

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	MSc Health Psychology
2	Course Code	PT0771
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (If different from point 3)	
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	The British Psychological Society (BPS)

6	Course Description
	Our MSc Health Psychology at Birmingham City University is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as Stage 1 of professional training in Health Psychology, providing the essential foundation for progression towards becoming a Chartered Health Psychologist. This course has been purposefully designed to immerse you in both the theoretical foundations and the applied practices of contemporary Health Psychology. Throughout your studies, you will engage with authentic, practice-oriented workshops, activities and assessments that mirror the real tasks, challenges, and decision-making processes that health psychologists undertake in professional roles across clinical, community, and public health contexts. You will explore how psychological principles inform the management of health conditions, the development and evaluation of behaviour change interventions (including CBT-based strategies, motivational interviewing, and digital health approaches), and the improvement of communication and interactions between patients and healthcare professionals. You will also critically examine the influence of health inequalities, social determinants of health, cultural contexts, and economic pressures on behaviour and wellbeing. A core feature of the programme is its emphasis on hands-on skills development. Through structured workshops, applied assessments, simulation, and reflective practice, you will gain experience in: • Conducting needs assessments and identifying behavioural determinants using evidence-based frameworks to understand influences on health behaviours. • Applying, evaluating, and critiquing behaviour-change models in real-world contexts to support intervention planning. • Designing evidence-based behaviour change interventions, selecting appropriate behaviour change techniques (BCTs) and tailoring them to specific populations and settings. • Producing professional-standard outputs, including case formulations, briefs, grant style proposals, consultancy research briefs, behaviour change plans, and evaluation reports. • Communicating psychological evidence clearly and persuasively to specialist and non-specialist audiences You will also undertake a specialist module focused on developing your professional identity and competencies as a future practitioner or health psychology researcher. This includes experiential learning in reflective practice, personal development planning, ethical decision-making, working with stakeholders, and understanding your evolving professional role within the wider global health landscape.

Teaching is delivered by an expert team of active researchers and practitioners in Health Psychology. Our staff have specialist interests including addictive behaviours, eating behaviour and weight management, gender and health, mindfulness and self-compassion, healthcare communication, and health inequalities. Their real-world expertise informs the teaching, ensuring you are exposed to current research, contemporary debates, and practical applications across the discipline.

Guest lectures from professionals across Health Psychology, behavioural medicine, public health, and related fields give you opportunities to learn from a wide range of applied perspectives. You will also collaborate with academic staff to design and conduct your own empirical research project on a topic of your choosing, developing hands-on research skills relevant to both academic and applied roles.

Our supportive, approachable course team and positive learning environment have been commended by the BPS, and we remain committed to helping you develop as a confident, skilled, and reflective health psychology professional.

What is covered in the course?

During the course you will:

- Gain an advanced understanding of core theories and applied issues in Health Psychology and how they inform professional practice.
- Develop skills for working with diverse populations across the lifespan, including cross-cultural, gender, family, and end-of-life contexts.
- Critically evaluate how psychological theory is used to design and implement health interventions and public health initiatives.
- Learn the principles of developing and assessing psychological interventions, with applied training in CBT and motivational interviewing.
- Receive comprehensive training in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including hands-on practice with advanced analytical techniques.
- Design and complete a high-quality research project on a Health Psychology topic of your choice.
- Build skills in self-reflection, reflexivity, and professional identity development relevant to careers in the health sector.
- Achieve the competencies required for BPS Stage 1 training, preparing you for Stage 2 doctoral training and HCPC registration as a Health Psychologist.

On our BPS-accredited Stage 1 MSc Health Psychology course, we combine traditional and contemporary teaching methods to create an engaging, practice focused learning experience. We adopt a skills-based, problem-solving approach that enables you to apply psychological theory to real-world health challenges. Our practical teaching style provides hands-on opportunities to develop the core competencies expected of a Health Psychology practitioner. This is embedded throughout the programme and reflected in our authentic, applied assessments, which mirror the tasks health psychologists undertake in professional practice and equip you with marketable, career-ready skills.

Our Psychology department offers a wide range of dedicated testing labs, specialist equipment, and advanced software to support your learning and research. You will also have access to a dedicated BPS computer lab equipped with Psychology-specific, industry-standard programs. Throughout the MSc, you will have hands-on opportunities to develop your technical skills by

	working with advanced psychological software and tools used in contemporary research and professional Health Psychology practice. Careers The MSc Health Psychology provides you with strong transferable skills and specialist knowledge that prepare you for careers across academic, clinical, healthcare, community, and public health settings. Successful completion of this BPS-accredited Stage 1 course enables you to progress to Stage 2 doctoral level training, leading to eligibility for HCPC registration as a Chartered Health Psychologist. If you are interested in an academic career, you may choose to continue into further postgraduate study, such as a PhD or professional doctorate in Health Psychology or a related field. Our graduates have secured roles in a wide range of applied settings, including positions as Assistant Psychologists in clinical, healthcare, public health, and private organisations. Many of our students also progress to Stage 2 training or pursue doctoral research, demonstrating the strong foundation this programme provides for both professional and academic pathways.
--	--

	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	Master of Science Health Psychology (BPS Accredited)	7	180
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Postgraduate Certificate Health Psychology	7	60
	Postgraduate Diploma Health Psychology	7	120

8	Variations from the University Regulations
	This course has approved variations to the University's Academic Regulations. These can be accessed via the student contract page: https://www.bcu.ac.uk/student-info/student-contract

9	Delivery Patterns			
	Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study	Code(s)
	Full Time	City Centre	1 year	PT0771
	Part Time	City Centre	2 years	PT0770

10	Entry Requirements
	The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk .

11	Course Aims
	This course aims to prepare you for work with clients and professionals across a wide range of applied health settings by developing the core knowledge and skills expected of a postgraduate

in Health Psychology. You will gain strong critical and applied competencies in using psychological theory and evidence to address individual, community, clinical and global health challenges, with a focus on behaviour change, health promotion, and the development of effective health interventions.

The programme is grounded in the scientist–practitioner model, encouraging you to integrate empirical evidence, scholarly enquiry, and applied practice. Throughout the course, you will engage with approaches that emphasise ethical awareness, best practice, and the use of Health Psychology to improve real-world health outcomes.

Course Aims:

- 1) Pursuing Excellence:** To situate Health Psychology within the context of managing health, health promotion, and behavioural interventions across the lifespan, fostering excellence in both scholarship and applied practice.
- 2) Practice-Led, Knowledge-Applied:** To equip you with the core and transferable skills required for BPS Stage 1 training, supporting practice-focused learning and applied research in Health Psychology.
- 3) Interdisciplinary Orientation:** To develop a critical understanding of Health Psychology theory in relation to allied health and cognate disciplines, and to prepare you for effective work within multidisciplinary teams.
- 4) Employability-Driven:** To provide opportunities to develop trainee-level knowledge, reflective practice, and advanced research skills that support future employment and progression within the health sector.
- 5) International and Societal Awareness:** To frame Health Psychology theory, research, and practice within contemporary social, cultural, and economic contexts at local, national, and international levels.

The course is designed to map onto the five core competencies required of a health psychologist:

- 1) Psychological Interventions,**
 - 2) Research,**
 - 3) Consultancy,**
 - 4) Teaching and training,**
 - 5) Generic professional competences, through covering the following areas:**
 1. Contexts and perspectives in health psychology
 2. Research design, methods and analysis
 3. Biopsychosocial and psychosomatic processes in health and illness
 4. Working with diverse client groups and stakeholders
 5. Health-related behaviour, cognition and determinants of behaviour
 6. Health psychology interventions and behaviour change applications
 7. Healthcare systems and professional practice settings
 8. Measurement, assessment, and evaluation in Health Psychology
 9. Professional, ethical and reflective practice
- Empirical research project and mini systematic review

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
1	Apply and critically evaluate advanced knowledge of health psychology theories, models, and empirical research across the core areas of health psychology (psychological processes, individual differences, research methods, and interventions), including their historical and contemporary development and relevance across the lifespan, and drawing on perspectives from related disciplines such as medical sociology, behavioural medicine, and health policy.
2	Critically analyse biopsychosocial and psychosomatic processes in health and illness, including epidemiological perspectives, and apply this understanding to contemporary health issues, public health priorities, and behaviour-change initiatives across local, national, and international contexts, including within healthcare systems and service delivery settings.
3	Design, conduct, analyse, and evaluate health psychology research using advanced qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, demonstrating methodological rigour, ethical practice, and critical reflection on research quality and limitations.
4	Critically evaluate and apply behaviour-change models and psychological interventions, including their selection, theoretical foundations, measurement and psychometric considerations, and effectiveness in addressing health-related behaviour, cognition, and outcomes, including diverse client groups and stakeholders.
5	Demonstrate cultural competence and sensitivity to diversity across the lifespan, including gender and family dynamics, and show critical awareness of the impact of long-term and acute health conditions and health services on individuals and populations.
6	Demonstrate advanced professional, ethical, legal, and reflective practice in line with BPS and HCPC frameworks, including adherence to statutory obligations, awareness of policy and legislative contexts, ethical decision-making, self-reflection, reflexivity, and development of professional identity as a trainee Health Psychologist.
7	Formulate and critically evaluate psychologically informed interventions, drawing on theory, evidence, and case-based understanding to address complex health challenges, within a scientist–practitioner framework.
8	Produce professional-standard written and oral outputs including grant proposals, systematic reviews, empirical reports, case formulations, intervention plans, and concise academic and professional arguments suitable for health sector contexts.
9	Work collaboratively and autonomously, demonstrating effective communication, problem-solving, and time-management skills, and the ability to engage confidently in academic and research contexts.
10	Demonstrate transferable skills to support ongoing professional development and scholarly activity, including independent learning, critical appraisal, digital literacy, research software proficiency, and engagement with health psychology research and continuing professional development.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	Postgraduate Certificate in Health Psychology (60 Credits)
1	Apply systematic knowledge of historical and current developments of theoretical constructs, approaches and evidence base in health psychology.
2	Critically discuss the role of psychology in health and illness and the impact of social, cultural and economic factors on health outcomes
3	Synthesise relevant literature and select appropriate research methodologies applied to health psychology
	Postgraduate Diploma (120 Credits)
4	Apply an advanced understanding of empirical research in its application of theoretical models to health-related behaviour, cognition, and other factors that may impact application.
5	Design, identify and employ appropriate research methods and analysis techniques (quantitative and qualitative) in the context of applied health psychology research.

6	Apply critical self-reflection, reflexivity, and capabilities relevant to progression to health psychology practice, work or scholarship in the health sector.
	Master's Degree (180 Credits)
7	Design and conduct a substantial empirical research project in Health Psychology
8	Identify and critically review relevant literature/methodologies in health psychology and report the findings in the form of a mini-systematic review.
9	Critically review the skills required to work with clients, and groups across the lifespan and multidisciplinary teams in health contexts.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	We view learning and teaching on the programme as a collaborative, active process. While lectures form part of the learning experience, we employ a wide range of teaching methods that extend beyond traditional delivery. Our approach places particular emphasis on blended learning, problem-based learning, and interdisciplinary learning, all of which support deep engagement and skill development. Blended learning enables part of your learning to take place through digital and online media, giving you greater flexibility over how, when, and where you engage with course materials. Problem-based learning provides opportunities to explore subject content through the process of addressing open-ended, real-world problems, mirroring the kinds of complex, multi-layered challenges encountered in health psychology practice. Interdisciplinary learning encourages you to draw on and integrate knowledge from across psychological and allied domains, enabling you to formulate more comprehensive and nuanced solutions. As part of this strategy, we direct you to relevant literature and resources for pre-session study, allowing classroom time to focus on active learning, discussion, and small-group work. This structure enhances your ability to synthesise information, apply theory to authentic scenarios, and work collaboratively key competencies for professional practice in Health Psychology. As a programme with a strong practice-based focus, we routinely draw on real-world examples from our own research and professional practice, and we invite expert visiting lecturers to share the latest developments, evidence, and trends within Health Psychology. Many of our students work part-time in health-related roles during their studies, and the programme is designed to enhance and extend their applied skills, strengthening their professional confidence and employability. For students who are new to the field, the course provides structured opportunities to develop core practice competencies, preparing them for future roles across health, wellbeing, behavioural science, and applied psychological settings. <u>Activities and experiences you will encounter:</u> The programme is designed to support your development as an independent, critically reflective learner throughout your postgraduate journey and beyond. We aim to make the transition into master's-level study as smooth as possible by embedding opportunities to develop advanced academic skills, particularly critical appraisal of theory, evidence, and practice. To maximise your learning, many sessions follow a blended structure that includes pre-session reading or activities, in-class discussion and application, and follow-up tasks to consolidate understanding. Directed learning may include short video lectures, guided reading, quizzes, online discussions, and access to curated digital resources. Classroom sessions then focus on

active learning, including discussion, case work, group activities, and applied exercises, to help you synthesise ideas and connect them to real-world examples.

This structure supports you to:

- move beyond memorising information to applying and evaluating it
- make sense of complex concepts by linking them to practice
- distinguish between overlapping ideas in health psychology
- develop confidence in analysing and communicating psychological evidence

We work closely with university librarians and BASE to help you understand the expectations of postgraduate study and to strengthen your academic, digital, and research skills.

The programme team is committed to a facilitative and responsive teaching style, using a range of methods such as small-group work, whole-class discussion, individual support, and Moodle-based learning. Our approach emphasises open-ended, problem-solving activities that encourage you to critically engage with contemporary issues, evaluate research and policy, and develop innovative approaches to health psychology practice.

Your learning culminates in the master's dissertation, where you apply research theory, critical insight, and independent judgement to produce an original piece of work. This transition from supported learning to autonomous scholarship helps you develop the habits and competencies essential for lifelong learning and professional growth.

Range of assessment, including feedback and feedforward

Assessments enable you to demonstrate achievement of the Module and Programme Learning Outcomes. Our assessment strategy is designed to develop your professional competence, reflect authentic health psychology practice, and enhance your employability.

We use a range of formative and summative assessment methods, including individual and group presentations, exams, essays, case studies, and project or intervention proposals. This variety allows you to evidence your ability to communicate in different formats, verbally, visually, and in writing, and to showcase your capability as a creative and analytical problem-solver. Assessments are designed to reflect real-world health psychology tasks and to address issues at local, national, and global levels.

You will receive multiple opportunities for feedback throughout the programme, including on assessed work and through in-class activities, helping you understand your progress and how to strengthen future work.

All modules incorporate formative learning activities, such as student-led presentations, pre-session quizzes, case study analysis, and peer- and tutor-review tasks. These provide structured opportunities to:

- understand and clarify learning intentions
- demonstrate learning through discussion and applied tasks
- receive constructive feedback to support improvement
- learn collaboratively and act as resources for one another
- develop confidence and autonomy in managing your own learning

Our assessments and feedback approach is designed to build your confidence, develop your academic and professional skills, and support your progression as an emerging health psychology practitioner.

15	Course Requirements																										
15a	Level 7: <i>In order to complete this course, you must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):</i>																										
	<table><tr><th>Module Code</th><th>Module Name</th><th>Credit Value</th></tr><tr><td>PSY7062</td><td>Application of Health Psychology Models</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7063</td><td>Health Psychology over the Lifespan</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7064</td><td>Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 1</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7065</td><td>Psychological Interventions and Behaviour Change</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7066</td><td>Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 2</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7067</td><td>Professional Development in Health Psychology</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>PSY7068</td><td>Health Psychology Dissertation</td><td>60</td></tr></table>	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	PSY7062	Application of Health Psychology Models	20	PSY7063	Health Psychology over the Lifespan	20	PSY7064	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 1	20	PSY7065	Psychological Interventions and Behaviour Change	20	PSY7066	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 2	20	PSY7067	Professional Development in Health Psychology	20	PSY7068	Health Psychology Dissertation	60		
Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value																									
PSY7062	Application of Health Psychology Models	20																									
PSY7063	Health Psychology over the Lifespan	20																									
PSY7064	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 1	20																									
PSY7065	Psychological Interventions and Behaviour Change	20																									
PSY7066	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 2	20																									
PSY7067	Professional Development in Health Psychology	20																									
PSY7068	Health Psychology Dissertation	60																									

15b Structure Diagram

Full Time Structure and Attendance

Full-time students will be expected to attend 2 days/week

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE
Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 1 (20 credits)	Psychological Interventions and Behaviour Change (20 credits)	
Application of Health Psychology Models (20 credits)	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 2 (20 credits)	
Health Psychology over the Lifespan (20 credits)	Professional Development in Health Psychology (20 credits)	
Health Psychology Dissertation (60 credits)		

Part Time Structure and Attendance

Part Time students will be expected to attend 1 day/week

Year 1

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE
Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 1 (20 credits)	Applied Research Methods in Health Psychology 2 (20 credits)	

Application of Health Psychology Models (20 credits)	Psychological Interventions and Behaviour Change (20 credits)	
---	--	--

Year 2

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE
Health Psychology over the Lifespan (20 credits)	Professional Development in Health Psychology (20 credits)	
Health Psychology Dissertation (60 credits)		

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Overall, your *workload* consists of class contact hours, independent learning and assessment activity, with each credit taken equating to a total study time of around 10 hours. While actual contact hours may depend on the optional modules selected, the following information gives an indication of how much you will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the course.

- *Scheduled Learning* includes lectures, practical classes and workshops, contact time specified in timetable
- *Directed Learning* includes placements, work-based learning, external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning
- *Private Study* includes preparation for assessments

The approximate percentage of the course assessed by coursework, exam and in-person is shown below.

Level 7

Workload

% Time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	188
Directed Learning	600
Private Study	1012
Total Hours	1800

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	85%
Exam	0%
In-Person	15%