

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BSc Hons
4	Programme Title	Psychology
5	UCAS/Programme Code	C800
6	Programme Accreditation	British Psychological Society
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Psychology
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Date written/revised	March 2014

10 Programme Aims

The programme aims:

1. To recruit able and well-motivated students.
2. To provide undergraduate degree programmes that will enable our students to gain the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership from the British Psychological Society.
3. To provide knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and empirical basis of the major areas of contemporary Psychology.
4. To provide knowledge of and competence in the practical skills and quantitative methods needed to carry out psychological investigations and procedures.
5. To equip students to progress to professional training in Psychology or related programmes.
6. To develop students' intellectual and transferrable graduate 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 (subject) .

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

- A1 Knowledge and understanding of the basic processes, theories and research methods in the main areas of Psychology which will provide sufficient breadth and depth to meet the BPS requirements for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership.
- A2 Knowledge and understanding of the core areas of psychology and their inter linkages, i.e. biological psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, personality and individual differences, conceptual and historical issues, research methods.

A3 Knowledge and understanding of research methods i.e. research design, the statistical analysis of data and issues concerning research ethics.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is lectures, supplemented by handouts and supported by tutorials and/or seminars, small group work (A1, A2), and practical classes and examples classes (A3). Students are encouraged to supplement taught material with independent reading and are provided with reading lists to guide them in this. Essay writing, practical report writing, practice at multiple choice questions, seminars, and individual supervision of a project in Stage 3 aid the development of knowledge and understanding. Issues concerning research ethics (A3) are supported by a lecture, practical work and the project, which is subject to ethical assessment, 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), course work and oral presentations . Some modules include coursework, and essays, and practical reports 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 Formulate and test hypotheses.
- B5 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 (B1-B5) are acquired further and developed through tutorials, seminars and small group work, coursework essays, practicals and statistics examples classes and project work. Specifically, some coursework encourages students to engage with adversarial viewpoints in order that critical thinking and evaluation is developed and assessed. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their skills development by the use of ePortfolio.

Assessment Strategy

Cognitive skills (B1-B5) are assessed by essays, unseen written examinations, data interpretation and empirical design work in Stages 1 and 2 practicals, and the Stage 3 Project.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Understand and implement empirical design principles and identify appropriate research methods for the design of empirical studies.

- C2 Conduct statistical analyses and interpret data and findings.
- C3 Demonstrate numerical and graphical data presentation skills.
- C4 Use results to inform their understanding of psychology.

Teaching and Learning Methods

These skills (C1-C4) are taught by hands-on experience of the methods of research and scholarship including library skills training and statistics. Laboratory training begins in Stage 1 and continues in Stage 2 with more advanced data analysis and report writing. Students will be encouraged to record their practical skills development using ePortfolio. Practicals are used to develop research skills through the integration of research methodology and statistical techniques, and to prepare students for Stage 3 project work. Students review critically primary literature as a necessary component of their Empirical Project (PSY3097). Learning is also aided by discussions between students and their project supervisors

Assessment Strategy

Assessment is by way of examination and coursework (C2) and practical reports and project report (C1-C4).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have the ability to:

- D1 Communicate effectively in writing and orally.
- D2 Use library and other information sources effectively.
- D3 Work both independently and as an effective member of a team.
- D4 Take responsibility for their own learning, intellectual and transferable skills development.
- D5 Effectively 'time-manage' allocated work of various nature, as well as the ability to schedule work-loads effectively.
- D6 Use computing and IT resources.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Communication skills (D1) are acquired and developed in tutorials, seminars, small group work and presentations, including the final year project presentation, and in essays, practical and project report writing. The use of library and information searching skills (D2) are developed in essay, practical and project work. Teamwork, working independently and taking responsibility for their own learning (D3, D4) are skills that are acquired in the context of practical and project work and also 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, practical and project reports, tutorial and seminar discussions, and presentations, as well as in unseen written examinations. Skills D1-D5 are also assessed by means of in-course exercises in PSY2008. D6 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

This is a three-year full-time programme based on 30 weeks attendance per annum and accredited by the BPS. Modules to the value of 120 credits are taken in each year or stage (360 credit total over the duration of the course), and 10 credits are equivalent to 100 hours of study time (contact time plus private study time). Modules can vary in size from 10 to 30 credits, although the majority are worth either 10 or 20 credits.

In Stage 1 and 2 all modules are compulsory and in Stage 3 the 3rd year project (30 credits) and Professionals Skills module (10 credits) are compulsory with a total of 80 credits from optional Psychology modules (students may take up to 20 credits from FHEQ level 5 or 6, non-psychology modules subject to approval of the DPD).

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

A Programme Features

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 eight 10 credit lecture modules in the core areas of psychology, two 10 credit Methods modules, which provide a detailed and comprehensive approach to research methodology in conjunction with practical work. There is also a 10 credit advanced statistical techniques module which develops from PSY1010 & PSY1011 and is intended to underpin the statistics which will be necessary when the student undertakes their project in Stage 3. In addition, Psychological Enquiry 2: Principles of Psychology (PSY2008) and Introduction to Professional Skills in Psychology (PSY2015) encourage students to think critically about major issues, debates and current problems, practical issues in psychology and to record and reflect upon their skills development using ePortfolio.

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. There are two compulsory modules, the Project (30 credits) and the Professional Skills module and then a range of optional 10 and 20 credit modules, which are chosen from a range which can include up to 20 credits from outside the degree structure.

The 10 credit professional skills module was introduced in stage 2. By keeping a reflective log using ePortfolio students are able to reflect on their academic and transferrable skills development. In addition to academic skills, students are also encouraged to record skills gained from work experience. This reflective log serves as the assessment for the module but also makes students aware of their skills and helps to prepare them for the job application process.

The 30 credit project provides students with the opportunity to do a piece of research in an area, either of their own choosing or that is part of the current research programme of a member of staff, and enables students to apply and develop the various skills of research methodology and statistical analysis acquired over the previous two years.

Lectures are supplemented more than in previous years by seminars. 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 re-sit attempts are allowed.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

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

13 Criteria for admission

Entry Qualifications

A Levels

AAA-ABB including at least one A level from a subject with a substantial science or mathematics component including Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Psychology, Chemistry, Statistics, or Economics. Offer levels depend on the number of science/mathematics A levels a candidate offers. Minimum offers are usually: 1 science/mathematics A level, AAA 2 science/mathematics A levels, AAB 3 or more science/mathematics A levels, ABB.

Preference will be given to applicants offering at least two sciences. General Studies is accepted. GCSE Mathematics plus a science (both at a minimum grade B) are required. Two AS levels (or one AS Double Award) will not be considered in the place of one A level.

Scottish Qualifications

AAAAA-AA BBB at Higher Grade, including at least one subject with a substantial science or Mathematics component including Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Psychology, Chemistry, Statistics, or Economics. Offer levels depend on the number of science/mathematics Highers a candidate offers. Minimum offers are usually: 1 science/mathematics Higher, AAAAA 2 science/mathematics Highers, AAABB 3 or more science/mathematics Highers, ABBBB Preference will be given to applicants offering at least two sciences. Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers accepted. Mathematics plus a science required at grade 2 Standard Grade (or Intermediate 2 equivalent).

International Baccalaureate

A minimum of 34 points in the IB Diploma. Three subjects at Higher Level grade 6 or above, preferably including science. Mathematics or Mathematical Studies to be offered at Standard Level grade 5 if not offered at Higher Level. At least one third of all subjects taken must be science/mathematics.

Irish Leaving Certificate

AAAB/AABBB at Higher Level, including at least one subject with a substantial science or mathematics component including Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Economics. Offer levels depend on the number of science/mathematics subjects a candidate offers at Higher Level. Minimum offers are usually: 1 science/mathematics subject at Higher level, AAAAB 2 science/mathematics subjects at Higher level, AAABB 3 or more science/mathematics subjects at Higher level, ABBBB Preference will be given to applicants offering at least two sciences.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Access Qualifications

Units in Mathematical Studies and/or Quantitative Methods, Human Biology and a third subject (preferably a science subject) are required with at least 45 level 3 credits at Distinction.

BTEC Higher National Diploma

Applicants offering a BTEC Higher National Diploma are considered on an individual basis.

BTEC National Diploma

Applicants offering a BTEC National Diploma are considered on an individual basis.

Advanced Diploma

The Advanced Diploma is acceptable for entry in the following lines of learning: Business, Administration & Finance; Construction & the Built Environment; Creative & Media; Engineering; Environmental & Land-Based Studies; Information Technology; Manufacturing & Product Design; and Society, Health & Development. Minimum grade B is required in the Principal Learning and Extended Project, and minimum grade B in a science A level. GCSE Mathematics plus a science (both at a minimum grade B) are required. For a list of acceptable science A levels, please see A level entry requirements.

Cambridge Pre-U

D3,D3,D3-D3,M2,M2 in Principal Subjects including at least one principal subject from a subject with a substantial science or mathematics component including Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Psychology, Chemistry, or Economics. Offer levels depend on the number of science/mathematics principal subjects a candidate offers. Minimum offers are usually: 1 science/mathematics principal subject, D3,D3,D3 2 science/mathematics principal subjects, D3,D3,M2 3 or more science/mathematics principal subjects, D3,M2,M2. Preference will be given to applicants offering at least two sciences. GCSE Mathematics plus a science (both at a minimum grade B) are required.

Additional Information

Level of English Language Capability

IELTS – no score of less than 6.5 in any of the 4 domains.

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

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.

The transition of new students is also supported through a structured peer-mentoring programme as part of the Semester 1 module "Psychological Enquiry 1" The main goal of this module is to introduce students to appropriate working patterns; provide guidance for good use of private study time; discuss current practices of library use, report writing, catching up with lecture material and preparations for exams.

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 and specific modules throughout the degree (e.g. Psychological Enquiry 1).

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 and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.* A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support team 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.

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.

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.

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

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports

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

Student evaluations

All modules and stages* are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff 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 students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

*With the exception of intercalating years and the final stages of undergraduate programmes.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

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

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

The degree programme is accredited by the British Psychological Society every five years and was last re-accredited in 2011.

Additional mechanisms

QAA Report (April 2000), in which we gained the maximum score of 24/24 points. The high quality research (as evidenced in recent RAEs) informs and directs our teaching.

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 re-assessment 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 1:2

Common Marking Scheme

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

	Modules used for degree classification (DC)	Modules not used for degree classification
<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

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching Learning and Student Experience 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: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>

The School Brochure: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

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.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Development of specific Intended Learning Outcomes occurs through the following modules (compulsory modules in bold text, optional modules in normal, italic text)

	Statement of intended learning outcome	Modules contributing to the outcome
A1	Knowledge and understanding of the basic processes, theories and research methods in the main areas of Psychology which will provide sufficient breadth and depth to meet the BPS requirements for Graduate Basis for Registration	All modules
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	All modules
A3	Knowledge and understanding of research methods i.e. research design, the statistical analysis of data and issues concerning research ethics.	PSY1010, PSY1011, PSY2008, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY2014, PSY3009, PSY3016, PSY3018, PSY3020, PSY3021, PSY3023, PSY3027, PSY3029 PSY3097
B1	Gather information from a variety of sources	All modules
B2	Understand and apply theoretical concepts.	All modules
B3	Critically evaluate arguments and evidence.	All modules
B4	Formulate and test hypotheses.	PSY1010, PSY1011, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY2014, PSY3018, PSY3029, PSY3097.
B5	Understand and consider critical issues in psychology and articulate arguments and points of view in relation to these.	All modules, especially PSY2006, PSY2008 and PSY2015, PSY3002, PSY3008, PSY3009, PSY3016, PSY3018, PSY3020, PSY3021, PSY3023, PSY3027.
C1	Understand and implement empirical design principles and identify appropriate research methods for the design of empirical studies.	PSY1010 PSY1011, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY2014, PSY3029, PSY3097.
C2	Conduct statistical analyses and interpret data and findings	PSY1010 PSY1011, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY3029, PSY3097.

C3	Demonstrate numerical and graphical data presentation skills.	PSY1010 PSY1011, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY3018, PSY3027, PSY3097.
C4	Use results to inform their understanding of psychology.	PSY1001, PSY1010 PSY1011, PSY2008, PSY2009, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY2014, , PSY3097.
D1	The ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally.	All modules, especially PSY1001, PSY1007, PSY1008, PSY2008, PSY2015, PSY3097, PSY3008, PSY3009, PSY3016, PSY3018, PSY3020, PSY3021, PSY3023, PSY3027, PSY3029.
D2	The ability to use library and other information sources effectively.	All modules
D3	The ability to work both independently and as an effective member of a team.	PSY1001, PSY1007, PSY1010, PSY1011, PSY1008, PSY2008, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY3008, PSY3009, PSY3015, PSY3020, PSY3021, PSY3022, PSY3023, PSY3027, PSY3097.
D4	The ability to take responsibility for their own learning and intellectual development.	Induction and throughout the psychology course, particularly PSY1001, PSY3029, PSY3097.
D5	Time-management skills and the ability to schedule work-loads effectively.	All modules, but particularly in PSY1001, PSY1010, PSY1011, PSY2008, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY2014, PSY3029, PSY3097.
D6	The ability to use computing and IT resources.	All modules, but particularly in PSY1001, PSY1004, PSY1010, PSY1011, PSY2008, PSY2009, PSY2010, PSY2011, PSY2015, PSY3008, PSY3018, PSY3020, PSY3021, PSY3023, PSY3027, PSY3029, PSY3097.