

## **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

### **Course record information**

Name and level of final award:	MSc Health Psychology The MSc Health Psychology is a Bologna FQ- EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Health Psychology Postgraduate Certificate in Health Psychology
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	New Cavendish Street
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	One year full time, two years part time. September start
<a href="#">QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</a> :	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	British Psychological Society (2017)
Date of course validation/review:	Dec 2018
Date of programme specification approval:	Jan 2019
Valid for cohorts:	From 2019/20
Course Leader:	Tina Cartwright
Course URL:	<a href="http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate">westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate</a>
Westminster Course Code:	PMPSY03F (FT) & PMPSY03P (PT)
JACS code:	
UKPASS code:	

## **Admissions requirements**

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: [westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply)

## **Aims of the course**

The MSc Health Psychology has been designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and applied bases of psychology and health, illness and disease. Specifically it aims to:

- provide students with a strong foundation in health psychology for work in the healthcare sector;
- provide students with a systematic understanding and critical awareness of the role of the biopsychosocial model in the development and maintenance of health and illness;
- provide a forum within which the methods of health psychology can be critically evaluated, assessed and debated in regard to their value, degree of scientific validity and the credibility of their guiding principles;
- enable students to undertake, analyse and disseminate quantitative and qualitative research in health psychology according to ethical codes of practice;
- enable students to critically evaluate a range of health psychology interventions and develop practice-based skills for health psychology practice;
- guide students in developing their professional identity through critical self-reflection and interprofessional learning;
- satisfy the core curriculum criteria for accreditation by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

## **Employment and further study opportunities:**

The MSc Health Psychology is designed to confer BPS Stage 1 training towards Chartered Psychologist status for those holding Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). As such it is a mandatory qualification for those wishing to pursue Stage 2 training and subsequent registration with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Practitioner Psychologist: Health Psychologist. At the time of writing, for those students who do not hold GBC, it is not possible to continue further training on an approved course. It should be noted, that it is not the responsibility of the University of Westminster to check whether students are eligible for GBC. It is the student's responsibility to check their eligibility for GBC directly with the BPS. If a student has declared on their application form that they are eligible for or hold GBC and this turns out not to be the case, and they are excluded from further HCPC approved training, the University of Westminster cannot be held liable.

Irrespective of GBC status, the course is suitable as preparation for undertaking a PhD in Psychology and preparation for other areas of postgraduate training in general. The MSc Health Psychology also provides a strong foundation for working in an applied healthcare or health-related setting.

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

The MSc Health Psychology is committed to embedding employability within the course and offers workshops, lunchtime talks and an optional work experience module to enhance student employability opportunities.

### **Learning outcomes**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

*On successful completion of the course students should be able to:*

- demonstrate a systematic understanding of the role of health psychology in health care settings (*KU*);
- critically evaluate evidence regarding the relationship between biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors in the development and maintenance of health and illness (*KU, SS*);
- critically evaluate the practice, techniques, philosophies and principles which underpin the methods used in health psychology (*KU, SS*);
- demonstrate skills in critically appraising and applying health psychology theory and evidence to practice (*SS*);
- demonstrate transferable skills and effectiveness as a self-reflective learner capable of ethically informed research within multidisciplinary health contexts (*SS, TS*);
- demonstrate the skills to communicate effectively to academic and health practitioner audiences through a range of mediums (*SS, TS*)

Note: Knowledge & understanding (*KU*); Specific skills (*SS*); Transferable skills (*TS*)

### **Learning, teaching and assessment methods**

#### **Learning and teaching**

The course team believes that the student is at the centre of the learning process and students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and manage their time effectively. Students are expected to engage with all timetabled sessions, the learning resources and other opportunities provided.

The approach manifest in the delivery of the MSc is one which facilitates a student's understanding of a broad range of theory and application in Health Psychology. It emphasizes the importance of an evidence based approach to Health Psychology and allows the student to gain skills and knowledge through taught sessions and independent study, and demonstrate critical thinking through a range of assessments.

Course modules are taught by a mixture of lectures, seminars, workshops, student led learning, 'hands on computing' and one-to-one supervision as appropriate. In addition to formal contact, students are required to engage in private study and research primary resource material. Teaching methods are kept under review by the course team at all times, and student feedback is routinely gathered.

## Assessment

Underpinning the design of the course, a wide range of assessment methods are used in order to develop critical evaluation and effective communication over a variety of different mediums. The course's novel and innovative assessments have been praised by external examiners, the BPS accreditation team and internal reviewers.

Written assessments include: a critical review, quantitative and qualitative research reports, essays, summary and reflective reports, conference poster, behaviour change diary and reflective essay, grant proposal, timed in-class test, mini-systematic review, peer review paper and research portfolio (Research Based Project).

Oral presentations are geared towards both academic and health professional audiences. These include: a short poster conference presentation, student-led panel, participation in a grant committee, and presentation to health care workers (role play).

## Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year, part-time students over two academic years.

For MSc: Core modules six 20 credit taught modules and 60 credit project.

For PG Diploma: Core modules six 20 credit taught modules.

For PG Certificate: Core modules three 20 credit taught modules.

Credit Level 7				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7HPSY001W	Theories & Perspectives in Health Psychology	Core	20	10
7HPSY002W	Health Psychology in Practice	Core	20	10
7HPSY003W	Health Psychology: A Lifespan Development Perspective	Core	20	10
7HPSY004W	Individual Differences, Health, Stress & Illness	Core	20	10
7PSYC001W	Data Handling & Research Methods for Applied Psychology	Core	20	10
7PSYC026W	Specialist Topics for Applied Psychology	Core	20	10
Students will be registered for 7HPSY005W ( <i>core</i> ) or can choose 7PSYC029W AND 7PSYC023W				
7HPSY005W	Research Based Project: Health Psychology	Core Option	60	30
7PSYC029W	Work Experience in a Psychological Setting for MSc Students	Core Option	20	10
7PSYC023W	Independent Research Project	Core Option	40	20

## **Professional Body Accreditation or other external references**

The MSc Health Psychology is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS). It confers BPS Stage 1 training towards Chartered Psychologist status for those holding Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC).

## **Academic regulations**

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at:  
[westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

## **How will you be supported in your studies?**

### **Course Management**

The course is managed by the Course Leader within Psychology who is responsible for day to day running and overall management of the course. The Associate Head of School (Psychology) has overall responsibility for all courses in Psychology and the Head of School of Social Sciences has overall responsibility for all courses in the School.

### **Academic Support**

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

### **Learning Support**

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students<sup>1</sup> can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

### **Support Services**

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

## **How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?**

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2018. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

### **How do we act on student feedback?**

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- There are also School Staff Student Exchange meetings that enable wider discussions across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.

**Please note:** This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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