MSc in Clinical Aspects of Psychology (full-time)

For students entering Part 1 in 2014/5

Awarding Institution: University of Reading
Teaching Institution: University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s): Life Sciences Faculty
Faculty: Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length: 12 months
Date of specification: 27/Jan/2015
Programme Director: Dr Craig Steel
Programme Advisor: MSc Programmes in Psychology

Summary of programme aims
The purpose of the course is to prepare graduates in Psychology and allied disciplines for academic, clinical, educational, health, and research careers entailing familiarity with abnormal psychological functioning and associated psychological treatments. Students are introduced to topics in clinical psychology. This is done in substantially more depth, and with greater emphasis on current research and treatment innovations, than is typically possible in the course of an undergraduate degree in psychology. Students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods, culminating in the completion of a piece of original research relevant to clinical/abnormal psychology. It is intended that the majority of graduates will go on to clinical or research posts, or further clinical training.

Transferable skills
During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

By the end of the course, students will have developed the following transferable skills:
- Ability to use computers for statistics, data analysis, and communication.
- Ability to use database/library resources.
- Writing skills: writing of papers, abstraction of others' work from written and oral material, critical evaluation.
- Ability to make oral presentations.

Programme content
Compulsory modules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Module title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PYM0S1</td>
<td>Data Collection and Analysis 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM0S2</td>
<td>Data Collection and Analysis 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYMINT</td>
<td>Introduction to Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM4PT</td>
<td>Psychological Treatment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM3P2</td>
<td>Topics in Developmental Psychopathology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM0CP</td>
<td>Methods in Clinical Psychology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM0PP</td>
<td>Project Preparation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYM0EP</td>
<td>Empirical Project</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
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Progression requirements
Acceptance onto any module is conditional on the student having attempted all assessments set in previous modules. The Empirical Project will normally be the last piece of work to be submitted for assessment (by Dissertation).

Assessment and classification
Teaching is by a variety of methods, including lectures, small group seminars, web-based work-throughs, self-paced workshops, individual feedback on written work, and one-on-one supervision. Assessment mirrors this
diversity, with methods including written assignments and other coursework, portfolio, seen examinations, open-book test, submission of practical reports, oral and poster presentations, and submission of project dissertation.

The University’s taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

**Mark Interpretation**
- 70 - 100% Distinction
- 60 - 69% Merit
- 50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

**Failing categories:**
- 40 - 49% Work below threshold standard
- 0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

**For Masters Degrees (180 credits)**
Award of PG Diploma will follow University of Reading published criteria (see http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx); in addition students must have marks not below 40 in module PYMINT.

**For PG Diplomas (120 credits: as MSc but without a Project)**
Award of PG Diploma will follow University of Reading published criteria (see http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx); in addition students must have marks not below 40 in module PYMINT.

**For PG Certificates (60 credits, without a Project)**
Award of PG Certificate will follow University of Reading published criteria (www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx). A certificate in Research Methods in Psychology may be awarded if that is a more appropriate reflection of the modules completed.

**Admission requirements**
Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an Honours degree in psychology or related discipline (e.g., cognitive science, linguistics, philosophy). Applicants should have gained, or expect to gain, a class mark of 2(1) or better (i.e., 60%+ [or international equivalent, e.g. B+ US letter grade]). Applicants holding 2(2) degrees may apply and each case will be considered on its own merits. We discourage applications from holders of Third Class degrees.

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Kate Harvey

**Support for students and their learning**
University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.reading.ac.uk/student

Support for graduate students in the Department of Psychology is similarly aimed at both learning and pastoral support. Learning support includes use of workrooms dedicated to MSc students with networked PCs and printer, access to the departmental library, a specially selected and maintained reprint collection, provision of photocopying cards, and ready access to members of staff who are all respected scholars in the fields taught. Pastoral support augments the University's care systems, with each student being allocated a Personal Tutor from the Board of Studies.

New students undergo an induction programme in the week before they start the course. A comprehensive handbook is available for the course; this is available on-line, as are a wealth of other resources via the
department's intranet. Teaching is usually in small groups with much opportunity for students to discuss matters and support one another. There is an active Student-Staff Committee with postgraduate representation.

Career learning

Career prospects

Graduates will have good prospects in careers which involve either a background in clinical psychology, or more broadly based research and analytic skills. Such careers occur in a wide variety of academic, clinical, educational, health, and research fields. It is anticipated that at least half of graduates will go to into careers involving clinical work, further clinical training, or research (interpreted broadly). The remainder will be able to use skills and insights gained on the course in areas as diverse as health care, health policy, education, international development, and counselling.

Opportunities for study abroad

Opportunity for first-hand research and/or clinical involvement is available to students on the course through volunteer placements in laboratories at the Department of Psychology, the Winnicott Research Unit, and the Charlie Waller Institute, where there are numerous researchers and clinicians working in the field of abnormal psychology. External placements may also be considered.

Placement opportunities

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Advanced concepts, theories, and evidence in the core domains of: research methods, theoretical issues for psychologists, psychopathology and psychological treatments for disorder.
2. A broad variety of methods and approaches in the understanding and treatment of psychopathology. This to be at a graduate level of understanding.
3. Applications of research outcomes in the field of psychopathology.
4. Particular difficulties inherent in clinical research.
5. Ethical issues arising in relation to psychological research and practice, particularly those relevant to the clinical field.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1-5 are covered in lectures and seminars.
- 2, 4 and 5 are further supported by practical experience, most notably in the completion of an empirical project.
- 1 and 2 are supported by attendance at seminars (PYMINT, PYM4PT) given by staff and by visiting speakers, who are generally leaders in their field.

Assessment

- 1-4 by coursework assignments, class tests, and seen examinations.
- 1, 3, 4, and 5 are assessed directly in the empirical project, and 2 is assessed indirectly (through the rationale for the methods actually deployed by the student).
- 5 is assessed throughout.
- In all cases, students are expected to perform at a level above that required for undergraduate study.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

1. Use advanced evidence-based reasoning to argue or evaluate a claim about clinical psychology.
2. Apply multiple perspectives and levels of explanation to understanding and treating psychological disorder.
3 Design and plan clinical research.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1-3, and 5, are explicated in seminars.
- Coursework assignments and class tests give opportunity for formative feedback.
- Feedback to students on coursework in ‘Methods’ modules (one of which is compulsory) assists students in the deployment
4. Critically evaluate the design and conduct of psychological research into clinical issues.
5. Write well-structured and well-argued essays at graduate level.
6. Understand the theoretical framework(s) in which psychological research, especially clinically relevant work, is conducted.

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. Perform advanced searches for information relevant to specific topics.
2. Choose and apply appropriate data analytic techniques.
3. Plan and carry out, with supervision, psychological research relevant to clinical psychology.
4. Write up empirical research relevant to the understanding of psychological disorder.
5. Conceptualise individual clinical problems and formulate plans for intervention.
6. Make an application for ethical approval.

D. Transferable skills - able to:

1. Communicate concisely or at length in writing.
2. Give oral presentations.
3. Work with a group.
4. Plan and implement a project.
5. Solve practical problems.
6. Use IT to write, to present information visually, to manage and analyse numeric data, to communicate, and to find information.
7. Summarise complex, orally delivered information.
8. Manage time.
Assessment

- 1, 2, 4, and 6 are formally assessed as coursework and/or in class tests.
- An adequate standard in 3, 5, 7 and 8 is necessary to pass the course.

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.