



## Programme Specification

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

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	Psychology with Foundation Year
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	PSYU99
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	C800
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Undergraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	BSc Honours
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Final Qualification at FHEQ Level 6 – this programme specification relates solely to the Foundation Year delivery at University of Sheffield Undergraduate Foundation Level 0 (broadly equivalent to FHEQ levels 2-3), which guarantees progression to University of Sheffield Undergraduate Level 1 (FHEQ Level 4) at a mark threshold of 60.
6	<b>Intermediate Qualification(s)</b>	Students who pass the Foundation Year at Level 0, but do not achieve the specified progression threshold of 60 or meet additional specified conditions, will be entitled to the award of a Higher Education Achievement Record documenting and explaining their achievements on the Foundation Year. They would also be entitled to transfer onto any appropriate Certificate in Higher Education offered by the Department of Lifelong Learning at the University of Sheffield.
7	<b>Teaching Institution</b> (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Science
9	<b>Home Department</b>	Psychology
10	<b>Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme</b>	DLL is responsible for delivery of all Foundation Year provision. The Faculty of Science is responsible for all higher levels of programme delivery and will also contribute to the delivery of an Extended Project module and the facilitation of departmental visits and student mentoring arrangements
11	<b>Mode(s) of Attendance</b>	Full-time at Foundation Level 0. Mode at higher levels determined by arrangements within Faculty of Science
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	One year full-time at Foundation Level 0, plus three years on full-time degree within Faculty of Science. For further details, see programme specifications for PSYU01.
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	British Psychological Society (BPS) Eligibility for Graduate Membership of the BPS
14	<b>Date of revision</b>	Revised September 2022

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

Psychology is an empirical science which aims to understand the how's and why's of human experience and behaviour. Methodologies developed within the discipline are used alongside those derived from cognate disciplines such as biology, neuroscience, computer science, and philosophy.

Psychology encompasses several fields including social psychology, developmental psychology, occupational psychology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and health psychology. 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 the first 2 years 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.

The foundation year is taught within the Department for Lifelong Learning, who have nearly forty years' experience working with adult learners to unlock their potential to succeed through the offer of accessible foundation courses leading to full- and part-time degree level study. Students learn alongside other students studying for a number of different degrees, typically in small class-sizes, supporting one another to develop and succeed. Students' progress to the Department of Psychology following successful completion of their foundation year with an overall grade of 60 or above, including a mark of 60 or above in the Extended Project module (ACE0349). This foundation year includes a range of opportunities to become involved in the life of the Department of Psychology.

On progression to the degree programme in the Department of Psychology rigorous scientific techniques and statistical procedures to analyse, explain and report on human behaviour. Students also acquire, practise 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. In addition to the skills learnt during the course, in their 3rd year students learn a set of subject and employability specific skills during their placements including understanding of the workplace and the industry they work for as well as acquiring knowledge that informs their career choices. Students reflect on these skills at the end of their placements via a set of assessed reflections that detail the acquisition of professional and workplace skills as well as understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sector they entered.

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 (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 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 foundation year aims to:

- Provide students with subject based knowledge and skills of the required standard for a successful undergraduate career at the University of Sheffield.
- Develop students' familiarity with different methods of learning, teaching and assessment employed at the University of Sheffield.
- Build confidence in students' academic ability and develop understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop students' ability to adapt knowledge and skills in new situations.
- Increase students' awareness of the opportunities as well as the challenges of studying as an undergraduate student throughout the University year.
- Provide strategies for managing the conflicting demands placed upon mature students.
- Provide information and guidance relating to students' chosen degree programme.
- Develop students' awareness of the key attributes of the Sheffield Graduate.
- Encourage students' enthusiasm and motivation for future degree level study.

The aim of the degree 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

<b>Knowledge and understanding: by the end of the foundation year students have:</b>	
<b>K1</b>	Knowledge and understanding of Academic English of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study;
<b>K2</b>	Knowledge and understanding of Mathematics and descriptive statistics of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study;
<b>K3</b>	Subject knowledge and understanding of Psychology and the Natural OR Social Sciences sufficient for successful progression to Level 1 within BA Psychology;
<b>K4</b>	Knowledge and understanding of the opportunities as well as the demands placed on students by university style methods of learning, teaching and assessment;
<b>K5</b>	Knowledge of personal study strengths and weaknesses.

**Knowledge and understanding:** By the end of the degree programme students will have gained knowledge and understanding of:

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

<b>Skills and other attributes: by the end of the foundation year students have:</b>	
<b>S1</b>	Relevant skills in the acquisition, evaluation and use of subject-related information in different circumstances;
<b>S2</b>	Essential skills in oral and written communication;
<b>S3</b>	Problem-solving and presentation skills sufficient to develop and sustain a coherent line of argument;

<b>S4</b>	Ability to participate effectively in group work activities, both assessed and non-assessed;
<b>S5</b>	Ability to carry out small-scale independent study and research;
<b>S6</b>	Familiarity with basic techniques of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis;
<b>S7</b>	Information literacy skills sufficient for effective study at Level 1;
<b>S8</b>	Reflective learning skills which promote self-awareness and appropriate responses to feedback.

<b>Skills and other attributes: Transferable skills: On successful completion of the degree programme a student will be able to:</b>	
<b>S1</b>	communicate effectively by developing relevant arguments backed up by empirical evidence;
<b>S2</b>	interpret and critically assess scientific data, using problem-solving and reasoning skills;
<b>S3</b>	carry out literature and information searches effectively;
<b>S4</b>	use software for communication, word processing, statistical analyses and accessing databases;
<b>S5</b>	develop the skills and confidence of an independent learner;
<b>S6</b>	work as part of a team and to be aware of the psychological aspects of interpersonal communication and shared skills.
<b>Skills and other attributes: Subject specific skills: On successful completion of the degree programme a student will be able to:</b>	
<b>S7</b>	consider the ethical dimension of any work or activity;
<b>S8</b>	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;
<b>S9</b>	recognise distinctive psychological approaches to different issues;
<b>S10</b>	generate psychological hypotheses and the ways to test those hypotheses;
<b>S11</b>	carry out empirical studies using psychological methods of data collection;
<b>S12</b>	analyse quantitative and qualitative psychological data;
<b>S13</b>	use psychological tools, such as statistical procedures, laboratory equipment and psychometric tests;
<b>S14</b>	write an ethical proposal for psychological work;
<b>S15</b>	produce independent psychological research and describe that work in a written psychological report as well as deliver verbal presentations to an audience of psychologists.

## 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

<p><b>Development of the programme learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:</b></p> <p><b>FOUNDATION YEAR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lectures and seminars.</b> Most modules rely largely upon a mixed lecture/seminar format in order to impart essential subject knowledge, build confidence and encourage individual student participation. The latter is achieved through regular question and answer sessions and the use of small-group work to stimulate discussion on particular issues. The balance between tutor- and student-led discussions varies from subject area to subject area. (K1-3, S1-4).</li> <li>• <b>Problem solving classes.</b> These are an integral part of the Maths and Statistics module, allowing students to develop their problem solving skills with individual support from tutors where necessary. The work carried out in these classes allows students to apply and practice their theoretical knowledge, as well as their examination technique, in a supportive environment. (K2-3, S1, S3, S6).</li> <li>• <b>Field studies.</b> Short field study trips to specific landscapes, places or buildings (e.g. museums) are employed in modules in order to introduce particular concepts, ideas and techniques best understood in context. These also provide an opportunity to practice basic recording methods in some instances. (K2-4, S1, S4-6).</li> <li>• <b>Independent study.</b> This is the most important part of the learning process for most Foundation Year students. The extent to which independent study is formally guided by the tutor through the setting of specific weekly “private study tasks” will vary from subject area to subject area. In many natural science</li> </ul>
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based subjects, for example, formal or informal question papers and tasks may be set on a regular basis. In other subjects, the emphasis will be more upon the location, reading and analysis of suitable primary or secondary sources, often in preparation for particular formally assessed essay questions or projects. All students take a core Extended Project module which specifically develops their independent study and research skills. Within this and the Academic Literacy and Communication Skills module, students are also encouraged to monitor and reflect on their learning and performance in a number of different contexts (K3-5, S1-8).

- **Skills and subject-based tutorials.** These are provided as part of the core Extended Project and Academic Literacy and Communication Skills modules. All students are also assigned a personal tutor for the duration of their studies on the Foundation Year with whom they are encouraged to discuss their progress and degree choice. (K3-5, S8).
- **Group work.** Throughout the Foundation Year students are encouraged to work together and support one another both within and outside the classroom – sharing knowledge and experience in a creative way in order to develop support networks during their time on the Foundation Year which they can continue to draw upon in their future degree level studies. (K4-5, S4, S8).
- **On-line activities.** All Foundation Year modules make use of MOLE courses to develop familiarity with the use and potential of virtual learning environments to enhance and structure learning, and as a tool for effective communication. (K1-5, S2, S4, S7-8).
- **Revision workshops.** All those modules which include substantial summative assessment by formal written examination will include specific workshops tailored to prepare students for this particular form of assessment. This is an area of assessment which mature students often find particularly challenging, but is also a key assessment tool used at level one and above on most degree pathways (K4, S2-3, S8).
- **Laboratory sessions.** The Foundations of Biology module includes some laboratory classes in which students will practice basic laboratory procedures, skills and techniques, whilst exploring their understanding of subject knowledge through experiment and observation. (K3, S1, S3-6).

## DEGREE PROGRAMME

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:**

### FOUNDATION YEAR

The assessment on the foundation year of the BA Psychology with Foundation Year is designed to provide experience of all key forms of assessment method which students are likely to encounter at higher levels of study. Early exposure to these different assessment methods, including formative assessments in all "Foundations of" modules, as well as the opportunities provided through feedback and tutorial discussion to reflect on these

experiences, helps build students' confidence in their ability to succeed, and to identify strategies for future success.

The assessment methods employed are as follows:

1. *Essays*. A common method of assessment across most Social Science based modules. In preparing for and writing their essays, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1, K3, S1-3, S5 and S7.
2. *Oral or poster presentations*. Individual and group presentations, supported by Powerpoint or posters, are assessed as part of the core Academic Literacy and Introduction to the Social Sciences modules respectively. They provide an important opportunity for students to demonstrate to their peers their achievement of all learning outcomes.
3. *Reflexivity exercises*: these exercises can take various forms (e.g. learning journal, feedback action planning, critical reflection on individual extended essay/project) and are an important element of the Academic Literacy and Extended Project modules. They provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1, K3-5, S1-8.
4. *Unseen examinations*: End of module examinations are an integral part of all 'Foundations of ...' and the Introduction to the Social Sciences modules. In preparing for and sitting examinations, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1-3, S1-3 and S6.
5. *On-line participation*: a small number of modules formally assess students' participation in virtual learning environment activities. This provides the opportunity to develop K1-5 while demonstrating S2, S4 and S7-8.
6. *Extended project*. The core extended project module gives all students the opportunity to develop their independent research and communications skills, whilst further exploring subject matter relevant to an Health and Human Sciences degree in more depth. The successful completion of this module enables students to demonstrate achievement of all learning outcomes.

## DEGREE PROGRAMME

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](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

At Foundation Year level, all students take six 20 credit modules including two core modules covering study skills and personal development (Academic Literacy and Communication Skills), and basic numeracy and statistical skills (Maths and Statistics).

Psychology students also take Foundations of Psychology and one other subject-specific module relevant to the study of Psychology at degree level. Introduction to the Natural Sciences provides a general overview and introduction to study in the natural sciences; the Extended Project allows students to explore subject matter and specific skills important to their chosen degree in more depth, through researching and writing up an extended essay, project or laboratory-based experiment; and Foundations of Psychology provides foundational subject knowledge, skills and techniques in this subject area.

In all cases, students' personal tutors are available to discuss the best module options to take to best support successful progression to the BSc Psychology.

The BSc Psychology degree programme is delivered via 4 topic streams and 1 research methodology stream at levels 1 and 2. Each 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 level 1 and/or 2.

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.

The BPS also requires students to conduct an empirical project and this criteria is met by the level 3 research project.

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

Our Foundation Years are carefully designed to ease transition back into study for people who have not studied in a formal academic environment for a long period of time. In this respect, the key subject matter and assessments students encounter in the first semester are intended to introduce and refresh key study skills and practices, to build confidence, but also to open students to the wider field of learning and knowledge which is the life blood of any University degree.

We also place a strong emphasis upon group and peer-assisted learning at this stage, through the inclusion of different group tasks and assessments which are designed to ensure students can share and develop skills and support networks together which will serve them well throughout their University career.

As the year progresses, the nature of the challenges we present intensify, with an increasing emphasis placed upon those forms of assessment which mature students often find most rewarding (more in-depth project work) or most difficult (end of year exams). Through the project work, departmental visits and other means, we also create a

range of opportunities to become increasingly engaged in the life of the Department of Psychology. In this way, we aim to ease students second critical point of transition from foundation year student attached to Department for Lifelong Learning to a successful undergraduate student ready to flourish in their new departmental home.

Before the end of the year's study, all students are offered clear advice and guidance around progression options from Foundation Level to Level One, including appropriate careers advice, and through their final pieces of assessment in the Academic Literacy and Project modules, are encouraged to reflect carefully upon their learning over the course of their foundation year, and their preparedness for level one study.

In the case of students who do not achieve the average grade of 60 or better in their Foundation Year, plus additional conditions, required to progress onto level one of the BSc Psychology, we provide in depth support, advice and guidance to help them pursue an alternative progression route, either through the Department for Lifelong Learning's own Certificates of Higher Education, or by applying for other degree level study at Sheffield or elsewhere.

For the BSc 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.

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

All applicants must meet the University of Sheffield's minimum academic entry requirements for English Language (normally demonstrated by GCSE grade C or equivalent). A minimum GCSE grade D in Mathematics (or equivalent) may also be required. In addition, successful applicants will be able to demonstrate evidence of:

- Potential to succeed on their chosen degree programme, evidenced by a combination of work, life-based and prior educational experience;
- Understanding and commitment to the subject-area of their chosen degree programme;
- Preparedness for the demands that undergraduate degree level study will place upon them.

Further information regarding admission to the programme is available from the Department for Lifelong Learning website at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/dll/courses/foundation-year-degrees>.

## 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](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid).