

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
	<p>Our MSc Health Psychology course at Birmingham City University is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as Stage 1 of the professional training in Health Psychology and provides you with the essential step towards becoming a Chartered Health Psychologist.</p> <p>The course is designed to supply you with an in-depth investigation into the key theoretical and practical issues in health psychology and apply them to contemporary health issues. We will examine the role of psychology in determining how to manage health conditions, how to develop and evaluate health interventions such as CBT and motivational interviewing, and how psychological processes and interactions with healthcare professionals can influence health outcomes. You will also learn the importance of considering the impact of health inequalities, economic and social influences on health and wellbeing. You will have a specialist module dedicated to enhancing your professional identity, personal development and skills, which is invaluable in preparing you for work/training as a practitioner and/or scientist in the global health sector.</p> <p>You will be taught by our team of psychologists who are active researchers and practitioners within Health Psychology. The MSc Health Psychology team have a wide range of research specialisms including addictive behaviours, psychology of eating behaviours, gender and health, the role of mindfulness, compassion and self-compassion on health and wellbeing, healthcare interactions and health inequalities. You will also benefit from guest lectures throughout the course, which are delivered by professionals across Health Psychology and cognate disciplines, providing you with a multidisciplinary view of health and wellbeing. As part of the course, you will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with our team of experts to design and conduct your own research project in the field of Health Psychology. Our positive learning environment along with the supportive and approachable course team have been commended by the BPS.</p> <p>What is covered in the course?</p> <p><u>During the course you will:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a detailed understanding and advanced knowledge of the key theoretical and applied issues in health psychology. • Develop knowledge and understanding of skills involved when working with a range of clients over the lifespan (cross-cultural perspectives, gender differences, children and the role of the family in health and illness, and death, dying, and bereavement), management of acute and long-term conditions and the impact of health services. • Critically examine how psychological theory is used to inform health initiatives and health interventions.

- Explore the core components of developing and evaluating psychological interventions in health psychology with a focus on cognitive behavioural therapy and motivational interviewing.
- Receive formal training in a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods and gain hands-on, practical experience in applying a range of advanced qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques
- Have the opportunity to design, conduct and report a high-quality research project on an area of your choice in Health Psychology with expert guidance.
- Develop critical self-reflection, reflexivity, and capabilities relevant to progression to health psychology practice, work or scholarship in the health sector.
- Receive the necessary training to meet the competencies for Stage 1 training in health psychology, which enables you to proceed to Stage 2 doctoral-level training and register with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) to become a registered health psychologist.

On our BPS accredited Stage 1 MSc Health Psychology course we employ a mixture of traditional and contemporary teaching methods to enhance your learning experience and engagement with the course. We use innovative teaching methods through adopting a skills-based, problem-solving approach to learning. Our practical approach allows you to gain hands-on experience and training in order to achieve the required skills to be a competent and knowledgeable psychology practitioner. This is reflected in the applied nature of our assessments, giving you greater marketable and valuable professional skills towards your career development.

Our Psychology department has a wide range of dedicated psychology testing labs, equipment, and specialist software to support your studies, as well as a dedicated BPS computer lab with networked computers with Psychology-specific software. Throughout the MSc, you will have the opportunity to develop your skills and use a range of advanced specialist psychology software.

Careers

The MSc Health Psychology course provides you with training in transferable skills and knowledge to enable you to pursue career opportunities across a range of settings such as academic, clinical, healthcare, community settings and public health. Upon successful completion of this stage 1 course, you will be able to continue with the Stage 2 training to becoming a Chartered Health Psychologist. Those who wish to pursue an academic career can apply for further postgraduate study such as a PhD or doctoral level study in health psychology or related area. Our previous students have secured roles working in applied settings such as assistant psychologists in clinical, healthcare, public health and private organisations. Our previous students have also continued to Stage 2 training and further postgraduate study (PhD and Doctorate).

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

8	Derogation from the University Regulations
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compensation of marginally failed modules is not permitted. 2. Condonement of failed modules is not permitted.

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
<p>The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk.</p>	

11	Course Aims
	<p>This course aims to prepare you to work with clients and professionals in a range of applied settings such as those in the health sector, which requires core knowledge and skills expected from a health psychology postgraduate. You will develop sound critical knowledge and skills required to apply health psychology to individual, community, clinical and global contemporary health issues which target health behaviour change (cognition and behavioural), health promotion initiatives and health interventions. A scientist and practitioner model are encouraged in this course, led by excellence in empirical evidence and inquiry, scholarly activity, and practice, all of which meet with high ethical standards and best practice.</p> <p>The course is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice-led, based on the core knowledge and skills stipulated by the British Psychological Society (BPS) for stage one training in health psychology at master's level • Responsive to stakeholder training and employer requirements, • Informed by scholarly activity in the application of health psychology to contemporary health issues to a high scientific standard, and • Designed to support your choices in learning, teaching and assessment. In turn, this course endeavours to prepare you for work/training as a practitioner and/or scientist in the global health sector. <p>Course aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursuing Excellence: To set health psychology in the context of managing health, health promotion and health interventions over the lifespan in the pursuit of excellence in both scholarship and practice in health psychology and applied health psychology. 2. Practice-led, knowledge-applied: To equip you with core and transferable skills, which meet with stage one training in health psychology requirements as set out by the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology Training Committee (DHP/BPS, 2014). This supports practice-led training and applied research in health psychology. 3. Interdisciplinary: To provide you with a critical understanding of theoretical issues underlying health psychology, their relation to allied health and cognate disciplines, and working with multidisciplinary teams.

4. **Employability-driven:** To provide opportunities for you to develop health psychology trainee knowledge/outcomes and self-reflective, self-critical, and advanced research skills, which support future work and progression in the health sector.
5. **Internationalisation:** To set health psychology theory, research and practice in the context of contemporary, social, cultural, and economic factors within local, national, and international contexts.

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 and research methods
3. Physiological and psychosomatic disease process
4. Client groups and other stakeholders
5. Health-related behaviour and cognition
6. Interventions: applications of health psychology
7. Healthcare and professional settings
8. Measurement issues
9. Professional issues
10. An empirical project and mini systematic review, in line with the standards for master's courses in health psychology (BPS, May 2014).

The course upholds Birmingham City University's four core values of:

- **Excellence:** We take pride in ensuring the highest quality standards of academic achievement and professional service delivery.
- **People focused:** We value everyone, recognising that what we do is for the benefit of all those connected with the University.
- **Partnership working:** We work constructively with each other, our students and wider University community to create strong and successful working relationships.
- **Fairness and integrity:** We take a fair and balanced approach to our activities and are mindful of the impact of our actions.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
	Knowledge and Understanding
1	Apply systematic knowledge of historical and current developments of theoretical constructs, approaches and evidence base in health psychology and interrelatedness to cognate disciplines in its application.
2	Apply an advanced understanding of health psychology cutting-edge empirical research in its application to health initiatives, promotion, and education, which addresses contemporary government health priorities and authentic health issues (local, national and international) over the lifespan.
3	Apply advanced knowledge of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research in your application to health psychology research enquiry.
4	Apply an advanced understanding of the physiology of health and illness across the lifespan.
5	Illustrate a detailed understanding of ethical, legal, and practice frameworks and legal and statutory obligations and restrictions, which govern practitioner and scholarly work in health and applied health psychology in the UK, Europe, and further internationally.
6	Apply knowledge and understanding of skills involved when working with a range of clients over the lifespan (cross-cultural perspectives, gender differences, children and the role of the family in health and illness, and death, dying, and bereavement), management of acute and long-term conditions and impact of health services.
7	Evaluate skills relevant to working with other health professionals and multidisciplinary teams when applying health psychology in practice and scholarly activity.
8	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.
9	Discuss the process involved in selecting psychological interventions for behaviour change and measuring health outcomes.
10	Apply an advanced understanding of psychometric issues relating to development of outcome measures in health psychology.
11	Model an advanced understanding of the developing skills and competencies required for professional identity and work of a trainee and chartered health psychologist.
	Intellectual Skills
12	Critically evaluate current knowledge, theory and evidence base in the application of health psychology.
13	Critically appraise the limits of health psychology in its application and inter-relatedness to cognate disciplines.
14	Synthesise health psychology cutting-edge research in its application to authentic contemporary health issues.
15	Critically appraise relevant research methodologies and their utility in health psychology research enquiry.
16	Apply a critical approach to evaluating restrictions and limitations placed on health and applied health psychology in the UK, Europe, and further internationally.
17	Synthesise skills required to work with clients, and groups across the lifespan and multidisciplinary teams in health contexts.
18	Critically evaluate factors that impact and limit the application of health psychology models to health behaviour and cognition.
19	Compare and contrast psychology interventions and the limits of their application to behaviour change and measuring health outcomes.
20	Critically appraise psychometric issues in assessing outcome measures in health psychology.
21	Synthesise the skills and knowledge required for the professional identity and work of trainee and chartered health psychologists, and how these differ compared to allied health professions.
22	Formulate a novel argument in addressing contemporary health issues in practice locally, nationally, and internationally.
	Subject/Professional/Practical Skills

23	Apply theoretical grounded practical intervention skills to address health psychology issues.
24	Apply knowledge of relevant research methodologies and enquiry to a health grant proposal.
25	Apply skills required to conduct and complete a mini-systematic review in the context of health psychology.
26	Apply the relevant skills required to plan, propose, conduct and complete an empirical project in health psychology and write-up for publication.
27	Apply knowledge to the formulation and assessment of a health issues, and how this informs a health psychology intervention.
28	Apply advanced quantitative research techniques to health psychology data.
29	Apply advanced qualitative research technique to health psychology data.
30	Apply critical self-reflective and reflexive skills to clients/patients/service users and multidisciplinary teams.
31	Apply relevant ethical, legal and professional practice frameworks (BPS, HCPC) to practice and research.
32	Critically reflect on and synthesise health psychology knowledge and skills in developing professional identity as a trainee health psychologist.
33	Apply critical self-reflection, reflexivity, and capabilities relevant to progression to health psychology practice, work or scholarship in the health sector.
	Transferable Skills and other attributes
34	Perform competently as an independent and autonomous life-long learner.
35	Illustrate the ability to be self-critical, reflective, and reflexive skills to support continued engagement in professional development and working with others.
36	Proficiency in advanced research methods and techniques at master's level.
37	Demonstrate a proficient use of software and skills to carry on with scholarly activity.
38	Engage in collaborative work in teams and with supervisors.
39	Generate independent research at master's level.
40	Illustrate competence in the use of databases, searches, and using a variety of learning resources.
41	Perform competently in oral and written argument.
42	Present confidence in problem solving.
43	Evaluate and synthesise academic material in concise reporting.
44	Engage confidently in academic and professional communication, discussion and debate.
45	Demonstrate time management and organise work schedule, which meet with deadlines.
46	Perform the skills required for the systematic synthesis of empirical work.
47	Engage in active membership within the scientific community.

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
	<p>We approach learning and teaching on the programme as a cooperative process. We employ a variety of methods, which include, as well as go beyond, lecturing. We also place a high value on blended learning (part of the learning experience takes place through digital and online media, which gives you some control over time and place for the learning) problem-based learning (you have the opportunity to learn about a subject through the experience of solving an open-ended problem – this mimics real-life situations where multiple/complex answers are commonplace), and interdisciplinary learning (this includes opportunities to integrate various 'traditional' subject areas to find more comprehensive solutions to problems). Our strategy includes directing you to relevant literature for module session topics for pre-session learning so that we can then use the in-class time for active teaching and group learning methods (blended learning). This allows us to synthesise the information and apply it to real-world examples (problem-based learning and interdisciplinary learning).</p> <p>As a programme that is heavily practice-based, we reference real-world scenarios from our own research and practice and arrange expert visiting lecturers to relay information from the latest information and trends in health psychology. Many of our students work part-time in a field allied to health while they are on the course, and this programme is designed to further develop practice and employability skills for these students as well as students who are yet to be employed in this field.</p> <p><u>Activities and experiences you will encounter:</u></p> <p>The course is set up to support continuous learning throughout the programme of study. This means that we want to support you from the beginning of your time with us at BCU through the programme and eventually to having the tools to continue the life-long learning process after your time at BCU. We want to make the transition into postgraduate learning as smooth as possible. You will find that critical appraisal of ideas; practices and literature are at the forefront of study on our programme. Not only do the weekly in-class and independent learning activities</p>

focus on developing these skills, but we also work with the university librarians and the Centre for Academic Success to make sure that you have opportunities to expand your understanding of the differences between learning, teaching and assessment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and are equipped to embrace study at this level.

Many module sessions are set up to have pre-session activities and/or reading, and post-session activities and/or reading. These introduce and summarise the learning that takes place in the classroom. These are then followed up with group work, exercises and/or reading to help you make sense of the information, reflecting on how it fits within your previous knowledge and experiences. Directed learning can involve video lectures, reading supported by quizzes, links to external websites, reviewing lecturer's hand-outs, guided reading for peer reading groups, student/staff online forum discussions, etc. Face-to-face or "scheduled" sessions focus on activities to help you deepen your understanding of the knowledge delivered online. We know that when you are developing understanding, you may need support to:

- Move beyond memorising knowledge (e.g. relying on definitions or descriptions).
- Make sense of the knowledge provided (e.g. by applying it to practical examples or aspects of your own health and wellbeing).
- Demonstrate your understanding of how 'common sense' terms are used to describe a set of ideas in health (e.g. personal counselling)
- Show that you can pinpoint the differences between ideas that overlap (e.g. health education and behaviour change approaches)

The programme team are committed to a facilitative and responsive teaching style with lecturers applying appropriate methods, including small group work, whole-group discussion, on-to-one support, and the use of Moodle resources where appropriate. We have selected a range of open-ended and problem-solving learning activities because at postgraduate level we are developing skills to critically appraise complex issues. The learning that we are developing goes beyond memorization or description to development of the skills need to critically evaluate research, practice, and policy and to plan for innovation in health psychology. We want to help you to develop these skills in written and verbal expression of ideas.

The Master's in health psychology degree culminates in the production of a dissertation, which is also the apex of showcasing your abilities as an independent learner. It is an opportunity to show that you have been able to take information, critical discussion, and research theory and apply it to a project that is your own innovative concept. It is through this transition from dependent to independent learning that an appreciation for lifelong learning is formed.

Range of assessment, including feedback and feedforward

Assessments are the mechanisms for you to demonstrate that you have achieved the Module and Programme Learning Outcomes. Our assessment strategy includes the following:

- **A range of assessment methods, both formative and summative** including individual or group presentations; exams; essays; case studies; and project proposals. The range of methods is important for your employability, enabling you to demonstrate your competence in delivering a range of outputs that you are likely to require in future employment; and to demonstrate your ability to communicate in different ways (e.g. verbally through presentation skills; or in a variety of written media). We want your assessments to showcase your abilities as creative problem-solvers, an attribute that is of utmost importance for employability. The assessments have also been designed to demonstrate an understanding of issues relevant to health psychology at local, national, and global levels.

- **Multiple opportunities for feedback** both on the standard of work submitted or in-class discussions and suggestions for how you can improve your future work (feedforward).

Every Module will include **formative learning activities** (e.g. student presentations; pre-learning activities such as quizzes; assignment 'patches' that are marked by peers and tutors against the assessment criteria). The aims of these activities are to help you to:

- understand, share and clarify the learning intentions
- evidence your learning through discussions, activities and tasks
- provide feedback that you can use to improve future work
- provide opportunities for you to act as resources for one another
- help you take control of your own learning

15 Course Requirements

15a Level 7:

In order to complete this course, you must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):

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	99%
Exam	0%
In-Person	1%