:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/paa/academicadministration/assessment/codeofpracticeonassessment/>

## 11. Programme Version History

Version History	Date	CHANGES / NOTES
Date first created (if known)	21 May 2015	
Date last reviewed / revised	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	To reflect revisions and expansions to the Advanced Study modules, the removal of PSY-40047 Research Preparation, the change in name and entry requirements for MSc Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience and the inclusion of the Psychology and Health Inequalities course
Last reviewed by?	Nicola Ralph	
Date last approved at SEC	23 June 2021	
Date last approved at FEC		