



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study awarded by
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Psychology
2	Programme Code	PSYU01
3	JACS Code	C800
4	Level of Study	Undergraduate
5	Final Qualification	BSc Honours
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	None
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Science
9	Home Department	Psychology
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time
12	Duration of the Programme	3 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	British Psychological Society (BPS) Eligibility for Graduate Membership of the BPS
14	Date of revision	September 2022

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Psychology is an empirical science which aims to understand the experience and behaviour of humans, animals and automatants and their interactions. Methodologies developed within the discipline are used alongside those derived from cognate disciplines such as biology, neuroscience, computer science, sociology, political science, and philosophy.

Psychology encompasses several fields including social psychology, developmental psychology, occupational psychology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and health psychology, to name but a few. Students on the course are exposed to a variety of philosophical and methodological approaches to the study of human experience and behaviour, which reflect the broad spectrum of methods used in the discipline. The programme adopts a Programme Level Approach that aligns content across levels 1 and 2 via four topic streams and one research methodology stream. This structure facilitates coherent delivery of the wide range of topics on the course and allows for a range of assessments that are set across the year to avoid assessment bottlenecks. Students with a range of entry qualifications (e.g., science and/or social science and humanities A Levels or equivalent) are able to obtain key subject knowledge that provides the basis for postgraduate studies required to qualify as a psychologist. The Department of Psychology at Sheffield University is committed to research-led teaching and offers final year students the opportunity to apply their learning via specialist modules linked to research conducted in the Department.

During their degree students learn to use rigorous scientific techniques and statistical procedures to analyse, explain and report on human behaviour. Students also acquire, practice and reflect on a set of skills (e.g., time management, Information Digital Literacy etc.) that enhance their professional development and are sought after by employers.

The degree at Sheffield is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and confers eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership. This is an essential qualification for those who intend to practise as psychologists. Accreditation means that the degree includes all the components of the BPS syllabus (which is an explicit version of the QAA subject benchmarks for Psychology). Subject Benchmark statements describe the abilities graduates are expected to obtain and, along with the Sheffield Graduate Attributes, are used as reference points for the design of programmes and the setting and assuring of academic standards.

The BPS requires students to have a comprehensive overview of the substantive areas of contemporary psychology and demonstrate that they are able to conduct empirical ethical research. The Department more than meets all the necessary BPS requirements for quality teaching and resources.

16. Programme aims

The aim of the programme is to ensure that students have a comprehensive overview of the substantive areas of contemporary psychology (required for British Psychology Society Accreditation) and are able to apply their knowledge of psychological theories in the following areas:

Social Psychology,
Cognitive Psychology,
Neuroscience and Clinical Psychology,
Developmental Psychology,
Psychological research methods.

Historical and conceptual issues in psychology and individual differences are woven throughout topics above.

The programme also aims to make sure that students;

- are experienced in the processes and methods of empirical psychological research including the design of empirical investigations, ethical conduct, collection of qualitative and quantitative data, statistical analysis of results, and the interpretation of findings.
- are able to assess psychological theory, via the interrogation of evidence, and are equipped with appropriate information and digital literacy skills to obtain that evidence.
- are skilled communicators, who are able to translate and adapt knowledge for different audiences and are comfortable with different styles of communication.
- acquire a set of skills that are valued by employers resulting in highly desirable graduates who will succeed in a competitive job market.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding: By the end of the programme student will have gained:

K1	a critical understanding of theories in different areas of psychological research;
K2	a comparative awareness of the relationship between psychology and other disciplines;
K3	a knowledge of biological psychology, including the biological basis of behaviour and neuropsychology;
K4	a knowledge of cognitive psychology, including perception, learning, memory, and language;
K5	a knowledge of social psychology, including social cognition, attitudes and group processes;
K6	a knowledge of developmental psychology, including cognitive, social and language development;
K7	a knowledge of individual differences, including differences in intelligence and personality;
K8	an understanding of methodologies in different areas of psychology;
K9	an understanding of the significance of ethical issues in relation to psychological work and research;
K10	an understanding of different conceptual and historical issues in psychology;
K11	an understanding of how psychological theories and research are related to applied contexts.

Skills and other attributes: Transferable skills: On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to:

S1	communicate effectively by developing relevant arguments backed up by empirical evidence;
S2	interpret and critically assess scientific data, using problem-solving and reasoning skills;
S3	carry out literature and information searches effectively;
S4	use software for communication, word processing, statistical analyses and accessing databases;
S5	develop the skills and confidence of an independent learner;

S6	work as part of a team and to be aware of the psychological aspects of interpersonal communication and shared skills;
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Skills and other attributes: Subject specific skills:	
On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to:	
S7	consider the ethical dimension of any work or activity;
S8	carry out a significant empirical project with independence and responsibility, to meet the constraints and time limits of such a project, and to achieve work of a recognised scientific quality;
S9	recognise distinctive psychological approaches to different issues;
S10	generate psychological hypotheses and the ways to test those hypotheses;
S11	carry out empirical studies using psychological methods of data collection;
S12	analyse quantitative and qualitative psychological data;
S13	use psychological tools, such as statistical procedures, laboratory equipment and psychometric tests;
S14	write an ethical proposals for psychological work;
S15	produce independent psychological research and to describe that work in a written psychological report and as a verbal presentation to an audience of psychologists.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the programme learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

To ensure students are knowledgeable in their subject area (**K1-K11**), the level 1 and 2 core topic streams deliver content via lectures. Two hours of lectures each week for each topic stream allow the traditional lecture format to incorporate a range of non-didactic elements designed to enhance the student experience (e.g., Q+A sessions, group discussions, flipped learning, interactive online materials **S2, S5**).

The psychological research methodology stream forms the backbone of the course, it links with the topic streams and delivers content via lectures, computer classes (**S4**) and small group tutorials (**S5**). This ensures students' are experienced in the processes and methods of empirical psychological research including the design of empirical investigations, ethical conduct, collection of qualitative and quantitative data, statistical analysis of results, and the interpretation of findings (**K1, K8, K9, S7-S15**).

At level 3 students focus on an area they are interested in via specialist modules that are delivered via lectures and seminars. Level 3 modules provide students with the opportunity to apply their learning from levels 1 and 2 and gain insight into how psychological theories and research are related to applied contexts (**K1-K11**).

In addition, individual staff members supervise literature reviews (**S1, S2, S3**) and project dissertations at level 3 (**S1-S15; K1,K2,K8,K11**). Students apply their learning from all levels in their projects and gain experience in preparing, carrying out and writing up research. Students receive instruction in ethical reasoning and are required to produce an ethical proposal for their Level 3 project (**K9**).

During their dissertation projects and throughout the course students also apply a set of transferable skills that they have practised in level 1 and 2 modules (**S1-S15**) for example group working, presentations and effective communication whilst liaising with participants.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

A range of assessments that include coursework, MCQ, short answer questions and essay examinations ensure that students are knowledgeable in their subject area (**K1-K11**).

Ethics proposals for research, laboratory reports and final year dissertations ensure that students are experienced in the processes and methods of empirical psychological research (**S7-S15**).

Students demonstrate that they are comfortable communicating with a range of audiences via a series of presentations throughout their undergraduate programme (**S1, S6, S15**).

Skills related to using software and statistical analyses are assessed via lab reports, short answer questions and MCQ exams (**S4**).

Transferable skills and students' ability to articulate these skills are assessed via exercises that are linked to coursework, for example reflection exercises (**S1, S5, S6, S15**).

Level 3 literature reviews and dissertation projects as well as lab reports completed at levels 1 and 2 assesses transferable skills and subject specific skills (**S1-S15**).

Formative assessment is provided via draft work submitted during levels 1 and 2 and draft dissertation chapters at level 3. Formative assessment helps students develop their confidence as independent learners (**S5**) and achieve work of a suitable scientific quality (**S8**).

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Sheffield Graduate Attributes

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffieldgraduate>

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661828!/file/FinalStrategy.pdf

British Psychological Society syllabus and standards for education providers

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/accreditation/education-providers>

20. Programme structure and regulations

Levels 1 and 2 of the programme are structured in 4 topic streams and 1 research methodology stream. Each 1 of these streams has a core year-long 20 credit module. At levels 1 and 2 students are able to take 20 credits of unrestricted modules.

The 4 topic streams are:

- Social Psychology;
- Cognitive Psychology;
- Neuroscience and Clinical Psychology;
- Developmental Psychology;
- The research stream is termed Psychological Research Methodology.

The topics in these streams meet all the content requirements of the British Psychological Society (BPS) accreditation criteria. Staff are assigned to one of these streams and thus all staff provide teaching at level1 and/or 2.

The BPS also requires students to conduct an empirical project and this criteria is met by the level 3 research project. As the BPS criteria are met at level 2, this allows students a wider degree of choice at level 3.

Level 3 allows 'traditional' research led teaching (staff teach topics related to their own research) with staff providing a wide range of specialist 10 credit modules. These modules are broadly aligned to the earlier topic streams but also allow students to see that research often spans these boundaries (e.g. cognitive neuroscience modules spanning the neuroscience and cognitive stream) and gives students further examples of how these earlier topic streams are related to real world examples (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy modules) thus equipping students to work confidently both outside and across disciplines.

University regulations specify the number of credits necessary for progression between Levels. For details of the University regulations see below.

Please refer to the [General University Regulations](#) and the [On-line Directory of Modules](#) for detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules.

21. Student development over the course of study

The content streams at level 1 and 2 have been developed such that students gain a background in each of the topic areas at level 1, this is extended at level 2 and developed into specialist knowledge at level 3.

Each stream is assessed via a range of assessments throughout the year. This ensures students have a breadth of knowledge and understanding in each of these content areas and ensures that students engage with all of the taught course material. Providing feedback on assignments across the course facilitates 'feed-forward' into the next assignment making sure that students are able to use their feedback to develop throughout the course.

Within the research methodology stream, coursework provides an opportunity to write academic laboratory reports and conduct statistical analyses. The complexity of the analyses increases through levels 1 and 2. By level 3 students acquire the skills and knowledge required to take more complex specialist modules and conduct their own empirical research project.

Following on from introductory study skills at Level 1, students continue to work on transferable and employability skills at level 2 which provide the basis for more specialised Level 3 options and allows students to make informed choices regarding level 3 modules depending on their interests and future career plans.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/>

23. Additional information

Please refer to the Department's web pages at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/psychology>, and to the British Psychological Society's web pages at <http://www.bps.org.uk/index.cfm>.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.