

MSc Psychology Modules

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document provides general guidance only. While every care has been taken to provide correct information at the date of authoring (September 2017), information may be subject to revision from time to time.

Course Structure (Full-time)

Credits	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
10	Foundations in Critical Thinking	Current Research in Psychology	MSc Research Project
	Research Practical		
	Introduction to Neuroscientific Methods		
	Choose TWO of the following 10 credit modules:		
	MatLab Programming	Design & Analysis 2	
	Design & Analysis 1		
20	Choose ONE of the following 20 credit modules:		
	Research Reviews	Public Engagement with Psychological Research	
	You will also choose ONE 20-credit Psychology Option (to study in Term 1 OR Term 2) For an example module list, please refer to the list of Year 3 option modules available here: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/psychology/psychology.aspx#CourseDetailsTab	Proposing Research in Psychology	
Total	Minimum 60	Minimum 30	60

Typically, part-time students take the some taught modules in Year 1 and complete the research modules (Proposing Research in Psychology and MSc Research Project) in Year 2. There are some restrictions to how the modules are organised (e.g., Proposing Research must be studied before or at the same time as the MSc Research Project). At the beginning of the academic year, part-time students meet with their Course Director to discuss their study plan.

Compulsory Modules

Module title:	Foundations in Critical Thinking
Module code:	03 14418
Module Lead:	Dr Natalie Kelly
Term:	1 and 2
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Tutor/student-led discussion seminars
Assessment method:	Critical analysis of selected journal articles (60%), group oral presentation of a critique of a published research report (30%), attendance at each group presentation session (10%).
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Lectures discuss current research techniques and develop critical approaches to reading and evaluating research articles. The module includes small group discussions where students target critique of specific research approaches.
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module students should be able to: discuss and identify different research approaches; identify current and emerging research topics and techniques, and critically assess and review journal articles.
Recommended reading list:	Bell, P., Staines, P. & Mitchell, J. (2001). <i>Evaluating, doing and writing research in Psychology</i> . London: Sage.

Module title:	Research Practical
Module code:	tbc
Module Lead:	tbc
Term:	2
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Lectures, practical classes, project supervision, and computer-based exercises
Assessment method:	2,000-word research report (80%) and online assessment of key skills and issues (20%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	This module will cover how to systematically approach conducting research. Topics will include methods and analysis techniques; reporting research effectively in writing; training in IT and administrative skills useful for research activities (e.g., file management); and key ethical, legal, health and safety issues in psychology and neuroscience research
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module, students should be able to: Design a research project(s) using methods relevant to specific research area(s); write a research report using professionally accepted formats; demonstrate a working knowledge of IT and administrative skills and ethical, legal, and health and safety issues when conducting psychology and neuroscience research
Recommended reading list:	A reading list will be provided at the start of the module.

Module title:	Introduction to Neuroscientific Methods
Module code:	tbc
Module Lead:	tbc
Term:	1
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Lectures, workshops, and computer-based exercises
Assessment method:	Time-limited assignment (120-minutes) (50%) and workshop-based exam (60-minutes) (50%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	This module will cover the main techniques of brain mapping used in cognitive neuroscience (e.g., MRI, fMRI, DTI, EEG, TMS, MEG). Topics will also include the physics of NMR and MRI, introduction to fMRI experimental design and analysis. Students will have computer based training in data analysis and seminar-based workshop sessions discussion imaging methods
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module the student should be able to: demonstrate a broad knowledge of the main methods used for mapping brain functions in cognitive neuroscience; show an appreciation of the design and analysis of fMRI experiments; and, understand the methods used in published imaging papers, and be able to design simple imaging experiments
Recommended reading list:	A reading list will be provided at the start of the module

Module title:	Current Research in Psychology
Module code:	03 25728
Module Lead:	Dr Natalie Kelly
Term:	2
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Lectures and Seminars
Assessment method:	Two 500-word diary entries of seminars attended (each contributes 35% towards module mark); one 500-word press release (contributes 30%); seminar attendance log (contributes 0%, but must be submitted)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Lectures will provide an overview of current research in psychology. The lectures will an overview on <u>and</u> current theoretical debates and methodologies in a variety of Psychology areas. Guidance will be provided on writing for different audiences, including the broader public
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module the student should be able to: demonstrate a broad knowledge of current research in psychology; understand the current theoretical debates; understand the methodologies employed in current research; and, write a summary of current research in a style for public understanding.
Recommended reading list:	For this module, there is no set reading list. Instead, students are advised to engage in general study of the key scientific thinking, writing, and presentation skills (see above), and to engage in critical reading of academic sources for the subject-specific content. Some academic sources will be recommended by the module Lead:s.

Module title:	Proposing Research in Psychology
Module code:	03 26539
Module Lead:	Dr Fay Julal
Term:	1
Credit value:	20
Delivery method:	Lectures, tutorials
Assessment method:	A written research proposal of 3000 words in two parts. Part 1 will be formative and Part 2 summative (contributes 100% to module mark)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Lectures will provide an overview of the process of planning and proposing research projects (e.g., grant writing) and ways in which research can be reported (e.g., oral and poster presentations). Students will also develop relevant IT, administrative, and research skills. Students will work in small groups or one-to-one with a staff member to develop and write a research proposal. The proposal will typically involve pilot studies and require a lab placement with a staff member.
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module students should be able to: write a research proposal; demonstrate a working knowledge of the key skills and issues useful for research; visually present research in a concise and clear manner, in the form of a professional conference-style poster presentation; and understand the methodologies and background knowledge relevant to specific research area.
Recommended reading list:	For this module, there is no set reading list. Instead, students are advised to engage in general study of the key scientific thinking, writing, and presentation skills (see above), and to engage in critical reading of academic sources for the subject-specific content. Some academic sources will be recommended by the module Lead:s.

Module title:	MSc Research Project
Module code:	03 28503
Module Lead:	Dr Fay Julal
Term:	3
Credit value:	60
Delivery method:	Student-centred research dissertation
Assessment method:	Written dissertation (6,000 words max) (contributes 80% to module mark); poster presentation, with oral walk-through (contributes 20%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Students will conduct a substantial empirical inquiry, with some aspect of originality, into a topic under supervision. Students will be assigned to a research supervisor, with whom the student will negotiate a contract setting out the project's aims, the relevant knowledge and skills, and milestones for conducting the research.
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module students should be able to: systematically conduct a substantial empirical inquiry using research methods and analysis techniques appropriate to the field of research and level of study; communicate effectively in writing, using professionally accepted protocols, to a standard that would be suitable for publication in a research journal; visually and orally present research in a concise and clear manner; develop a research project that entails some aspect of originality, and show independence in managing the research project.
Recommended reading list:	<p>Beins, B. C., & Beins, A. M. (2008). <i>Effective writing in psychology: Papers, posters, and presentations</i>. Blackwell: Oxford.</p> <p>Wood, C., Giles, D., & Percy, C. (2012). <i>Your psychology project handbook: Becoming a researcher</i> (2nd ed.). Essex: Pearson Education Limited.</p> <p>* For this module, you will also be expected to engage in extensive, critical reading of the academic sources underpinning your research. Your research supervisors will often provide you with some seed references to get you started.</p>

Optional Modules

Choose **TWO** from the following: Design and Analysis 1, Design and Analysis 2, MatLab Programming

Module title:	Matlab Programming
Module code:	03 20516
Module Lead::	Dr Peter Hansen
Term:	1
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Computer-based seminar/workshops
Assessment method:	Structured programming exercise (100%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	The module will provide an introduction to the Matlab package. Topics covered will include: what exactly is Matlab, and why it is so useful; interacting with the Matlab IDE and command line environment; basic Matlab concepts (commands, data structures including vectors and matrices, calculations, programming); Matlab programming techniques (flow control, modules, functions and .m files, file input/output, graphics), and finally, students will complete a structured programming exercise, aimed at producing a simple visual experiment in Matlab. This will form the basis of the course assessment.
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module the student should be able to: demonstrate a working knowledge of Matlab, including the ability to build and use simple functions to manipulate and display data.
Recommended reading list:	A reading list will be available at beginning of module.

Module title:	Design & Analysis 1
Module code:	03 14416
Module Lead:	Dr Dietmar Heinke
Term:	1
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Lectures
Assessment method:	Workshop-based exam (100%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Topics typically include: questionnaire design and analysis; discriminant function analysis; descriptive statistics; hypothesis testing: z-scores; t-tests and ANOVAs with factorial, repeated measures and mixed designs; planned and post-hoc comparisons; correlation, linear and non-linear regression; multiple regression; tuition in SPSS.
Learning outcomes:	Students should be able to: choose an appropriate statistical test for a given type of data and research question; to enter data into SPSS in an appropriate format; to carry out the statistical tests covered in the course using calculators and statistical, or SPSS as appropriate, and to interpret the results of the statistical tests covered in the course.
Recommended reading list:	Dancey, C. & Reidy, J. (2014). Statistics without Maths for Psychology. Pearson.

Module title:	Design & Analysis 2
Module code:	03 14417
Module Lead::	Dr Dietmar Heinke
Term:	2
Credit value:	10
Delivery method:	Lectures
Assessment method:	Written exam (100%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Research methods and analyses will typically include: advanced regression techniques (log-linear analysis, logistic regression, simple path analysis); mathematical models; qualitative analysis; survey methods; power calculations and direct observation of behaviour.
Learning outcomes:	Students should be able to: choose an appropriate statistical test or analysis tool for a given type of data (qualitative or quantitative) and a research question; to carry out the quantitative statistical tests covered in the course using SPSS; to interpret the results of the statistical tests covered in the course, and to carry out and interpret a thematic analysis of selected newspaper articles.
Recommended reading list:	Field, A. (2013). <i>Discovering Statistics Using SPSS</i> . Sage. Howell, D. (2011). <i>Statistical Methods for Psychology</i> , 8th Edition. Cengage. Kline, R. B. (2010). <i>Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modelling</i> . Guilford Press.

Choose **ONE** from the following: Research Reviews, Public Engagement with Psychological Research

Module title:	Public Engagement with Psychological Research
Module code:	03 30123
Module Lead:	Dr Fay Julal
Term:	2
Credit value:	20
Delivery method:	Lectures (3), small group or individual supervision
Assessment method:	3,000 word article or report (100%)
Marks required to pass module: 50%	
Aims and learning objectives of this module: Lectures and seminars will provide an overview of approaches to engaging with the public and the knowledge and skills required to design public engagement activities (e.g. planning public events; developing a website). Working in small groups or individually, students will develop their own public engagement activity. Lectures will provide an overview of approaches to engaging with the public (e.g. contacting groups; planning events). Assessment will be a report of the public engagement event and the research on which it is based or a journalism-style article.	
Learning outcomes: By the end of the module students should be able to: plan a public engagement event to promote scientific research; write a detailed account of the public engagement project, including summary of the research on which it is based; write a public-friendly literature review, and understand the pathways used to develop public engagement.	
Recommended reading list: For this module, there is no set reading list. Instead, you are advised to engage in general study of the key scientific thinking, writing, and presentation skills (see above), and to engage in critical reading of academic sources for the subject-specific content. Some academic sources will be recommended by the module Lead:s.	

Module title:	Research Reviews
Module code:	03 27296
Module Lead:	Dr Fay Julal
Term:	1
Credit value:	20
Delivery method:	Seminars, paired activities and tutorials
Assessment method:	A 750 word annotated bibliography on a selected topic (10%), and a 3,000 word narrative literature review (90%)
Marks required to pass module:	50%
Aims and learning objectives of this module:	Students will be taught the process for conducting narrative, systematic, and meta-analytical literature reviews, will discuss existing literature reviews, and complete formative assessments.
Learning outcomes:	By the end of the module students should be able to: Conduct a narrative, systematic, or meta-analysis based on a selected topic in Psychology and related disciplines; communicate effectively in writing, using professionally accepted protocols; and understand the methodologies and background knowledge relevant to a selected topic in Psychology.
Recommended reading list:	<p>Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1997). Writing narrative literature reviews. <i>Review of General Psychology</i>, 1, 311–320.</p> <p>Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, 118, 172–177.</p> <p>Cooper, H., & Shoolbred, M. (2016). <i>Where's your argument? Pocket study skills</i>. Palgrave Macmillan.</p> <p>Fink, A. (2014). <i>Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper</i> (4th ed.). London: Sage.</p> <p>Hartley, J. (2008). <i>Academic writing and publishing: A practical handbook</i>. Abingdon: Routledge.</p> <p>*For this module, you will also be expected to engage in extensive, critical reading of the academic sources underpinning your research.</p>