

Frequently Asked Questions

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 (or equivalent) 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)

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 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>

Postgraduate Loans for Masters students

Student Finance England's new Postgraduate Loan application service is now open for Masters degrees in the UK. The Postgraduate Loan for Masters study will be:

- Up to £10,280 per student for the 2017-18 academic year;
- A contribution towards the costs of study, i.e. it will be at your discretion to use the loan towards fees, maintenance costs or other costs;
- Non-means tested;
- Paid directly to you into a UK bank account;

Online applications are now open [via the PGL website](#).

Student Finance England have created a range of resources on their [YouTube channel](#) to help you understand the Loan.

4 How do I apply for the course?

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?

The personal statement should describe research experience and research interests, supporting the applicant's reasons for applying and demonstrating the motivation for studying the MSc. The personal statement should include the following key information:

Section 1: Research Experience

1. Briefly describe the research project you completed in the final year of your undergraduate degree.
2. Briefly describe any other projects you have worked on as a volunteer or paid research assistant.
3. Do you have any experience of programming? If Yes, briefly describe your experience.

Section 2: Research Interests

4. What are your research interests? Briefly describe how your research interests fit within the areas of research expertise in the School of Psychology, University of Birmingham.
5. What research methods and analysis techniques would you like to use or develop as a student on the MSc?
6. What are your future research/career plans? How will a place on the MSc help you to achieve your future research/career plans?
7. Please state the names of three academics within the School that, given the opportunity, you would like to work with. **Please note: If you are offered a place on the MSc, we will contact you about identifying relevant, available supervisors before the course starts. 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.**

Section 3: Other Experiences (maximum 200-words)

Provide here details of voluntary work experience, other aspects of your CV, and/or other points of achievement

To ensure that your personal statement meets our requirements, please follow the guidance in the personal statement template. Failure to include the requested information in the personal statement will result in delays to processing the decision on your application.

A template for the Personal Statement can be found on the course's webpage:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/psych/psychology.aspx>

6 What does the part-time MSc look like?

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.

In Year 1, the taught modules run from October through to April; there may be some exams in May and June. Most classes are held on Mondays, but option modules could be scheduled on other week days. There will

likely be other non-module 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, the taught and research modules run from September/October through to August.

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 What are the course contact hours?

Our Masters qualifications are based on a simple modular credit system. To obtain one of our Masters you must successfully complete modules totalling 180 credits. One credit is equivalent to 10-hours of work. So a 20-credit module equates to 200-hours of work, which includes time spent on class-based activities, independent study, coursework preparation and so on. Each term, you will typically study modules totalling 60 credits, or 600-hours of work. However, these are indicative figures and you might choose not to devote the same amount of time to all modules. You are likely to find some tasks easier than others so we suggest that you budget your time outside scheduled classes accordingly.

We tend to schedule all Masters taught module classes, workshops, and other practical classes across 1, and sometimes, 2 or 3 week days. Whilst this might suggest that the rest of the week is free for other pursuits, many of the hours on the course are not timetabled. On the other 2-3 week days you'll need to be available to attend seminars (e.g., for Current Research in Psychology), have supervision meetings, attend lab meetings, and for data collection or other research work. There is some flexibility – you can sometimes choose which seminars to attend and can negotiate with your supervisor about the timing of supervision meetings – however, this flexibility is not unbounded: If you are studying full-time, then supervisors and module tutors will expect that students are available on days when there are no scheduled classes.

10 Is the course BPS accredited?

Our MSc courses are not accredited by the BPS and, therefore, do not offer Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the society.

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 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 or refer to in your personal statement (e.g., a supervisor might leave 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)

13 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