Frequently Asked Questions

MA Psychology, MSc Psychology, and MSc Brain Imaging and Cognitive Neuroscience (BICN)

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1  What are the course entry requirements?

**MSc Psychology and MSc BICN:** 2:1 or higher in undergraduate degree (Psychology or a related discipline) and at least a 2:1 (60% or higher) in the research dissertation. Applicants are expected to have taken modules in experimental psychology, cognitive psychology, physiological/biological psychology and/or neuropsychology and/or neuroscience, and statistics and research methods. Applicants also need to have completed/be completing a final-year dissertation that includes planning and conducting research and analysing quantitative or qualitative data.

Undergraduate degrees in Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Biological Science, Medical Sciences that included some psychology modules (as described above) will also be considered (entry requirements as above: 2:1 or higher in degree and in the research dissertation)

**MA Psychology:** 2:1 or higher in undergraduate Psychology or 2:1 or higher in any discipline with some Psychology content. Ideally, the Psychology content will be Psychology-specific modules (e.g. Introduction to Psychology; Social Psychology; Developmental Psychology; Cognitive Psychology; Biological Psychology / Neuropsychology / Biopsychology; Neuroscience; Personality and Individual Differences; Research Methods and Statistics for Psychology).

**International students** are also required to provide proof of the University of Birmingham recognised English Language qualifications. Further details are available at: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/requirements-/pgt/international/index.aspx

2  What are the course fees?

Please check the University website for the latest fees: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/fees.aspx

3  Are there any bursaries?

The MSc and MA are self-funded courses; however students can check the University website for any scholarships that may be available for postgraduate courses:
http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx

4  How do I apply for the course?

First, visit the course-specific webpage for details about what to include in your personal statement:

- **MA Psychology**
- **MSc Psychology**
- **MSc Brain Imaging & Cognitive Neuroscience**

Applications are made online at: https://pga.bham.ac.uk/. Please apply as soon as possible, as places are limited and the programme may close when full.

**Please note:** It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they provide the supporting documents (personal statement, two academic references, transcripts) to enable the University to process the application as quickly as possible.
5 What do I put in my personal statement?

MSc Psychology and MSc BICN:

Research experience: Mention any projects completed for your undergraduate degree and any projects you have worked on as a volunteer or paid research assistant. Be sure to mention: details of research methods and methods of data collection used; quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques used; Participant groups; areas of research.

Research interests: Describe your short-term research interests and future research/career plans. Explain how a place on this course will help you to achieve these plans. Please include details of research methods and analysis techniques that you would like to use or develop as a Masters student.

Explain how your research interests fit with the areas of research expertise in the School of Psychology. Be sure to state the names of academics within the School that, given the opportunity, you would like to work with. If possible, indicate more than one research interest and indicate your preference for each of them. (Please note, however, that if you are offered a place on the course, we will contact you about identifying relevant, available supervisors before the course commences. When allocating a supervisor, we will take your preferences into account, but there are a number of other factors we consider, so your supervisor may not be one of the academics you have listed.)

MA Psychology:

Previous experience of Psychology: Mention the undergraduate Psychology modules you have taken, whether psychological theory or research was embedded in your undergraduate project, and any practical experience of Psychology you have (e.g., work as volunteer or paid research assistant on a Psychology project).

Research interests: A major aspect of the MA Psychology course is the Research Project, a substantial critical inquiry into an area of psychology research. Describe your research interests and explain how your research interests fit with the areas of research expertise in the School of Psychology. Be sure to state the names of academics within the School that, given the opportunity, you would like to work with. If possible, indicate more than one research interest and indicate your preference for each of them. (Please note, however, that if you are offered a place on the course, we will contact you about identifying relevant, available supervisors before the course commences. When allocating a supervisor, we will take your preferences into account, but there are a number of other factors we consider, so your supervisor may not be one of the academics you have listed.)

All courses:

- What are your career aspirations? Why do you have these aspirations?
- Highlight other aspects of the CV or points of achievement.

6 What does the part-time MSc look like?

In Year 1, students complete the majority of the taught modules. Most classes are held on Mondays (MSc Psychology) and Mondays and Tuesdays (MSc BICN). Although the rest of the week is typically unscheduled, there will likely be some MSc-related commitments on the other days, too (e.g., attending seminars, coursework preparation; group meetings), which students will need to schedule.

In Year 2, students complete the research components of the course (a research proposal, a research placement and the major research project) and one taught module.
The taught module timetable is planned in advance, allowing students to arrange their work and study commitments. If you have any queries about the forthcoming taught module timetable, please contact the Course Admin Team: pg-psychology-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk

7 What does the part-time MA look like?

In Year 1, students do the majority of the taught modules. Most classes are held on Mondays, but the Psychology option module could take place on any day of the week. Although the rest of the week is typically unscheduled, there will likely be some MA-related commitments on other week days (e.g., attending seminars; coursework preparation, group meetings), which students will need to schedule.

In Year 2, students do the research components of the course (a public engagement project; the research project) and one taught module.

The taught module timetable is planned in advance, allowing students to arrange their work and study commitments. If you have any queries about the forthcoming taught module timetable, please contact the Course Admin Team: pg-psychology-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk

8 Can I be a full-time student and work part-time?

Full-time students are encouraged not to have part-time jobs because the course is set out to be a full-time commitment. If students do choose to work, then the University recommends that full-time students do not work for more than 15 hours a week during term time. It's also important to bear in mind that paid work commitments are not normally considered to be grounds for requesting extensions to coursework deadlines or deferring exams.

The taught module timetable is planned in advance, allowing students to arrange their work and study commitments. If you have any queries about the forthcoming taught module timetable, please contact the Course Admin Team: pg-psychology-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk

9 Is the course BPS accredited?

The MScs and MA are not accredited by the BPS and, therefore, do not offer Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the society.

10 Is the MSc Psychology / MA Psychology a conversion course?

No, these courses are not conversion courses and do not provide a grounding in the core areas of Psychology covered on an undergraduate Psychology degree.

11 Could you move onto Clinical Psychology after completing the MSc Psychology / MSc BICN?

The MSc would be excellent training for any PhD and, therefore, also a PhD in Clinical Psychology. (Note: a PhD is not the same as a DClinPsy, the qualification needed to be a clinical psychologist). The MSc provides excellent research training, which could be very useful for a doctorate in clinical psychology, given the emphasis on research experience in some clinical psychology doctorate programmes.
12 Could you move onto Clinical Psychology after completing the MA Psychology programme?

To follow the British Psychological Society’s clinical training route, you will need Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the Society, which is gained by completing an accredited Psychology course (undergraduate or conversion). The MA Psychology is not a conversion course and will not, therefore confer GBC on completion. You can find out more information about the clinical training route here: http://careers.bps.org.uk/

13 Do I need to choose supervisors for my research components before I apply?

No, you do not. It is important, however, that you investigate whether your research interests fit with the areas of research expertise and ongoing research in the School. If you wish, you could contact academics in the School to discuss your research interests; however, there is no guarantee that you will be supervised by any academic(s) that you contact (e.g., a supervisor might the University before you arrive or may not be taking any Masters students that year)

If you are offered a place and accept it, we will give you detailed information about how students are allocated to supervisors. Briefly, allocations take into account students’ research interests, staff availability, and students’ course of study (e.g., for BICN students, at least one research module must involve use of brain imaging techniques or analysis of brain imaging data)

14 What’s the difference between the MSc and MA Psychology courses?

MSc projects are lab-based, whereas MA projects are scholarship-based. MSc students are involved in collecting, analysing, and writing-up research data, whereas MA students are engaged in the advanced synthesis of existing psychological literature, coming up with new ideas but not new data.

MA, but not MSc, students take one Psychology module from our undergraduate programme.

MA, but not the MSc, students conduct a substantial project in which they promote psychological research to the public

15 What is the difference between the MSc Research Project and the MSc Research Placement?

For the MSc Research Project, students conduct a substantial piece of original research under supervision. The research project is developed and assessed across two modules. Planning begins in Term 1 and the thesis is submitted at the end of the course (September).

For the MSc Research Placement, students work under supervision, but the research work is on a smaller scale to the MSc Research Project. Placements might include working on a mini research project, conducting a literature review, or skills training (e.g., how to use a specific brain imaging technique). The work begins and is completed in one term.

16 Who should I contact if I have questions about the course?

For general enquiries contact: PG Admissions Team: Email: pg-psychology-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk