

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
QAA subject benchmarking group(s) :	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	British Psychological Society (2010)
Date of course validation/review:	March 2011
Date of programme specification approval:	2014
Course Leader:	Tina Cartwright
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster Course Code:	W50
JACS code:	
UKPASS code:	

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate 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

Aims of the course

The course aims 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 public and/or private sector;
- cultivate the skills necessary to communicate research findings effectively and succinctly;
- provide students with an understanding of the social, cultural and economic contexts of health psychology research;
- offer the opportunity to understand a range of self-help, treatment and rehabilitation approaches derived from psychology intervention programmes;
- provide a forum within which the methods of health psychology can be evaluated, assessed and debated in regard to their value, degree of scientific validity and the credibility of their guiding principles;
- provide the opportunity for participants to expand and develop their own experience of health and illness (work and personal) through critical analysis, research and collaborating understanding;
- satisfy the core curriculum criteria for accreditation by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

Employment and further study opportunities:

The programme 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 students 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.

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, ie 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.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the Programmes students should be able to:

- discuss the application of psychology to the theory and practice of medicine and health care including primary care;
- articulate the application of behavioural sciences to a wide range of issues faced by a variety of health professionals;
- evaluate evidence regarding the relationships between psychological factors, physiological and pathological factors and health, illness and disease;
- evaluate research outcomes on the psychological correlates of health and illness behaviours;
- describe the practice, techniques, philosophies and principles which underpin the methods used in health psychology;
- demonstrate transferable skills and effectiveness as an independent learner capable of research within health contexts;
- articulate the value of utilising appropriate health psychology approaches within medical settings.

Knowledge and understanding

Students are expected to develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the application of psychology to the theory and practice of medicine and health care including primary care;
- the application of behavioural sciences to a wide range of issues faced by a variety of health professionals;
- the practice, techniques, philosophies and principles which underpin the methods used in health psychology.

Specific skills

Students are expected to develop the following subject specific skills:

- evaluate evidence regarding the relationships between psychological factors, physiological and pathological factors and health, illness and disease;
- evaluate research outcomes on the psychological correlates of health and illness behaviours;
- articulate the value of utilising appropriate health psychology approaches within medical settings;
- select an appropriate methodology for a given purpose and a given set of data;
- demonstrate the skills involved in preparing a grant application, a journal review article and an empirical based research paper suitable for submission to a peer review journal.

Key transferable skills

Students are expected to develop key transferable skills to a high level. For example:

- skill in undertaking research within a range of contexts;
- group working especially task centred working;
- use of a range of learning resources and research techniques;
- self-evaluation especially in terms of critical analysis, opinion challenge and response to feedback;
- management of information in terms of information and data retrieval (including ICT), creative and innovative thinking and research strategy;
- autonomy in terms of ability to undertake and management of independent learning, and time management in general;
- verbal and written communication skills;
- identification of problems and the application of methods to resolve;
- discipline relevant career development

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Learning and Teaching methods include: Lectures, small group work, seminars, demonstrations, practical sessions, specialist speaker events, informed debate.

Assessment methods include: Time restricted open and closed book short answer exams, in-class tests, essays, grant application proposal submission and critique, journal review paper, individual conference style presentations, individual seminar style presentations, reflective intervention diary, practical report, empirical based research paper.

Course structure

The core modules available are given below.

MSc Health Psychology students will normally complete the 180 credits in one academic year (FT) or two academic years (PT).

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 must choose either 7HPSY005W or AND				
7PSYC023W	Independent Research Project	Core	40	20
7PSYC029W	Work Experience in a Psychological Setting for MSc Students	Core	20	10
7HPSY005W	Research Based Project: Health Psychology	Core	60	30

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The course is managed by a Course Leader within the Department of Psychology, one of the Departments in the Faculty of Science and Technology. The Department has 30 full-time staff and a number of Visiting Lecturers.

The Department has one away-day per year where discussions include ways to identify and improve the design and delivery of its courses. There is also an annual research forum where staff and research students present their latest findings and where teaching-research links are considered. Staff in the Department undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by their colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance or research activity. Staff in the Department attend events organised by the Quality and Standards Office, Westminster Exchange and the Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues.

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. Students¹ 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?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 1995. 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.

¹ Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

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 Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty 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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