

Postgraduate Programme Specification

D.Psych Health Psychology

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Programme Title	DPsych Health Psychology		
Final Award	Doctorate in Health Psychology		
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University		
School	Health and Life Sciences		
Department	Psychology		
Mode of Study	Full-time Part-time		
Location of Delivery	Glasgow Campus		
UCAS Code	N/A		
Accreditations (PSRB)	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)/British Psychological Society (BPS)		
Period of Approval	From:	September 2024	To: August 2029

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
<p><i>Background</i> Applied psychology, or Practitioner Psychologists, became a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) regulated profession in 2009. The regulatory framework encompasses seven domains of applied psychology practice, each with protected title status. These include: Health, Sport and Exercise, Counselling, Forensic, Clinical, Occupational and Educational Psychology. HCPC Standards of Proficiency (SOPS) for applied psychology are organised into two components: 1) generic standards spanning all domains of applied psychology practice (known as profession-specific standards); and 2) standards specific to each domain (known as domain-specific standards). Profession-specific standards comprise over 80% of all SOPS.</p> <p>With such a significant proportion of shared standards and competencies, postgraduate programmes have the opportunity to move away from historically entrenched, domain-specific training structures, which typically emphasise the differences between applied psychology practice. Instead, we offer a broad, Applied Psychology Doctoral Framework (APDF) which promotes the sharing of profession-specific resources, utilising inter-professional collaborations while still retaining a specific professional domain identity.</p> <p>Currently at GCU, psychology is strongly focussed on the application of psychological knowledge and research for the common good. Existing programmes, accredited by appropriate professional bodies (e.g., British Psychological Society [BPS] and HCPC) include: a BSc (Hons) in Applied Psychology with domain-specific bracketed titles; an MSc in Forensic Psychology; and three HCPC/BPS approved Professional Doctorate Programmes: DPsych Counselling Psychology; DPsych Health Psychology and DPsych Sport and Exercise Psychology, all with multiple exit points. All three of these Professional Doctorate programmes sit within our APDF. The APDF model is highly flexible, utilising a small 'core' team of expert staff supplemented by wider departmental expertise and external support. It is inherently expandable and responsive to</p>

scale. The APDF offers shared profession-specific teaching and resources while also delivering domain-specific training. Students benefit from shared teaching and learning on 'core' topics, while the programme team draw on existing, efficient systems of administration, research supervision and placement management.

Health psychology as a discipline is the fastest growing field of psychology within the UK and yet only three Universities in Scotland (University of Stirling, University of Aberdeen and St Andrews University) currently offer British Psychological Society (BPS) accredited MSc programmes. At present, there is only one other health psychology doctorate programme offered in Scotland (University of Stirling). Given an ageing and obesogenic population (and the associated increased prevalence of chronic and long-term health conditions), the demand for behavioural health and wellbeing interventions (and, therefore, Health Psychologists), is only set to increase.

The doctoral programme is designed to meet the BPS's accreditation standards for Stage 1 and 2 training in health psychology, thus meeting the requirements for eligibility to apply for Chartered Psychologist status. In addition, approval has been gained from the HCPC for eligibility to apply for registration as a Health Psychologist. It is noteworthy that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

Programme Aims

The overall aim of the Doctorate in Health Psychology is to provide the knowledge and skills required to develop a career as a practitioner Health Psychologist. The programme, therefore, aims to prepare students for accreditation as a Health Psychologist by providing training and supervision in five key areas of competency, including: research, teaching and training, consultancy, behaviour change interventions, and professional skills. In doing so, the proposed programme aims to enable students to work as Health Psychologists within a broad range of inter-disciplinary environments, including third sector, health and social care (e.g., NHS), government, industry, private practice and academic/research settings.

More specifically, the programme aims to:

1. Critically explore the historical underpinnings and development of health psychology.
2. Critically examine the theoretical frameworks within which health psychology practice is located.
3. Deliver a comprehensive, critical understanding of the ethical and professional issues pertinent to practicing as a health psychologist.
4. Provide original, specialist professional training in a range of behaviour change approaches.
5. Develop an advanced capability to establish, conceptualise and employ effective professional relationships with clients utilising a range of psychological models and approaches.
6. Offer highly innovative, specialist training in the conduct and analysis of health psychology research, together with an advanced understanding of its implications for professional practice.
7. Provide a psychologically safe, creative environment for personal development and self-reflection.

At the end of their doctoral training, students should be:

1. Highly competent, reflexive, ethically sound, resourceful, creative and informed health psychology practitioners, who offer highly specialised skills to a range of practice settings.
2. Leading in their responsibility to the interpretive, personal, intimate and relational aspects of health psychology practice.

3. Autonomous, committed and accountable for ongoing personal and professional development training.
4. Critically aware of the significance of wider social, cultural and political domains within which health psychology operates.
5. Deeply critical and evaluative of the philosophy, theory, research and practice that constitutes health psychology.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Across all programmes, the Department of Psychology (DoP) at GCU takes accountability for continuous monitoring and improvements in matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), guided in our ethical practices by our links with professional and statutory bodies. We commit to representing historically-excluded groups and addressing inequalities in our recruitment and retention processes, and across our research projects and learning and teaching practices. We are cognisant of, and deliberately embrace, the diversity of our staff, student body and the wider psychology community in terms of demographics and protected characteristics, and we seek to actively reflect that diversity throughout our work. Practically, we will transfer our EDI priorities into each module by regularly seeking perspectives from our diverse staff, student and client groups, and using these to inform the development of curricula, applied practice and engagement activities. This includes periodic auditing of our recruitment, progression and attrition rates with a focus on under-represented groups, ongoing evaluation of diversity among our invited speakers, and sharing of best practice in these areas across our programmes. In every module, we will ensure the resources and reading that we recommend come from increasingly diverse sources, and that the learning activities and applied examples provided in teaching materials and assessments explicitly reference a wide range of socio-cultural groups and perspectives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

A: Knowledge and understanding;

A1 Understand, critically evaluate, select, appraise and deploy a range of research methods, techniques and approaches that are appropriate for particular research questions and contexts, and demonstrate a deep understanding of issues relating to their validity, reliability and rigour.

A2 Undertake highly innovative, cutting-edge, applied research at a highly advanced level which conform to ethical principles (including those of the British Psychological Society) and demonstrates a clear ability to communicate results in a manner which satisfies peer review and merits publication.

A3 Make informed, critical judgements on complex issues in professional, health related and other specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data and to be able to communicate ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

A4 Be highly competent in comparing, contrasting and critically evaluating a range of health psychology models, frameworks and approaches to behaviour change intervention at both an individual and group/public level.

A5 Communicate an advanced knowledge of the organisational policies and contextual and legal frameworks within which Health Psychologists practice.

A6 Demonstrate advanced specialist skills in practicing, monitoring and evaluating professional practice.

A7 Mount a clear, critical defence of the work undertaken, clearly outlining its originality and contribution to the discipline.

B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;

B1 Enabled to work as highly skilled Health Psychologists within a broad range of interdisciplinary environments, including third sector, health and social care (e.g., NHS), government, industry, private practice and academic/research settings.

B2 Clearly demonstrate professional standards in research and professional practice, including making informed professional judgements on complex issues and adhering to codes of ethical and legal conduct.

B3 Demonstrate a detailed, critical understanding of clients' needs, develop an appropriate working formulation model, design, plan and implement it and deliver psychological intentions and critically evaluate their outcomes.

B4 Critically reflect on and review professional practice in health psychology, including recognising needs for further development or training.

B5 Adopt a critical and evaluative approach to the philosophy, theory, research and practice that constitutes health psychology.

C: Generic cognitive skills;

C1 Conceptualise, design, plan, deliver, assess and critically evaluate a training programme of five teaching sessions for the development of new knowledge, applications and understanding of health psychology.

C2 Create and interpret new knowledge through original, innovative research to extend the forefront of their practice and merit publication.

C3 Critically apply techniques for research and advanced professional and academic enquiry.

C4 Deeply understand a broad range of applied health psychology skills that are required to plan, develop, deliver and critically evaluate experiences of delivering interventions in a range of healthcare contexts, utilising a range of modalities.

C5 Demonstrate critical analysis and advanced problem-solving skills.

C6 Exhibit deep, self-reflection.

D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

D1 Present highly complex and novel ideas critically and effectively.

D2 Use web based learning technologies to assist and fulfil teaching and learning requirements.

D3 Develop advanced competency in using statistical analytic packages such as SPSS.

D4 Plan, design, deliver and demonstrate advanced skills in teaching/training programmes relevant to small and large groups utilising a range of teaching approaches, materials, techniques and exercise autonomous initiative in unpredictable situations.

D5 Demonstrate specialist skills in the conduct and management of consultancy work from pitching, negotiation and client-relationship management through to the final report.

D6 Communicate and demonstrate autonomous management of the consultancy process and outcomes by fully engaging with and actively planning the client-consultancy relationship.

D7 Demonstrate highly efficient, advanced communication and interpersonal skills that facilitate highly efficient working with clients.

E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

E1 Demonstrate advanced professional experience to practice as an autonomous practitioner in health psychology, including the deep understanding and acquisition of professional practice and the transferrable skills required for exercising personal responsibility and autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations in the professional environment.

E2 Independently plan, document, monitor, critically evaluate and adjust consultancy work drawing on theoretical frameworks/models and demonstrate a deep understanding of the barriers and enablers of effective intervention delivery based on clients' needs.

E3 Exemplify advanced professional skills in the engagement and applied practice of communication and relationship building with clients and delivering highly appropriate techniques to meet their individual needs in real life practice.

E4 Demonstrate the capacity to hold oneself accountable to the public and profession for one's own personal integrity.

E5 Communicate preparedness to accept responsibility for continuing professional development by developing greater powers of awareness and the courage to pursue deeper personal knowledge and critical understanding pertinent to effective working.

E6 Operate a deep understanding of anti-discriminatory practice and relevant ethical guidelines.

E7 Demonstrate an advanced ability to manage professional relationships including appropriate liaison and to work within inter-disciplinary contexts and teams.

E8 Demonstrate an advanced ability to practice, monitor and critically evaluate therapeutic practice.

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Placements
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate, determined at module level by the Module Leader in accordance with university requirements.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Written coursework (essays, reports, case studies, dissertation, literature review)
- Oral coursework (presentations, structured conversations)
- Practical Assessment (Placement, VIVA, Laboratory work)
- Group work
- Blogs and Wikis
- Presentations
- Formal Examinations and Class Tests

The above assessments may be delivered either in person and online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS²

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

Module Code	Module Title	Core or Optional	SCQF Level	Credit Size	Coursework %	Examination %	Practical %
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For the award of MSc in Health Psychology: 180 credits (at M Level), including the following modules:

MMC 825597	Applied Psychology Practice 1S (skills)	Core	11	30	10/40/50	0	
MMC 825598	Applied Psychology Practice 1T (theory)	Core	11	15	100	0	
MMC830673	Professional Development in Applied Psychology 1 M	Core	11	15	50/50	0	
MMC826024	Consultancy and Training in Applied Psychology: Health	Core	11	15	100	0	
MMC824546	Interventions in Applied Psychology 1	Core	11	30	30/70	0	
MMC826510	Analytical Methods	Core	11	15	40/60	0	
MMC 825509	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 1 (M)	Core	11	60	100	0	

Exit Award – Master of Science in Health Psychology

180

For the award of Doctorate In Health Psychology: 540 credits with 420 at Doctorate level, including the following modules:

MMC 825597	Applied Psychology Practice 1S (skills)	Core	11	30	10/40/50	0	
MMC 825598	Applied Psychology Practice 1T (theory)	Core	11	15	100	0	
MMC 825596	Professional Development in Applied Psychology 1	Core	11	15	50/50	0	
MMC826024	Consultancy and Training in Applied Psychology: Health	Core	11	15	100	0	
MMC824546	Interventions in Applied Psychology 1	Core	11	30	30/70	0	
MMC826510	Analytical Methods	Core	11	15	40/60	0	
MDC825506	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 1 (D)	Core	12	60	100	0	
MDC830674	Applied Psychology Practice 2A	Core	12	30	100	0	
MDC830675	Interventions in Applied Psychology 2	Core	12	30	50/50	0	
MDC825599	Professional Development in Applied Psychology 2	Core	12	30	50/50	0	
MDC825601	Critical Enquiry in Applied Psychology 2	Core	12	30	40/60	0	
MDC825508	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 2	Core	12	60	50/50	0	

MDC826023	Interventions in Applied Psychology 3	Core	12	45	100	0	
MDC825611	Professional Development in Applied Psychology 3A	Core	12	30	100	0	
MDC825612	Professional Development in Applied Psychology 3B	Core	12	15	Combined written and oral viva exam		
MDC825609	Critical Enquiry in Applied Psychology 3	Core	12	30	50/50	0	
MDC825507	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 3	Core	12	60	100	0	

Exit Award – Doctorate in Health Psychology

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme³:

Postgraduate Certificate in Psychological Approaches to Health & Wellbeing - *achieved upon successful completion of 60 credits at M level.*

Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Approaches to Health & Wellbeing - *achieved upon successful completion of 120 credits at M level.*

Master of Science in Health Psychology - *achieved upon successful completion of 180 credits at M level but may include ARAP1D (60 credits) in place of ARAP1M, where this has already been undertaken.*

Doctorate in Health Psychology – *achieved upon successful completion of 540 credits, which must include the modules indicated above 420 credits must be at Doctoral level.*

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at: www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulationsandpolicies

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions:

Case No's: 182, 202, 212

Details:

1. IELTS of 7 is required for programme entry (no element can be below 6.5). (Case 202)
2. The transition of students into the Doctoral programme is permitted using the GCU RPL process where they: (i) currently hold a Masters degree and have successfully completed a Dissertation at SCQF Level 11, AND (ii) successfully undertake an additional assessment through the RPIL process to show how they have demonstrated the doctoral level learning outcomes of Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 1D. (Case 202)
3. No compensation is permissible across any modules at SCQF level 11: all modules must be passed at 50%. (Case 182)
4. Students may be permitted to carry up to 60 credits into a following Stage, at the discretion of the Assessment Board. (Case 202)
5. Students undertaking D.Psych Framework programmes are expected to attend all classes, practical/workshop teachings and Practice Education placements. Where a student has attendance of less than 80% of any programme modules they will normally be required to retake the module prior to proceeding to the next level of the programme. (Case 212)

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)**Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.**

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0	Transfer of information to new template following programme reapproval. Introduction of three new modules: Professional Development in Applied Psychology 1M, Applied Psychology Practice 2A (30 credits) and Interventions in Applied Psychology 2 (30 credits). These <u>replace</u> Interventions in Applied Psychology 2 (60 credit).	November 2023	September 2024