University of Birmingham

Psychological Medicine BMedSc - Intercalated Degree

As a medical student, you may choose to take a year out from your medical course and study on one of our intercalated Bachelor in Medical Science degree programmes. During this year you will acquire skills in analysing and interpreting research papers and you will also gain substantial, direct experience of novel medical or clinical research (either in a research laboratory or in community or clinical settings).

Other BMedSc programmes are also available - see:

- **BMedSc Medical Sciences (/undergraduate/courses/med/medical-sciences-BMedSc-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)** - this course is open to University of Birmingham students only
- **BMedSc Clinical Science (/undergraduate/courses/med/ClinicalScienceBMedSc-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)**
- **BMedSc Healthcare Ethics and Law (/undergraduate/courses/med/HealthcareEthicsandLaw-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)**
- **BMedSc History of Medicine (/undergraduate/courses/med/HistoryofMedicineBMedSc-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)**
- **BMedSc International Health (/undergraduate/courses/med/InternationalHealthBMedSc-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)**
- **BMedSc Public Health and Population Sciences (/undergraduate/courses/med/PublicHealthPopulationScienceBMedSc-IntercalatedDegree.aspx)**

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Duration: 1 Year Full-Time

Places Available: 12 (approximately 12 students per year)

Start date: September / October annually depending on published term dates

Contact

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Details

Understanding why people think and act as they do is fascinating! You must agree - you've chosen a career (medicine/dentistry) that is focused on interacting with different people every day. Not only is psychology fascinating, it is also fundamental to the practice of both medicine and dentistry. How a person thinks, feels and behaves has an enormous impact on their state of health/illness – physical as well as mental. Mental illness (disorders of thoughts, feelings, behaviours) will affect at least 1 in 4 of us at some point in our lives. All doctors and dentists, irrespective of specialty, will need to treat patients with mental illness. Intercalating in Psychological Medicine will benefit any medical or dental student, whatever the field in which they are hoping to work. We have had students on the programme who hope to work in fields such as, general practice, psychiatry, paediatrics, neurology, anaesthetics, general medicine and even surgery!

Why study this course

The programme integrates the interesting scientific disciplines of psychology (the study of mind and behaviour) and psychiatry (the study of disorders of mind and behaviour), and combines science and art by an exploration of how psychopathology is portrayed in the arts. As with the other degrees in the BMedSc courses at Birmingham, there is a strong focus on research and you will spend over 4 months of the year completing research in an area of psychological medicine that interests you. Apart from one January examination (Research Methods module), the assessments are all coursework based and you are given the freedom to determine your own areas for further study. An overriding aim of this programme is to allow you to focus on topics that interest you.

As well as our own students, we have attracted students from all over the UK to study in Birmingham for this year long programme. Students have conducted research in a variety of settings (general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, GP surgeries, community mental health teams, schools, universities, internet surveys, laboratories) and on a variety of patient populations (for example, patients with schizophrenia, Huntington's disease, drug addiction, diabetes, arthritis, dementia). Other students prefer literature-based research and have conducted literary analyses or systematic reviews.

On completion of the programme you should have knowledge and understanding of:

- Commonly used research methods and data analysis techniques within health and medicine.
- Legal and ethical frameworks of medical research.
- The neurobiological basis of processes of the mind and behaviour.
- The neurobiological basis of mental illnesses.

- The portrayal of psychiatry and psychopathology in the arts.
- The value of fictional narratives, poetry, biography, letters, and journals in medical education.

In addition to enhancing knowledge and understanding we believe our teaching methods with emphasis on feedback and easy access to support strongly support development of the following skills and attributes:

- The ability to critically read and appraise research evidence.
- The ability to produce scientifically valid research.
- The ability to manage a research project from conception to completion with enhanced project management skills which will be transferable to other aspects of your career.

The ability to effectively communicate your ideas or scientific findings through a range of commonly used presentation mechanisms including oral presentation, poster presentation, production of a journal article and essay writing.
Enhanced independent learning skills.

- Greater awareness of team working and skills to support this in clinical and academic settings.
- Improved ability to think logically and broadly about a range of problems, drawing on a variety of disciplines to support arguments.

Student testimonials

"Gave me time to think rather than just learn – it was liberating"
"I used to be scared of research but now I'm not"
"I think I now understand better what it must be like to suffer from a mental illness"
"This will be useful in whatever specialty I choose"
"Thought provoking and challenging"
"Well structured – I liked having a theme each week"
"I now have the confidence to argue and discuss topics"
"I've learnt a lot, not just knowledge but so many 'skills' - in terms of presentation/discussion in lectures, structuring arguments, professional approach to research…and so on"
"Now I read books and watch films from a completely different perspective"
"Don't think this course is an easy option – it's much harder and much more work than I imagined"
"It's all so interesting"
"The approachability of the tutors is excellent – this is the best bit of the course"
"This course is completely different to anything we've done before…in a good way"
"Made me think outside the box"

Modules

Semester 1 (October-December)

This semester consists of three specialist modules covering psychological medicine, one larger module covering research methods and analysis, and the research design module that concentrates on the development of the protocol for the research project that is conducted in Semester Two.

- Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods
- Neurobiology of Psychological Processes
- Neurobiology of Mental Illness
- Psychiatry & Psychopathology in the Arts
- Psychological Medicine Research Design

Semester 2 (January-May)

This semester is dedicated to carrying out, analysing and writing-up the research project. All students will be supported by at least one nominated academic supervisor to support their research activity and will have access to one-to-one research and statistics support throughout the year.

- Psychological Medicine Research Project

This is the module list for 2012, but the programme continues to evolve and you should check the website regularly for any changes for next year.

Fees and funding

Standard Fees (/students/fees/index.aspx) Apply

All students are entitled to reclaim up to £500 project expenses for conduction of their research. Claims must be accompanied by original receipts. Further to this students who incur travel costs are eligible to apply for an Arthur Thompson Travel Award (up to £500). Applications for these awards will be considered at the end of the programme of study and are not guaranteed. These sources of funding are available to all students irrespective of their primary University of study.

Internal bursaries

All students who are registered on the MBChB or Dental Programmes at the University of Birmingham are eligible to apply for a bursary to support them during their period of study. The intention to apply should be indicated on the application form and students expressing an intention will receive further information. Bursaries are currently set at £3,000 and are limited. Students with an overall mean mark of <65% in year 2 of their programme of study are unlikely to be awarded a bursary.

Our funding sources mean that we are unable to offer bursaries to students from outside of Birmingham.

External bursaries

The College usually receives an invitation each year from the Royal College of Physicians to submit a limited number of applications for their Wolfson intercalated programme. The deadline for this is usually the end of March which means the programme needs to shortlist by mid-March. Bursaries are up to £5000 and are nationally competitive. Our students have a very good record in securing such awards. Any student interested in applying needs to contact the Admissions Tutor (Dr Lesley Roberts, l.m.roberts@bham.ac.uk) by the 31st of January in the year in which they plan to apply.

Eligible students should:

- Demonstrate a consistent and outstanding academic track record (an overall mean mark >70% in year 2 and consistently high marks in other years. N.B. Because of the need to show consistent academic achievement it is expected that students will be in year 3 or 4 at the time of application. A second year applicant who can demonstrate excellence may be considered but should contact the admissions tutor at the earliest opportunity to discuss this).
- Be applying for an intercalation in one of our science programmes (International Health, Psychological Medicine or Public Health and Population Sciences). As this bursary relates to science projects students on humanities programmes (Health care ethics and law and History of Medicine) should not apply (but should make contact with the relevant programme lead to enquire whether there are any discipline specific bursaries currently available nationally).
- Have a research focus or area of interest (Support will be given during February to develop this into an application).
- Be prepared to work on their application (including designing a research project) during February and early March.

All eligible students who express an interest will have the opportunity to meet with the Admissions Tutor to discuss the application and receive guidance in drafting an application. Further to this there will be the opportunity to submit one draft application by the 28th February for comment. All students will then be required to submit their application by the specified deadline (varies annually but likely to be mid-March). Students will be informed if their application has been selected for submission to the Royal College within 2 weeks. Any student submitted will receive an early and unconditional place on the programme. Unsuccessful applicants will be able to use their work in their application for an internal bursary.

Entry requirements

Applications for this programme will be accepted from students wishing to intercalate after year 3 or 4 of their medical studies.

Applications From Students Not Currently Registered at Birmingham

We are happy to consider applications for any of the programmes within the Population Sciences and Humanities subjects from students from other institutions. We have a strong track record over recent years in supporting these students and facilitating integration into their new institution.

Applications from students from other universities should be made on our standard application form| and must be accompanied by a transcript of marks from your current institution. Should an offer of a place be made to you further admission forms will be sent from the University via our Course Administrator.

We are always happy to discuss our programmes with students from other universities. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the opportunities available to you in Birmingham please contact us.

International students:

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the **foundation academy web pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx)** .

How to apply

To apply, please down load and complete the **application form (/Documents/college-mds/courses/undergraduate/bmedscintercalatedpopulationscienceandhumanities/BMedScPoSHapplication-form2015-16.doc)**

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. From the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

Support and supervision

You will have an academic supervisor to oversee your research activity, and may also have a clinical research supervisor. The Programme Lead, Dr Lisa Jones, and the Course Director, Dr. Lesley Roberts, will offer support and guidance for all aspects of the course. You have access to research and statistics clinics which operate on a booking system.

Example research projects

Below are some example research projects from recent Psychological Medicine students. These have been selected to give an indication of the range of possible projects:

- The influence of parental values and practices on the presence of coprolalia in Tourette syndrome
- The determinants and patterns of self-harm behaviours in individuals who belong to internet-based self-harm forums
- Screening for ADHD in children with learning disabilities using Conners' rating scales Self-efficacy and pain management in arthritis: a cross sectional study
- A review of pathological jealousy with specific reference to Othello
- Neuropsychiatric consequences of head injury: a comparison between age groups
- Criminal thinking and self-control among drug users in court-mandated treatment
- The 'schizophrenia postdrome' – a study of low-level symptoms after full recovery from first-episode schizophrenia
- Adverse birth outcomes in women taking SSRIs during the first trimester of pregnancy: a systematic review
- Is the severity of cognitive impairment in Alzheimer's disease an accurate predictor of testamentary capacity?
- Levels and content of consciousness during psychogenic non-epileptic seizures and epileptic seizures.
- What factors are associated with changes in perceptions of body image, self-worth and quality of life in children
- The neural correlates of apathy following stroke: a voxel-based morphometry (VBM) study of MRI data
- Cultural and social influences of negative illness appraisals in first episode psychosis
- Variables associated with postpartum psychiatric outcome in women with bipolar disorder

Our facilities

The College of Medical and Dental Sciences houses state-of-the art facilities to support a range of teaching, learning and research activity.

Our facilities ensure that students receive the best possible learning experience by working in a modern environment. Among our most recent developments include a refurbishment of the Medical School foyer, Barnes library and Wolfson Centre for Medical Education.

Explore our facilities and take a tour by moving around our 360-degree panoramas:

ERROR:

Adobe Flashplayer 10.1 (or higher) or a
HTML5 Browser with CSS 3D Transforms or WebGL support are required!

Assessment methods

You'll be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations, laboratory-based work (depending on your chosen degree) and formal exams.

At the beginning of each module, you'll be given information on how and when you'll be assessed for that particular programme of study. You'll receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You'll be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

Employability

Preparation for your career should be one of the first things you think about as you start university. Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our Careers Network can help you achieve your goal.

Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team (in each of the five academic colleges) who can give you expert advice. Our team source exclusive work experience opportunities to help you stand out amongst the competition, with mentoring, global internships and placements available to you. Once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CV's and job applications will help give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed award-winning Personal Skills Award (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

Find out more about **Careers Network. (http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/careers)**

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2014 Website of the Year Career & Education