

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	MSc Health Psychology The MSc Health Psychology is a Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Health Psychology Postgraduate Certificate in Health Psychology
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	New Cavendish Street
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Tina Cartwright (from Sept 2014)
Course URL:	http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/overview-pg?coursecode=P09FPHY&school=School%20of%20Social%20Sciences,%20Humanities%20and%20Languages
Mode and length of study:	FT
University of Westminster course code:	W50
JACS code:	
UCAS code:	
QAA subject benchmarking group:	
Professional body accreditation:	British Psychological Society (2010)
Date of course validation/review:	March 2011
Date of programme specification:	2014

Admissions requirements:

Candidates for admission to the course will normally be expected to possess a good honours degree in Psychology or a cognate discipline that confers eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society. Applications are scrutinised for evidence of interest within the discipline in terms of health psychology taken at undergraduate level, or an appreciation of how the applicants experience to date would benefit from training at M level.

Aims of the course

The course aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and applied bases of psychology and health, illness and disease. Specifically it aims to:

- provide students with a strong foundation in health psychology for work in the public and/or private sector;
- cultivate the skills necessary to communicate research findings effectively and succinctly;
- provide students with an understanding of the social, cultural and economic contexts of health psychology research;

- offer the opportunity to understand a range of self-help, treatment and rehabilitation approaches derived from psychology intervention programmes;
- provide a forum within which the methods of health psychology can be evaluated, assessed and debated in regard to their value, degree of scientific validity and the credibility of their guiding principles;
- provide the opportunity for participants to expand and develop their own experience of health and illness (work and personal) through critical analysis, research and collaborating understanding;
- satisfy the core curriculum criteria for accreditation by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

Employment and further study opportunities:

The programme is designed to confer BPS Stage 1 training towards Chartered Psychologist status for those holding Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). As such it is a mandatory qualification for those wishing to pursue Stage 2 training and subsequent registration with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Practitioner Psychologist: Health Psychologist. At the time of writing, for those students who do not hold GBC, it is not possible to continue further training on an approved course. It should be noted, that it is not the responsibility of the University of Westminster to check whether students are eligible for GBC. It is the students responsibility to check their eligibility for GBC directly with the BPS. If a student has declared on their application form that they are eligible for or hold GBC and this turns out not to be the case, and they are excluded from further HCPC approved training, the University of Westminster cannot be held liable.

Irrespective of GBC status, the course is suitable as preparation for undertaking a PhD in Psychology and preparation for other areas of postgraduate training in general.

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, ie employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the Programmes students should be able to:

- discuss the application of psychology to the theory and practice of medicine and health care including primary care;
- articulate the application of behavioural sciences to a wide range of issues faced by a variety of health professionals;
- evaluate evidence regarding the relationships between psychological factors, physiological and pathological factors and health, illness and disease;
- evaluate research outcomes on the psychological correlates of health and illness behaviours;
- describe the practice, techniques, philosophies and principles which underpin the methods used in health psychology;
- demonstrate transferable skills and effectiveness as an independent learner capable of research within health contexts;
- articulate the value of utilising appropriate health psychology approaches within medical settings.

Knowledge and understanding

Students are expected to develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the application of psychology to the theory and practice of medicine and health care including primary care;
- the application of behavioural sciences to a wide range of issues faced by a variety of health professionals;
- the practice, techniques, philosophies and principles which underpin the methods used in health psychology.

Specific skills

Students are expected to develop the following subject specific skills:

- evaluate evidence regarding the relationships between psychological factors, physiological and pathological factors and health, illness and disease;
- evaluate research outcomes on the psychological correlates of health and illness behaviours;
- articulate the value of utilising appropriate health psychology approaches within medical settings;
- select an appropriate methodology for a given purpose and a given set of data;
- demonstrate the skills involved in preparing a grant application, a journal review article and an empirical based research paper suitable for submission to a peer review journal.

Key transferable skills

Students are expected to develop key transferable skills to a high level. For example:

- skill in undertaking research within a range of contexts;
- group working especially task centred working;
- use of a range of learning resources and research techniques;
- self-evaluation especially in terms of critical analysis, opinion challenge and response to feedback;
- management of information in terms of information and data retrieval (including ICT), creative and innovative thinking and research strategy;
- autonomy in terms of ability to undertake and management of independent learning, and time management in general;
- verbal and written communication skills;
- identification of problems and the application of methods to resolve;
- discipline relevant career development

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Learning and Teaching methods include: Lectures, small group work, seminars, demonstrations, practical sessions, specialist speaker events, informed debate.

Assessment methods include: Time restricted open and closed book short answer exams, in-class tests, essays, grant application proposal submission and critique, journal review paper, individual conference style presentations, individual seminar style presentations, reflective intervention diary, practical report, empirical based research paper.

Course structure

The core modules available are given below. MSc Health Psychology students will normally complete the 180 credits in one academic year (FT) or two academic years (PT).

For MSc: Core modules six 20 credit taught modules and 60 credit project.

For PG Diploma: Core modules six 20 credit taught modules.

For PG Certificate: Core modules three 20 credit taught modules.

Full-Time MSc Health Psychology Students: Course Structure Diagram

Full-Time MSc Health Psychology Students: Course Structure Diagram

Semester 1	Semester 2
1MPH7A1 Theories & Perspectives in Health Psychology 20 credit – core	1MPH7A7 Health Psychology in Practice 20 credit – core
1MPH7A2 Health Psychology: A Lifespan Development Perspective 20 credit - core	1MPH7A8 Individual Differences, Health, Stress & Illness 20 credit – core
SACN703 Data Handling & Research Methods for Applied Psychology 20 credit - core	1MPH7A5 Research Based Project: Health Psychology 60 credit – option co-requisites 1MPH7A3, 1MPH7A4
1MPH7A4 Specialist Topics for Applied Psychology 20 credit - core	OR SACN701 Independent Research Project 40 credit – option PLUS SPRM7A3 Work Experience in a Psychological Setting for MSc Students 20 credit – option

Part-Time MSc Health Psychology Students: Course Structure Diagram

Year 1, Semester 1	Year 1, Semester 2
1MPH7A1 Theories and Perspectives in Health Psychology 20 credit – core	1MPH7A7 Health Psychology in Practice 20 credit - core
1MPH7A2 Health Psychology: A Lifespan Development Perspective 20 credit - core	1MPH7A8 Individual Differences, Health, Stress & Illness 20 credit – core

Year 2, Semester 1	Year 2, Semester 2
SACN703 Data Handling & Research Methods for Applied Psychology 20 credit - core	1MPH7A5 Research Based Project: Health Psychology 60 credit – option, co-requisites 1MPH7A3, 1MPH7A4
1MPH7A4 Specialist Topics for Applied Psychology 20 credit - core	OR SACN701 Independent Research Project 40 credit – option PLUS SPRM7A3 Work Experience in a Psychological Setting for MSc Students 20 credit – option

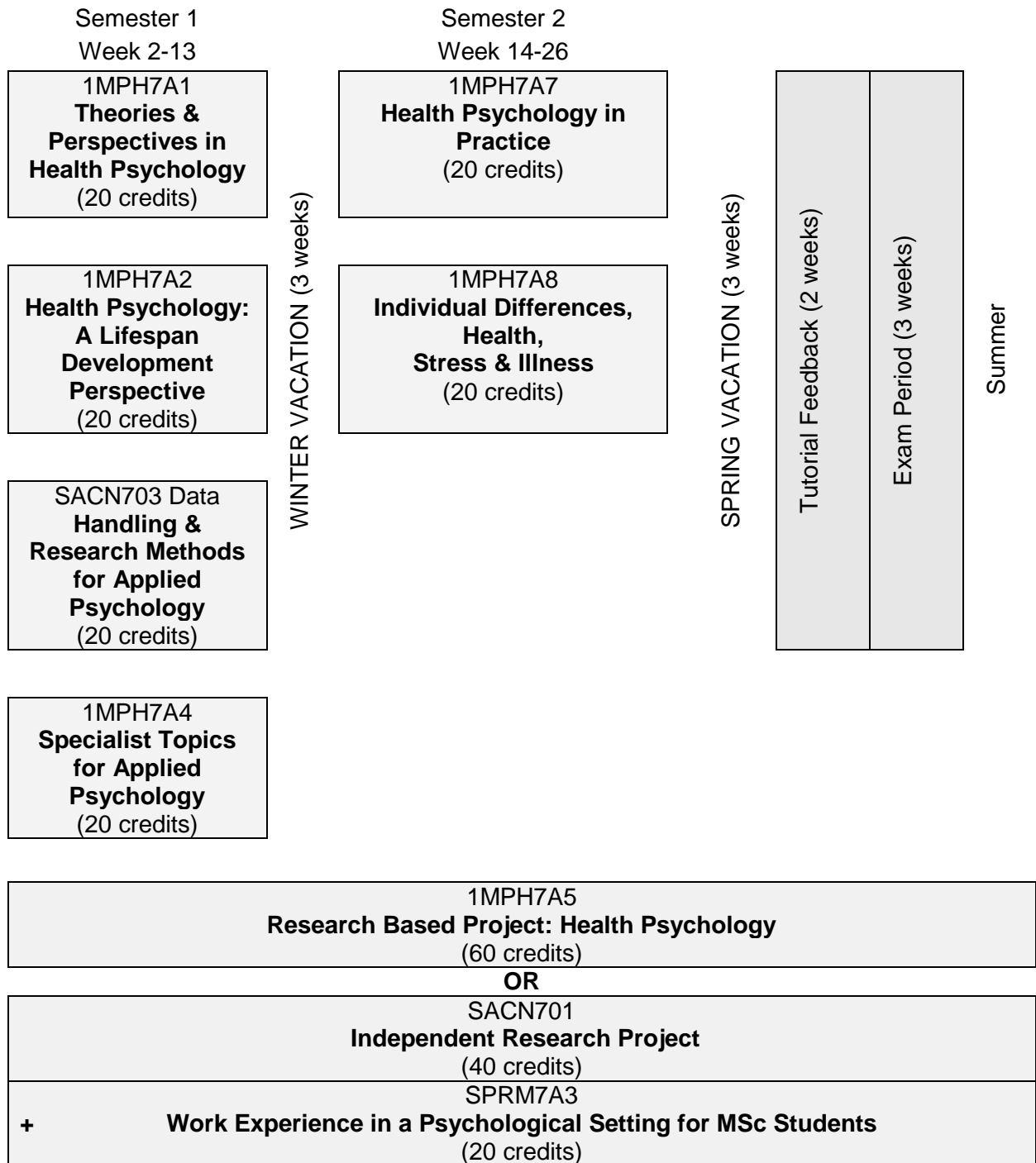
Academic regulations

The MSc Health Psychology and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the

University's Academic Regulations and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

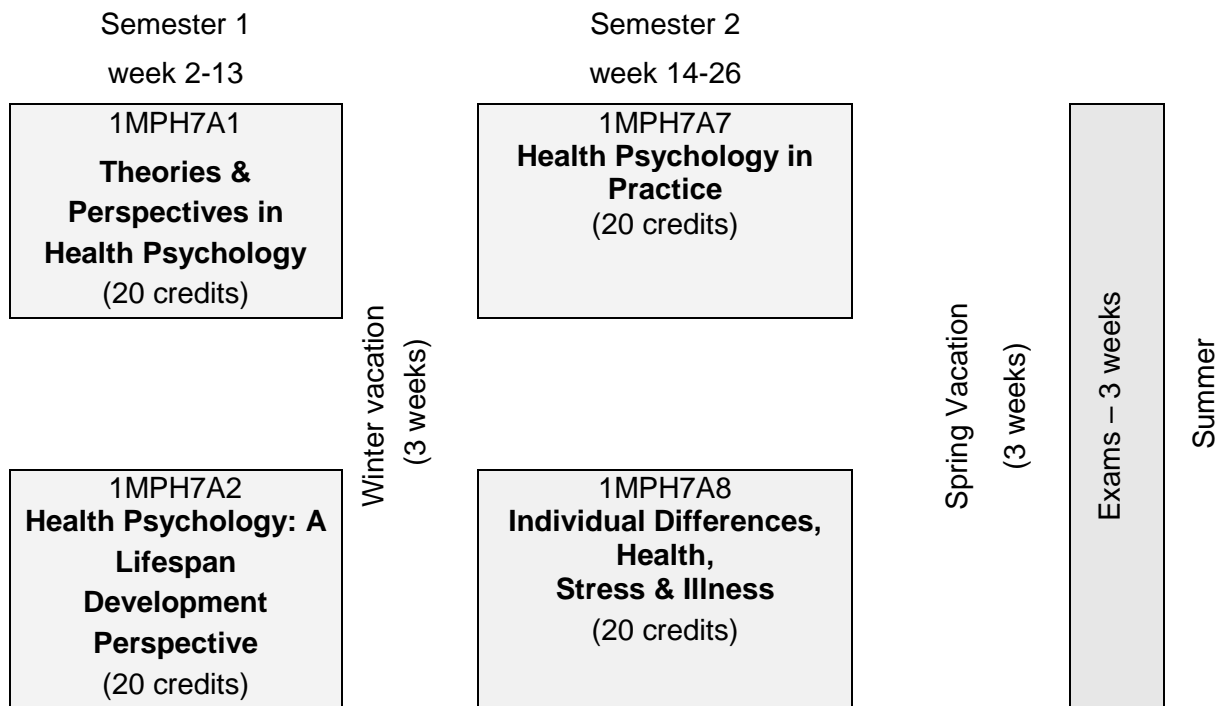
All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the *Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations*, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

MSc Health Psychology course map (F/T)

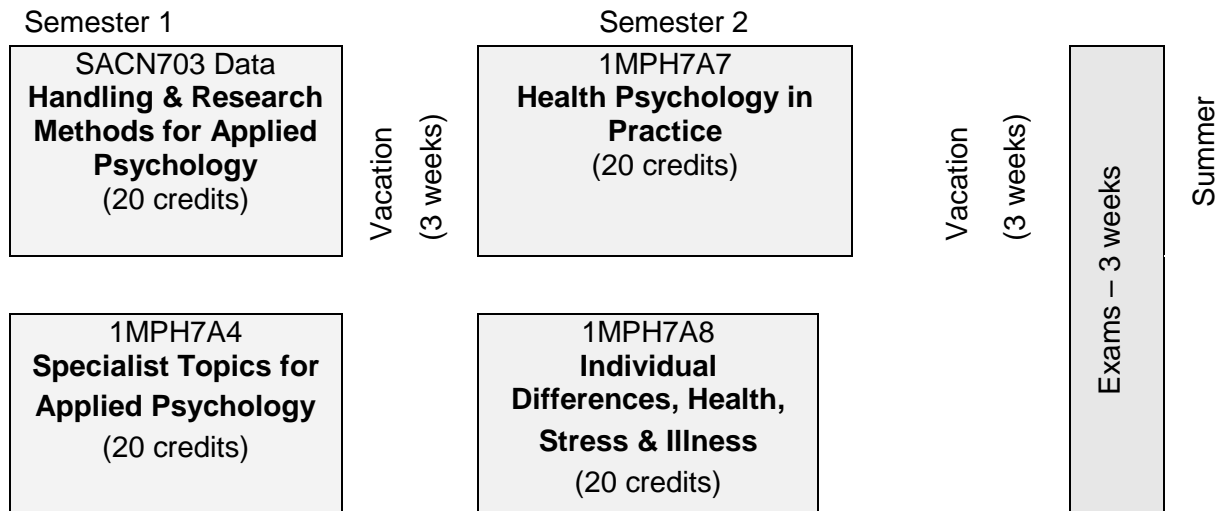


Part-time module map

YEAR ONE



YEAR TWO



SACN702 **Independent Research Project** (60 credits)

OR

SPRM7A3 **Work Experience** (20 credits)

SACN701 **Independent Research Project** (40 credits)

Award

To qualify for the award of MSc Health Psychology, a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 (this may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6 where validated as part of the award);
- attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits; and

Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.

- satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant Course Scheme.

The University may award:

- a Masters Degree with Merit to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

Support for students

Upon arrival, an orientation programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

At University level, Services for Students provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The International Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

Key Reference points for the course

Internally

UoW Framework for Postgraduate Courses

UoW Quality Assurance Handbook

UoW & Faculty Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policies

UoW Skills Policy

Psychology Research Committee Annual Reports

Externally

BPS Consultation on Subject Draft Benchmarks for Health Psychology

BPS DHP Training Committee Core Curriculum

QAA Descriptor for M level qualification

Knowledge of external courses through external involvement in external organisations and Health Psychology in HE

Professional body accreditation

The MSc Health Psychology course is accredited by the BPS Division of Health Psychology Training Committee to confer Stage 1 towards registration with the Health Professions Council as a Practitioner Psychologist: Health Psychologist. The last accreditation was given in 2010.

Quality management and enhancement

Course management

The course is managed by a Course Leader within the Department of Psychology, one of the Departments in the Faculty of Science and Technology. The Department has 30 full-time staff and a number of Visiting Lecturers.

The Department has one away-day per year where discussions include ways to identify and improve the design and delivery of its courses. There is also an annual research forum where staff and research students present their latest findings and where teaching- research links are considered. Staff in the Department undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by their colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance or research activity. Staff in the Department attend events organised by the Quality and Standards Office, Westminster Exchange and the Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 1995. The panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers. The course was subsequently revalidated in 1999 and accredited by the BPS for a period of 5 years. Revalidation and reaccreditation for a further 5 years was granted in 2005 and in 2010 the course was once again successfully reaccredited by the BPS. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously.

Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback

on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with review panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from course committees is part of the Faculty's quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course, please go to:

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/humanities/postgraduate/psychology/msc-health-psychology> or contact the admissions tutor Prof Tony Towell towella@westminster.ac.uk.

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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