

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BSc (Hons)
4	Programme Title	Biology and Psychology Mathematics and Psychology Psychology and Statistics
5	UCAS/Programme Code	CC18, CG81, CG83
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Psychology
8	FHEQ Level	Honours
9	Date written/revised	February 2008

10 Programme Aims

The programme aims:

- A to provide a 50% component of a joint honours degree which gives a balanced view of psychological theory.
- B to recruit able and well-motivated students.
- C to provide knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and empirical basis of the major areas of contemporary Psychology.
- D to develop students' intellectual and key skills relevant to work in a wide variety of careers.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Psychology.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students will have gained and be able to demonstrate:

- A1 Knowledge and understanding of the basic processes, theories and research methods in the main areas of Psychology.
- A2 Knowledge and understanding of the core areas of psychology and their inter-linkages, i.e. cognitive psychology, perception, learning and memory, personality and individual differences, intelligence, social psychology, developmental psychology, biological psychology and conceptual issues
- A3 An awareness of selected current developments in psychology and an appreciation of the broader impact these may have on society and the ability to apply such knowledge.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is lectures, supplemented by handouts and supported by tutorials or seminars (A1, A2, A3). Students are encouraged to supplement taught material with independent reading and are provided with reading lists to guide them in this. Essay writing, practice at multiple choice questions, and seminars aid the development of knowledge and understanding. Issues concerning ethics in psychology (A3) are supported by a lecture course in Conceptual Issues, and through explicit discussion in the Degree Programme Handbook.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment is by means of formal unseen written examinations (essay, MCQs and short answers) and course work. Most second and third year modules include coursework, and essays are assessed both formatively and summatively. Feedback on both form and content informs and encourages students' progress and self-monitoring

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Gather information from a variety of sources.
- B2 Understand and apply theoretical concepts.
- B3 Critically evaluate arguments and evidence.
- B4 Understand and consider critical issues in psychology and articulate arguments and points of view in relation to these.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Initially, students are introduced to many of the principles underlying cognitive skills through the lectures, where the different views and critical issues surrounding particular areas of psychology are introduced. Following this, cognitive skills (C1-C4) are acquired further and developed through tutorials seminars, and coursework essays. Specifically, some coursework encourages students to engage with adversarial viewpoints in order that critical thinking and evaluation is developed and assessed.

Assessment Strategy

Intellectual skills (B1-B4) are assessed by essays and unseen written examinations.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Understand psychological theories and principles and the results and conclusions of empirical studies in the psychology literature.
- C2 Critically assess the value and limitations of existing information on a subject within the discipline and produce critical reviews of such information.

Teaching and Learning Methods

These skills (C1-C2) are taught by discussion of the methods of research and scholarship in psychology, including library skills training. Students review critically primary literature for their essays and coursework in Stages 2 and 3. Learning is also aided by discussions between students and their seminar leaders.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment is by way of examination and coursework.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students will have developed:

- D1 The ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally.
- D2 The ability to use library and other information sources effectively.
- D3 The ability to work both independently and as an effective member of a team.
- D4 The ability to take responsibility for their own learning and intellectual development.
- D5 Time-management skills and the ability to schedule work-loads effectively.
- D6 The ability to use computing and IT resources.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Communication skills (D1) are acquired and developed in tutorials, seminars and essays. Library workshops teach further information searching skills (D2), which are developed in essays and other coursework. Teamwork, working independently and taking responsibility for their own learning (D3, D4) are skills that are acquired by progression from a fairly structured course in Stages 1 and 2 to more independent learning in Stage 3. Time management skills (D5) are encouraged throughout the course by the requirement to meet regular coursework

and other deadlines. Computing and IT skills (D6) are introduced in Stage 1 Induction Week, developed in specific modules and reinforced in many elements in each stage of the programme.

Assessment Strategy

Skills D1, D2 and D6 are assessed variously through essays, tutorial and seminar discussions, and seminar presentation, and in unseen written examinations. D5 is not assessed per se, but is necessary for the student to achieve success over the three year period, and counselling in relation to this is provided where necessary by personal tutors.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

a) This component is 50% of a three-year full-time programme based on 30 weeks attendance per annum. Modules to the value of 60 credits are taken in each year or stage, and 10 credits are equivalent to 100 hours of study time (contact time plus private study time). Modules can vary in size, being worth either 10 or 20 credits.

Stage 1 provides a good introduction to a broad range of basic topics in Psychology and also gives guidance in the development of a range of key skills, including time management, memory techniques, organising knowledge, note-taking, reading styles (including speed-reading), creative use of IT and communication skills. Topics are taught in this Stage in order to introduce students to the variety of content and different methodologies of the subject, and to provide them with basic psychological principles, which are important to apply throughout the subject; this approach continues throughout the first year, although there is some development between semesters 1 and 2.

Stage 2 has six 10 credit lecture courses in the core areas of psychology, which encourages students to think critically about major issues, debates and current problems and advances in psychology. This module is intended also to encourage the student to interpret psychological findings in context for example the political or societal contexts] and also to integrate the various aspects of psychological knowledge gained throughout all three years of the degree programme. It is examined at the end of Semester 1 in a 3 hour paper.

Stage 3 allows for specialisation in a narrower range of topics and offers the opportunity to discover some of the latest work that is being carried out in the field. Much Stage 3 teaching takes place in small groups, tutorials and student-led seminars, rather than being predominantly lecture based. Course syllabuses are broad, reading lists detailed and extensive, and a great deal of responsibility is placed upon students to decide how to organise their learning, the scope and focus of their reading, and the nature of the practical work they undertake.

Progression through to Stages 2 and 3 is dependent on obtaining marks of at least 40 in all modules at the preceding stage. Two resit attempts are allowed.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

Field Code Changed

13 Criteria for admission

Dealt with in overarching Joint Honours Programme Specification.

High grades at A-level and minimum of grade B at GCSE Maths, or the equivalent of these.

14 Support for Student Learning

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml>

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School

Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports

This programme is not accredited by any professional body.

Additional mechanisms

Review Mechanisms:

Student Questionnaires
Degree Programme Review
Internal Subject Review
QAA Academic Review

Committees For Monitoring Quality

Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-disciplinary Degree Programmes
Co- and Multi-disciplinary Staff-Student Committee
Awards Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Degree programmes
Subject Area Boards of Studies
Subject Area Boards of Examiners
Subject Area Staff-Student Committees
Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
University Teaching and Learning Committee

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Weighting of stages

The marks from Stages 2 and 3 will contribute to the final classification of the degree
The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stages 2 and 3 is 1:1.

Common Marking Scheme

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	Honours	Non-honours
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Annex

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes
A1	All modules
A2	All modules
A3	All modules
B1	All modules
B2	All Stage 2 and 3 modules
C1	All modules
C2	All modules
D1	All stage 2 and 3 modules
D2	All modules
D3	All modules for independent work, and stage 3 module presentations for teamwork specifically;
D4	All modules
D5	All modules
D6	All modules