SECTION FOUR- RESEARCH

Contents

Introduction

Clinical psychology is an evidence-based discipline, and, as such, research forms an integral part of the Programme. This is recognised in the BPS Standards for the Accreditation of Doctoral Programmes in Clinical Psychology (Clinical Accreditation Handbook 2019) and the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (Practitioner psychologists), which emphasise the importance of research in the core competencies and values of

clinical psychologists. In developing these skills during training, trainees undertake a major research project written up in the form of a doctoral thesis. In addition, trainees are expected to make use of research evidence in all of their academic and clinical work.

It is expected that trainees will already have undertaken substantial research training in their undergraduate degree, and also potentially as postgraduate students. Trainees' further learning about research during the Programme is supported by Research Training Curriculum teaching sessions, workshops, presentations on major research projects within the research presentations groups, attendance at the annual Research Conference, and individual research supervision. Trainees are encouraged to engage with wider relevant societies and conferences. Attendance of established research conferences for the dissemination of findings from the major research project can be supported by a research budget, which is available to all trainees to cover relevant costs of undertaking their major research project.

This section of the Programme handbook is largely concerned with the research training curriculum and with the major research project. It is intended to be a resource to trainees and research supervisors. The University of Liverpool produces a *Postgraduate Research Handbook* for postgraduate research (PGR) students and supervisors; the most recent edition of which is available on the University web pages. Trainees are registered as PGR students at the University. PGR policies, procedures and regulations are also available on the University web pages. Some of the information in this Handbook simply repeats this information to make it more accessible to trainees and supervisors and, in some cases, give additional advice and specific guidance on D.Clin.Psy research.

The Vision for Research Training of DClinPsy. Trainees

The DClinPsy. research team at the University will endeavour to help trainees develop their: appreciation of the value of research activity; understanding of research theory, methodology and design; awareness of ethical issues and the process of gaining ethical approval; competencies in conducting research, and confidence in disseminating research findings. The key skills and competencies developed during a period of intense research training should allow trainees to contribute to the evidence base, to inform evidence based practice, and to assure the quality of practice (e.g., by using quantitative and qualitative methods to gather information and to monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice; HCPC Standards of proficiency).

The Research Team

The main point of contact during the completion of the major research project will be trainees' research supervisors. Supervisors are required to supervise and support trainees to develop the appropriate skills and competencies required to undertake the major research project. The development of research skills and knowledge throughout the three years of the training Programme is also supported by the Programme team. The research team provide clear governance of the research component of the D.Clin.Psy. programme, and work together with the wider staff team to support trainees' learning and development and to monitor trainees' progress. The research team are:

Dr Steven Gillespie	Research Director responsible for the overall Research training curriculum and research component of the Programme
Dr Ioannis Angelakis	Research Tutor Year 1 Convenor

Dr Mengya Zhao	Research Tutor Year 1 Convenor
Dr Anam Elahi	Research Tutor Year 2 Convenor
Dr Barbara Mezes	Research Tutor Year 2 Convenor
Dr Gemma Cherry	Research Tutor Year 3 Convenor
Dr Cintia Faija	Research Tutor Year 3 Convenor

Programme Research Director and Tutors

The research team is responsible for supporting and monitoring the progress of trainees with their research. There is a designated research tutor for each year of the Programme (see the table above). The year research tutor will:

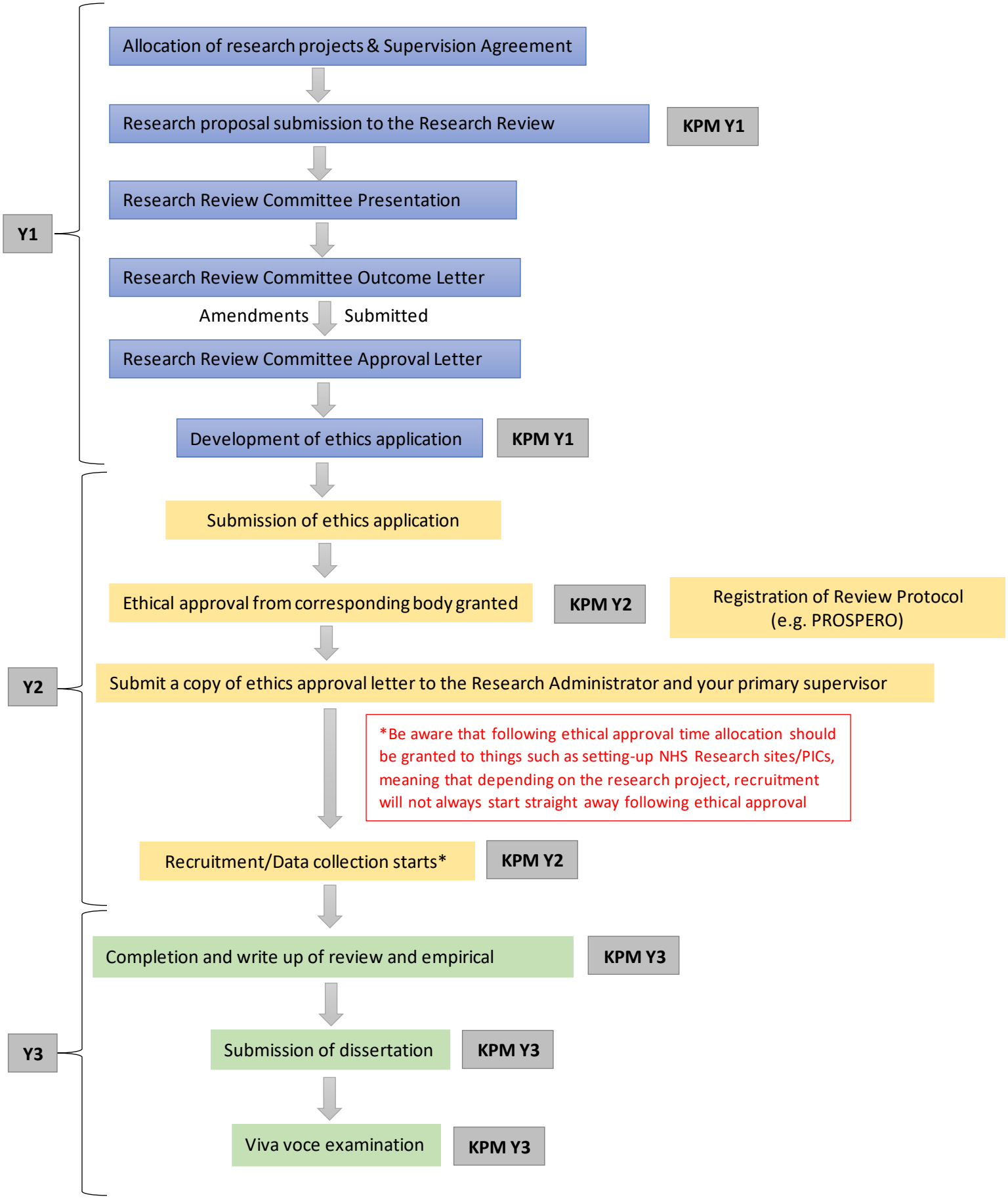
- Monitor the overall progress of trainees with their projects through contact with trainees and research supervisors.
- Be a source of advice for trainees and supervisors on specific Programme requirements.

The members of the research team have a range of expertise in research methodology as well as the practical and procedural aspects of research. Members of the research team offer workshops on specific aspects of research methodology throughout the Programme. Research team members can also provide research advice. However, any queries regarding research designs, methodologies and analyses should be discussed with the trainee's supervisors and importantly any decisions taken are the responsibility of the trainee and the primary supervisor.

The Research Thesis

It is a requirement of the degree that trainees submit a write up major research project, which is known as a thesis. Planning for and design of the research project begins in year 1 of the Programme with the submission of a research proposal; the process of applying for ethical review should usually be started in the first year following approval of the research proposal, with main data collection, analysis and writing of the thesis undertaken during years 2 and 3.

Flow Diagram Chart. DClinPsy Research journey overview including Key Progression Milestones (KPM) per year



The conduct of a research project and literature review, and submission of a research thesis, form a vital part of the degree. The guidelines for the write up of the major research component of the programme can be accessed here. The thesis submission dates, unless otherwise notified, are usually in June of the final year for examination in July - with an additional window for submission in January for February examination.

Aims of Assessment by Research Dissertation

The work should be of a publishable standard and of sufficient quality to demonstrate that the trainee is competent to go on to conduct future research and to offer advice on research without close supervision. The research thesis should aspire to make valuable contributions to the research field. In practice, this means:

1. There should be a sufficient quantity of work given the time and resources available. Due to time restrictions, longitudinal and intervention studies will require the trainee and supervisory team to be highly organised to make optimal use of the time available, and careful consideration should be given to issues of feasibility in the timescales of the D.Clin.Psy.
2. The study should show the trainee's ability to put psychological theory into practice. Trainees are cautioned against undertaking surveys or similar investigations that might lack adequate sophistication for doctoral level research.
3. The results of the research should have clear implications for clinical psychology and/or its associated stakeholders. Studies which stretch the limits of conventional methodology and design in the attempt to link with clinical practice are encouraged.
4. The research should be of such quality as to be considered for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Although each trainee's aim should be to publish their research findings, this is not a prerequisite for passing the viva voce examination. Positive or provocative results are not crucial. What is essential is that the trainee has carried out a study that has potential clinical relevance and value.
5. There should be evidence that the trainee has learned from the experience of research. For instance, in the thesis and viva voce examination, the trainee should demonstrate a capacity to reflect on how the original research question(s), design or methods could have been modified.
6. All research has limitations. The write-up should show an awareness of this for the particular project and reflect on how the research could have been done differently.

Organisation of the Major Research Component

Trainees' planning, execution, analysis and write up of their research is supported through supervision, training sessions, the Research Review Committee (RRC), the research team, and colleagues from across the University.

Research Days

Year		Research Leave (bookable)	Research Days (set – per week)
1	Oct – End of Term 2	4 half days (to prepare proposal)	0
	Remainder of Year 1	0	1
2	Oct - Mar	0	1
	Apr - Sep	0	1
3	Oct - Mar	6 full days	1
	Mar -> Thesis submission deadline		2
	Thesis deadline -> Research Conference	0	1.5
	Post-Research Conference -> Sep	0	0.5

Note: Trainees have a half-day study every week through the three years.

In order to request leave, trainees should fill in the leave request form that is available on Canvas. Request forms must be submitted to the Student Experience team at least one week in advance of the requested leave days, after being agreed with placement supervisors, if necessary. Retrospective leave requests will not be granted approval.

During year 1 trainees have one set day per week for their research. The research day is agreed with placement supervisors.

In year 1 the main task is the preparation of the research proposal which is submitted in February. Most of the work on this will be undertaken during trainees' own study time. However, it is recognised that trainees may need time during working hours to meet with potential supervisors and negotiate with gatekeepers concerning access to potential participants etc. To this end, trainees may request up to a total of four half-days out of placement before the submission of their research

proposal. Requests for research leave must be taken as half days. Only in exceptional circumstances will a full day research leave be approved. These half days may not be carried over beyond the proposal submission deadline.

During year 2 and through to the end of March of year 3, trainees have one set day per week for their research as a Programme requirement. These research days cannot be carried over or claimed back retrospectively. The research day is agreed with placement supervisors, usually before the beginning of the placement. The day of the week to be taken will often be driven by the requirements of the research (for instance, by the need to attend a clinic on a particular day to recruit participants). Trainees are strongly discouraged from taking Friday as their regular research day as experience suggests that Fridays are more likely to be missed due to annual leave. Placement supervisors may see Fridays as a good choice of research day as it allows consecutive days for clinical work in the middle part of each week, however it is advisable to choose a day when your research supervisors are more likely to be available. All of this indicates the importance of discussing and negotiating in advance with both research and clinical supervisors and arriving at the best overall solution taking account of the specific needs of the research alongside other demands. It is incumbent upon trainees to follow that process and agree the most appropriate solution.

Between the time when teaching finishes in year 3 and the submission of thesis, trainees will have an additional research day to work on the write-up of their thesis and prepare for their *viva voce* examinations. After the thesis deadline, trainees will then be entitled to one and a half days per week for research until the Research Conference. From the research conference to the end of September trainees will be entitled to half a day per week for any amendments following the vivas, keeping abreast of their research, preparing for publication and writing research reports (e.g., NHS Trust Research and Development (R&D) committee/ethics committee).

Trainees are also entitled to six days research leave during year 3. These are usually taken to form a block of one or two-weeks of dedicated research time. This does **not** include teaching on Mondays – if trainees take their research leave while there is still teaching, they must still attend. If trainees choose to take their research leave in a week with a Bank Holiday, then they do **not** get an extra research day to take at another time. Trainees are also strongly advised to discuss this with their research supervisor in the context of a work plan and deadlines for producing drafts. Trainees may make a request to take their six days' research leave as individual days, but it is important to consult with your placement supervisor at an early stage to arrange this. A block week dedicated to research would include Mondays (when trainees either have teaching or a free day for research anyway depending on the time of year) and their one research day per week.

Research Training Curriculum

The research training curriculum consists of dedicated research teaching sessions, research presentations and the research conference. In addition, several optional research surgeries, workshops and seminars are available to support specific research learnings, knowledge and skills development in each year of training.

Research Training Curriculum Year 1

Convenors: Dr Ioannis Angelakis & Dr Anam Elahi

Aims

To re-familiarise trainees with the fundamental concepts involved in conducting research relevant to clinical psychology with a particular focus on the theoretical assumptions that underlie quantitative research, qualitative research, and systematic approaches to reviewing and synthesising research evidence. This builds on the material that trainees are expected to know from their

undergraduate/postgraduate qualifications and on the basis of having Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). It is essential that you reacquaint and familiarise yourselves with this material.

To provide outlines of:

- the types of research which are typically conducted within clinical psychology and allied fields, and the reasoning underlying them
- a range of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis, and for reviewing and synthesising literature
- ethical issues in clinical research
- the processes involved in planning a research thesis for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology.
- co-production and involvement of experts by experience (e.g., service users and/or carer involvement in research)

The teaching unit is designed to ensure that trainees can decide on appropriate methods of analysis for their own research and evaluate published research which may have a bearing on it. The module aims to draw together the applied nature of clinical research, with both taught and practical components to sessions.

Suggested reading

- Cherry, M.G., Boland, A., & Dickson, R.C. (2023). Doing a Systematic Review: A Student's Guide (3rd Ed.). London: Sage Publications
- British Psychological Society. (2017). Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research. Available here
- Clark-Carter, D. (2009). Doing Quantitative Psychological Research Hove: Psychology Press.
- Ess, C., & The Association of Internet Researchers. (2004). Ethical decision-making and internet research: http://aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf
- Field, A. (2017). Discovering Statistics using SPSS (5th Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (2014). Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers (2nd Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Wright, & Hallquist, M. N. (2020). The Cambridge handbook of research methods in clinical psychology / edited by Aidan G. C. Wright, Michael N. Hallquist. (Wright & M. N. Hallquist, Eds.). Cambridge University Press.
- Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, E. B., & Zechmeister, J. S. (2015). Research methods in psychology / John J. Shaughnessy, Eugene B. Zechmeister, Jeanne S. Zechmeister. (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Statistics Guides with Dr Paul Christiansen - YouTube

Research Training Curriculum Year 2

Convenors: Dr Barbara Mezes and Dr Mengya Zhao

Aims

The year 2 research sessions focus mainly on the more practical side of conducting research. This includes ethical issues and applying for ethical approval, the process of conducting literature reviews and meta-analysis, critiquing empirical research (quantitative and qualitative), conducting quantitative analysis, meaningful involvement of experts by experience, and reflecting on your own positionality in research. The research sessions aim to guide trainees as they conduct their review and collect and analyse their data.

To provide outlines of:

- supporting the ongoing development of research knowledge
- assisting with application(s) to research ethics and governance committees
- developing critiquing skills
- facilitating and supporting the completion of the research thesis

Suggested reading

- Aveyard, H., Payne, S., & Preston, N. (2021). *A Postgraduate's Guide to Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social Care* (2nd ed.). Open University Press.
- Cherry, M.G., Boland, A., Dickson, R. (2023). Doing A Systematic Review: A Student's Guide. (3rd Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Finlay, L. & Gough, B. (2003) (Eds) Reflexivity: *A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences*. Blackwell
- Jamieson, M. K., Pownall, M., & Govaart, G. H. (2022). Reflexivity in quantitative research: a rationale and beginner's guide. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass,* e12735.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Oates, J., Carpenter, D., Fisher, M., Goodson, S., Hannah, B., Kwiatowski, R., ... & Wainwright, T. (2021, April). *BPS code of human research ethics*. British Psychological Society.

Research Training Curriculum Year 3

Convenors: Dr Gemma Cherry and Dr Cintia Faija

Aims

The year 3 research teaching sessions, seminars and workshops aim to support the ongoing development of research knowledge and critiquing skills. The research sessions also aim to facilitate and support trainees in completing their doctoral research thesis, preparing for their vivas, writing for publication, and disseminating their research.

To provide outlines of:

- how to critique research, including literature reviews and your own work
- skills in writing for publication, including an awareness of the peer review process
- different methods of dissemination
- preparing for viva voce and after
- common thesis pitfalls
- continuation of research post-qualification

Suggested reading

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022) *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). Constructing Grounded Theory (3nd Ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Cherry, M.G., Boland, A., & Dickson, R.C. (2023). Doing a Systematic Review: A Student's Guide (3rd Ed.). London: Sage Publications
- Craswell, G., and Poore, M. (2004). Writing for academic success. Sage Publications.
- Eldridge et al. (2016). Defining Feasibility and Pilot Studies in Preparation for Randomised Controlled Trials: Development of a Conceptual Framework. PLoS One,11(3): e0150205

- Field, A. (2017). Discovering Statistics using SPSS (5th Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Hayes, A. (2022). Introduction to Mediation, Moderation and Conditional Process Analysis – A regression-based approach (3rd Ed). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Jacobson NS, Roberts LJ, Berns SB, McGlinchey JB. (1999). Methods for defining and determining the clinical significance of treatment effects: Description, application, and alternatives. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67(3):300-307.
- Jalongo, M. R., and Saracho, O. N.. (2016). Writing for publication – Transitions and tools that support Scholars' success. Springer.
- Murray, R. (2009). How To Survive Your Viva: Defending A Thesis In An Oral Examination (2nd Ed). Open University Press.
- National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR). (2019). How to disseminate your research? https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/how-to-disseminate-your-research/19951
- Ross-Hellauer, T., Tennant, J. P., Banelytė, V., Gorogh, E., Luzi, D., Kraker, P., Pisacane, L., Ruggieri, R., Sifacaki, E., & Vignoli, M. (2020). Ten simple rules for innovative dissemination of research. *PLoS computational biology*, 16(4), e1007704. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1007704
- Smith, J. A. (2008). Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods. London: Sage
- Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1, pp. 39-54.
- Trafford, V., and Leshem, S. (2008). Stepping stones to achieving your doctorate: Focusing on your viva from the start. Open University Press.
- Willing, C. (2013). Introducing Qualitative research in Psychology (3rd Ed). McGraw-Hill Education.

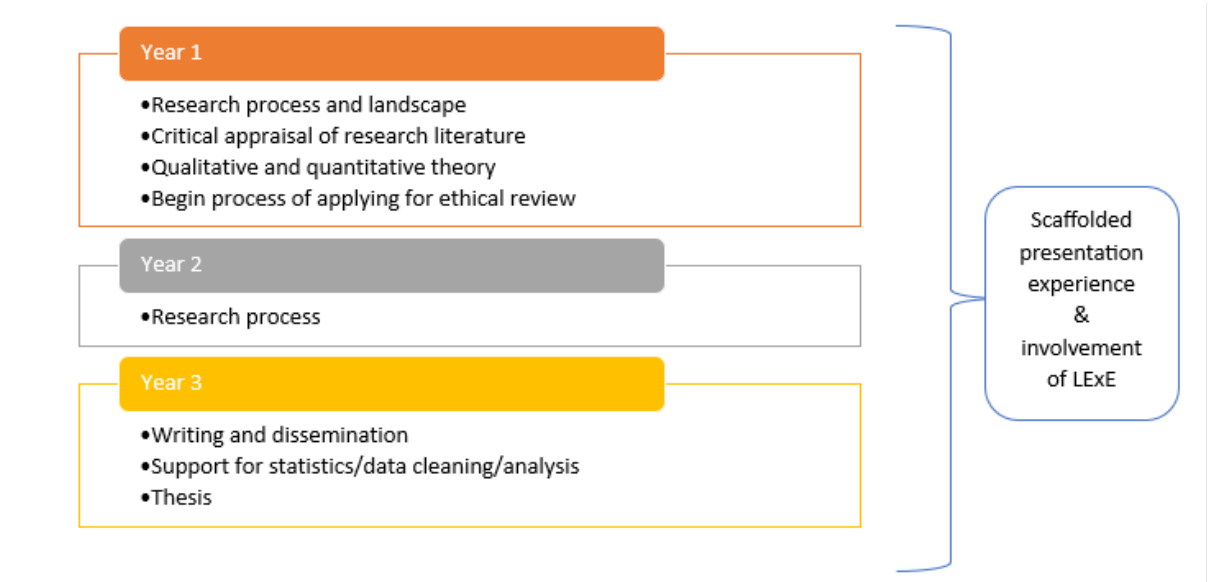


Figure 1. Schematic of research training and completion of thesis

Research Presentations

All trainees will be asked to give a short presentation on their ongoing research every year. This presentation will be made within the same small groups that are brought together for reflective practice group discussions with the addition of tutors and experts by experience. Slots for this are timetabled, and trainees will be given a date well in advance for presentation.

In year 1 the presentation is an outline of the research proposal that you are developing (this provides opportunities for input from those present about the feasibility of the proposed project).

In year 2 you will present your research progress to date, often presenting the rationale and methodology for the empirical study and review.

In year 3 you will present on the literature review progress and empirical study. You may have initial results to present but it is more likely that the presentation will focus on the methodology and a reflective evaluation of how this is working in practice.

The sessions will be in the style of conference presentations followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion. Trainees should prepare sufficient hand-outs for their presentations if appropriate. Formative feedback will be provided on presentations from attendees.

These presentation sessions provide an opportunity to develop presentation skills and critical appraisal and to gain feedback from peers and experience of engaging in discussions about research. Year 3 trainees gain the opportunity to develop their skills of chairing meetings and timekeeping. At these presentations a research tutor or other research active members of the department will be present.

Clinical Service-Related Investigations (CSRIs)

All trainees are required to complete a CSRI assignment. Within the Health & Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (available here), Standard 2b.1 requires that practitioner psychologists should be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions. For clinical psychologists this incorporates the ability **to conduct service evaluations**, and within that, to be able to identify, review and critically appraise a substantial body of research evidence relevant to clinical psychology practice. These proficiencies are assessed in the conduct and reporting of this programme assignment.

Suitable investigations that may be undertaken by trainees include audit (the evaluation of provision of services against some pre-set national standard or standards developed from within the service), small-scale research, research of staff attitudes, knowledge or training needs, evaluation of a group based or individual intervention, Surveys of patients'/carers' needs, surveys of approaches to clinical practice, or evaluation of a change in service structure. Further information about types of investigation, ethics requirements, and marking guidelines, can be found in the CSRI marking guidelines document available online here.

Research tutors can briefly comment on design questions or analysis queries and can comment on whether a particular question appears to be within the guidelines for the CSRI.

Research tutors cannot provide supervision to trainees to design a CSRI to answer a particular question or to write up the CSRI, as these are skills are being assessed in the assignment.

It is important to remember that any advice given by research tutors on, for example, whether or not a particular question appears relevant, does not guarantee that a CSRI will pass. When tutors provide advice, they are not looking at a final, written report. The execution of the work, and the quality of the write up and presentation are important to consider in whether an assignment passes or fails.

The Annual Research Conference

Each year a research conference is organised at which third year trainees present their research. The conference is held in June, following submission of research thesis. The presentations are attended

by other trainees, research supervisors, University staff, colleagues from NHS clinical departments, experts by experience and PGR students. This is an opportunity for trainees to gain experience in the preparation of research for dissemination to a wider audience and more specifically in conference presentations.

Key Progression Milestones for Major Research Project

Please note that generally the dates given are the last dates by which milestones should have been reached, and the 'desirable' date would generally be earlier.

Key Progression Milestones for each year of training

Year 1	Research proposal submission to the RRC (and possible resubmission following any changes required) Begin process of applying for ethical review
Year 2	Approval of the ethical application Registration of the systematic review protocol (e.g., systematic reviews should be registered on a database such as PROSPERO) Commencement of data collection
Year 3	Completion and write up of review and empirical chapters Submission of thesis and viva voce examination

It is expected that trainees will gain RRC approval for their research proposal in their first year of training, and that trainees will complete a literature review protocol and commence data collection in their second year of training.

Year 1

Trainees are advised to start thinking about their research project during the early stages of the Programme. In addition to a document detailing research projects, the interests and methodological expertise of potential supervisors, you can find information on staff research on the University web pages for individual Departments (e.g., Departments of Primary Care and Mental Health, Psychology, Health Data Science). The Research and Involvement Showcase presents potential research project areas and is arranged in the first term. The research teaching curriculum includes specific advice on planning your project and preparing your research proposal. Project abstracts will be presented to trainees via padlet (an online noticeboard). For research governance reasons, primary supervisors must be employed by the University of Liverpool. Thus, any projects recommended by external supervisors (e.g., clinicians working in the NHS) will need to be matched to a primary supervisor within the University.

The Project Allocation Process

In year 1, trainees will be provided with a list of project abstracts proposed by University staff and NHS colleagues. After the abstracts for potential projects has been circulated, trainees will be required to select their preferred projects and submit them in order of preference to the Year 1 Research Convenors and to the Research Administrator by a set date (to be communicated). Where possible, the research team will try to allocate first preferences. However, where more than one trainee has selected the same project, the potential supervisor will be asked to choose who they will supervise.

The Research Team will review the submissions and allocate a project to each trainee. Once allocated, the relative contributions and responsibilities of the primary and second supervisors should be discussed and agreed at the beginning of the project and should be explicitly stated in a

Research Supervision Agreement that is prepared by the trainee and signed by the entire team. The primary supervisor has the main responsibility for supervising a research project.

We recommend that you discuss roles, communication, and eventual publication of the work with your supervisors at an early stage. Agreed plans should then be summarised in the Research Supervision Agreement Contract, which can be reviewed throughout the project. The support offered by secondary supervisors will vary according to the level contribution agreed at the start of the project.

Supervisor approval of proposals

Once trainees have been assigned supervisors they should be in regular contact during the preparation of their proposals. It is the responsibility of trainees to maintain regular contact with their supervisors. Trainees should also ensure their supervisors have expertise in the methodology and analytical processes they plan to use. Please be aware that it is a requirement that your proposal includes a statement from your supervisors that they have read and approved your proposal. This implies that you will need to have a full draft of your proposal ready at least a few weeks before the submission date. Therefore, it is important to negotiate with your supervisors when to submit your draft proposal well in advance of the due date. It is important to establish a pattern of regular supervisory contact, particularly with your primary supervisor, as early as possible and to maintain it throughout the three years.

Year 2

Beginning of academic year 2

Except in the exceptional circumstances of complete breakdown of a project due to external events, trainees should not change fundamental aspects of their project proposal once the research project has been approved. No new research proposal can be undertaken without the approval of the Research Director. Trainees must inform the RRC of any proposed changes to their research, even minor changes. All proposed project amendments must be approved by the RRC before proposed amendments are submitted to University Sponsorship (if applicable) and the relevant ethical committee. Minor amendments can usually be approved by the RRC Chair or Vice Chair. However, major changes may require a review process similar to the process in Year 1. Requests for proposed research amendments should usually be addressed to the Year Lead/RRC Vice Chair. All research budgets must be approved by the project supervisors and the RRC, and any changes to this submitted to the RRC.

Trainees will usually also have to submit their research proposal for external scrutiny by other agencies. For projects that require NHS ethical approval, this will include obtaining approval from the NHS Trust Research Governance and applying for ethical approval via the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). Available.

HRA or CORE applications should be submitted by approximately November of Year 2. It is recognised that when Trust Research Governance committees and/or NHS research ethics committees ask for project amendments ethical approval may take some time. However, trainees should take all possible steps to ensure that they respond speedily to these committees. Once the relevant approval has been granted, trainees should submit a copy of their letter of approval to the Research Administrator and to their primary supervisor[1]. The same applies to all ethical and university sponsorship approval letters and subsequent correspondence regarding proposed amendments.

[1] Trainees should retain a copy of your ethics approval letters and sponsorship approval for your records.

Supervisor Feedback Reports - Year 2

Supervisors will be asked to provide research progress reports in November and June. The November report will ask supervisors to provide an update on progress toward gaining ethical approval and the development and registration of your literature review protocol. In the June report, supervisors will be asked to provide a detailed summary of progress to date, including recruitment, data collection and the literature review draft. In addition to your regular research supervision meetings, trainees should arrange to meet with their supervisors in early November and early June to give them an update on their research progress. Trainees who have not met the Key Progression Milestones will be asked to attend an Independent Progress Assessment Panel (IPAP). The aim of the IPAP is to understand any barriers to progress, to support the trainee to troubleshoot any issues that have affected progress, and to provide a space for the trainee to raise any concerns.

Year 3

Supervisor Feedback Reports - Year 3

Supervisors will be asked to provide feedback concerning the research progress at two points. By the end of November trainees should aim to have:

- completed a draft literature review chapter
- completed or be close to completing data collection
- be up to date in entering quantitative data into a data file (e.g. SPSS), or transcribing interview data etc.
- have a clear plan for data analysis

By the end of March**,** supervisors will be asked to review supervisee research progress and indicate if their supervisees are on course to submit their thesis by June. By this point, trainees should have:

- completed a draft empirical paper
- commenced planning the materials to be included in the appendices.

In addition to your regular research supervision meetings, trainees should arrange to meet with their supervisors in early November and early March to give them an update on their research progress.

In March, it is strongly advised that trainees should agree deadlines with their supervisor to aid progress towards completion of the research thesis. It is important to agree well in advance deadlines for the submission and reading of drafts. Following the March review, trainees who are not considered to be on course to submit their thesis by June will be asked to attend a similar IPAP review meeting to that described above for Year 2 trainees.

Draft thesis submission

Trainees must submit a full draft to their supervisors for feedback on an agreed date at least one month prior to the submission deadline for the thesis. It is important to remember that many supervisors are working with more than one trainee and will expect clear communication from trainees around timelines for submission of drafts and the return of feedback. Expectations for time required to read drafts and provide feedback should be agreed at the proposal stage and outlined in the research contract.

Year 3 third term

Deadline for submission of the thesis will be early June of the final year. Trainees will be notified of the exact date at the commencement of their final year[2].

[2] Trainees may wish to submit before this date in order to balance the research with other coursework and placement commitments.

It is the responsibility of trainees to ensure that their supervisor has a copy of their data and all associated transcripts, code, and other materials necessary to replicate analyses and data interpretation. This is essential for research integrity purposes, and examiners may enquire about data provenance, storage, and management. All data sharing should be carried out in ways that are consistent with the data management procedures outlined in the approved application for ethical review (e.g., data should not be shared using email without ethical approval).

The Supervisory Team

All trainees must have two named supervisors. Trainees **must** have a University of Liverpool supervisor who will act as primary for research governance. The second supervisor may be an internal or external supervisor. It is not unusual for different supervisors to bring different skills and experience to the supervisory team. For instance, one may have specific expertise in the subject matter of the project and methodological expertise whilst another brings a clinical expertise. However, the supervisory team must include suitable psychological and research expertise to support your research project – and at least one supervisor should have an appropriate qualification in Psychology. Where more than two people are involved in guiding the project, it will usually be advisable to designate some of these individuals as advisors or collaborators (rather than as supervisors)[3].

Any proposed change in supervision or research project must be approved by the Research Director.

The Primary Supervisor is usually responsible for:

- advising on theoretical, clinical, design and methodological issues specific to the area of study
- ensure that the trainee is regularly liaising with other supervisors
- ensuring that the study is practicable given the time and resources available (including access to research participants, availability of special equipment or materials[4])
- overseeing the application for ethical approval
- informing the Research Director and Research team as soon as possible of any problems that may threaten the research and otherwise monitor trainee progress
- facilitate access to any necessary support and resources within the University
- read a draft of each thesis chapter and of the complete thesis and provide feedback

Expectations of Supervision

T the proposal stage, all trainees are expected to complete a research contract, that should be agreed and signed by the trainee and their research supervisors. The contract should outline the expectations of the trainee and the supervisors, and should be revisited as appropriate during supervision.

Trainees and their supervisors will be asked to provide updates to the research team, summarising the process of supervision and providing a commentary on the overall progress of the work; allowing identification of potential problems that may impact progress.

Trainees should expect to meet with their primary supervisor about once a month. The intensity and frequency of contact varies across the lifespan of the project, with more intense contact when you are preparing your research proposal, ethical application, literature review protocol, starting data

[3] Note: external supervisors who act as secondary supervisors must have prior experience of supervising postgraduate research.

[4] As highlighted above, longitudinal and intervention studies are typically beyond the scope of a D.Clin.Psy. project.

collection and completing the analysis and write-up. Meetings with the secondary supervisor(s) are usually less frequent but should be discussed in the early stages of the research. Inevitably, sometimes staff change jobs or take parental or extended leave and in these instances the research team will assist in identifying new supervisors (or leave cover). A trainee cannot change their research project for a new project without this being approved by the Research Review Committee. A change of research project would only take place in exceptional circumstances. Trainees must inform all the relevant Research Ethics Committees, the D.Clin.Psy. Research Review Committee, and the Faculty Research Support Office (in relation to sponsorship cover) of any change in supervisor and/or project. Trainees should also notify the University Sponsorship and University Ethics Committee (CORE) of amendments to the title of their thesis. Failure to do this would mean that you were working outside your ethical approval and/or without insurance.

Transparency and awareness of bias

All trainees should consider potential sources of bias and how these will be managed in the conduct of their research. Sources of bias during research can result from personal experiences, beliefs, and membership of different groups. Potential biases can impact the research process at several stages, including the design of the project and research materials, the collection of data, the interpretation and writing up of the results, and can harm the reliability of the conclusions.

With this in mind, there are a few considerations when choosing to conduct your research in an area where you have personal interest and/or lived experience. It is important to be mindful of the context within which your research sits and what you hope to find. Your role as a researcher is to present your participants' experiences accurately, without bias, even where participants' experiences and beliefs do not align with your own personal experiences and beliefs.

Impartiality is integral in the conduct of research. One way to ensure that you can remain impartial is to appoint a supervisor with methodological expertise, and to have an agreed-upon plan for documenting the research process and discussing potential sources of bias in a way that reduces their impact on the conduct and the conclusions of the research. You should also remain faithful to your proposal, and carry out the research as planned, without making changes to your hypotheses, research questions, or data analysis without being able to provide an appropriate rationale for the scientific merits of any deviations and outlining these in a proposal amendment. There is an expectation that you will consider reflexivity and your positionality as a researcher. For trainees conducting qualitative or mixed-method projects, using the reflexivity section effectively within your thesis will help to ensure that your position is clearly stated.

The Research Proposal

A date for submission of proposals will be included in the list of deadlines for the year. When submitting research proposals trainees should submit the following documents (template forms are available on Canvas where relevant):

1. A research proposal checklist
2. A one-page lay summary
3. The full research proposal
4. A separate one-page detailed budget
5. A personalised timeline of the proposed research
6. A signed research supervision contract
7. A signed approval for the submission of the proposal by your supervisors
8. A signed declaration of trainee responsibilities

Trainees are required to submit an electronic copy of these documents to the Research Administrator and a copy of the main proposal document to Turnitin.

If any of these documents are not provided by the deadline the research review process may be delayed.

The research proposal must be presented double spaced using a font size as described in the section *Presentation of Assignments*, and in line with the most up-to-date APA manual guidelines[5]. The maximum length for the proposal itself is **2000 words** (see materials/slides for precise details). This limit does not include costs, timescale, references, the one-page lay summary or the EDI statement which is also required (see below). The proposal should not include either footnotes or appendices. The proposal should be structured in the manner of a research grant application. You will also find the sections very similar to those required for an application for ethical review.

As a guide, we would expect the rationale for your study to consist of 1-2 paragraphs, the literature review should ideally be about 1 page, and certainly never more than 2, the methodology (including measures, procedure, analysis) should be about 2 pages.

Specific guidance for proposals that are part of a larger project or involve secondary analysis of existing data

Some trainees may undertake a project that has already been designed in full or a project which forms part of a larger, related programme of research. If the proposed work does form part of a larger project or involves secondary analysis of existing data, then one additional page should be appended to the research proposal to address the following requirements: an identification of an alternative design that could potentially address the research question, an identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the design and a sound rationale for the choice of design and the analyses conducted. If two trainees are working on a similar, or the same area, both trainees must append an additional page to explain their unique contribution to the project.

At doctoral level of training, it is important for trainees to have an opportunity to develop independent thinking and critiquing skills in the research process, including at the project design stage.

Trainees are permitted to undertake empirical projects relating to secondary 'big data' sets[6]. 'Big data' is a term used for a collection of datasets so large and complex that it is beyond the ability of typical database software tools to capture, store, manage, and analyse them'[7]. Research studies of this nature provide opportunities for utilising sophisticated and causation revealing analyses. There is an expectation that the types of analyses used by the trainee would be sufficiently sophisticated to compensate for the lack of competencies demonstrated in the identification and recruitment of participants and the collection of primary data. Examples of 'big data' sets include, but are not limited to:

- National Survey of Health and Development (1946)
- National Child Development Study 1958
- British Cohort Study 1970
- Millennium Cohort Study

[5] https://apastyle.apa.org

[6] Please see the following resources for further information about the opportunities and challenges associated with working with 'big data' sets:

- Ahmadi, M., Dileepan, P., & Wheatley, K. K. (2016). A SWOT analysis of big data. Journal of Education for Business, 91(5), 289-294 https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/what-big-data-means-for-psychological-science

[7] RCUK: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/big-data-timeline-web-pdf/

Trainees should observe the most recent APA manual guidelines on reference and presentation style required for academic work. Clearly, much of the proposal will be written in the future tense but otherwise the style is much like that of any assignment. The most important thing is clarity. In many cases, trainees at this stage may still be negotiating aspects of access and procedure. It is important to explain clearly what you have already done and how you intend to progress.

One Page Lay Summary

A short summary of your whole proposal. This should fit on one, separate page. It must include:

- Submission date
- Title of project
- Provisional title of systematic review
- Your supervisors, and their contact details (including confirmation that they have sufficient expertise to supervise the methodology being used in the proposed research)
- Aims, hypotheses/objectives
- Methodology
- A brief summary of your procedure
- Service user/carer consultation

Information to be included in the full Research Proposal

Title for the project and proposed title for systematic review

The project title should be concise (in accordance with APA guidelines).

Date and Version Number

The date of submission should be clearly shown on the title page. As trainees may be asked to submit revisions of their proposal, this is vital for good administration.

Supervisors

Please see the guidance on supervisors provided above. You must append to your proposal a statement from your supervisors to say that they have read and approved the proposal submitted. This should be in the form of a signed statement of approval from each of the supervisors. You should ensure you have two supervisors in place, one of which must be an internal primary supervisor in the University of Liverpool.

Aims

What is the question being posed by your research? You should be able to state the overall aim briefly, in one or two sentences. This is then broken down into a series of research questions or hypotheses. It is essential to ensure that your methodology can meet your stated aims.

General background

This should set the context for the research, including a brief review of the relevant literature, and explain how the proposed research will contribute to theory and practice. This section should not be longer than 500-600 words. Try to use non-technical language here – the more technical explanation and references to the literature come in the next section.

Hypotheses/objectives

Express your research question in the form of an experimental hypothesis, or state clearly the precise objectives/aims of more exploratory or qualitative research.

Design

What form of research design will be used in your project? Design statements are generally short (one sentence), but it should be clear from the proposal as a whole why this is the most appropriate

methodology to use. Trainees typically have approximately 6 months for recruitment based on one research day per week in Year 2 and Year 3. Given the constraints of undertaking a D.Clin.Psy. research project, trainees should not undertake designs which cannot be completed within this period (e.g., intervention studies, longitudinal studies with follow-up lengths that would not be feasible within the timeframe).

Participants/sampling/access

With which client or staff groups will this work be conducted? Are sufficient numbers available in locations to which you have access? Are they likely to cooperate with the research? A justification of the proposed sample size is expected. For quantitative research, this will normally include a power analysis. The sample size for qualitative work should also be justified.

Try to be as precise and detailed as you can in this section, making clear how you have established the number of potential participants and the likely response rate. This is often a key point in deciding if your research is practicable. Proposals which do not include this information will not be approved. Inclusion and exclusion criteria should be explicit.

Permission of ethics committees

Most research in health service settings, or in adjacent agencies, requires ethical approval by specially appointed committees. You need to consider the ethical procedures pertinent to your study and detail the relevant ethical committees you will need to submit to for approval. An ethics flowchart has been produced by the Programme (available on Canvas).

Procedure

Specify the procedures you will use in collecting data. This section should make clear the methodological justification for your approach with reference to key texts and the practicalities of the research.

You may wish to reference any special training needed. Your proposal should make clear exactly how the data will be gathered.

Trainees should show their awareness of ethical and safety issues, referencing any relevant policies and the use of supervision in maintaining the safety of themselves and others.

Consent and withdrawal procedures should be detailed, as well as defined end of study, dissemination and archiving arrangements.

Measures/Materials

If you are using questionnaires or other psychometric tests you should include a short paragraph on the psychometric properties of each, with references. Other equipment and materials should be listed, and you should make clear whether and how you have access to these.

Data analysis

How will the data be analysed? Be clear and specific. For quantitative studies, you may find it helpful to structure this around the stated hypotheses. For qualitative studies, a clear rationale for your choice of method and a description of the method should be included. Will statistical, computing, or other professional advice be needed and, if so, where will it be obtained?

Service user/carer consultation

State how service users and/or carers have been consulted in the design of the project and your plans for consultation throughout the duration of the study and beyond.

Think about how to engage with experts by experience through your research project. State how experts by experience have been consulted in the design of the research project and your plans for involving experts by experience throughout the duration of the study and beyond.

Experts by experience could work collaboratively with trainees throughout the research project in a variety of ways. Below we list a few examples (not limited to) of expert by experience engagement:

- consultation regarding the design of the research proposal (e.g., identifying research questions and the design of the project)
- supporting and optimising recruitment pathways; ensuring recruitment strategies are acceptable, minimising the burden for participants
- drafting, providing feedback and/or piloting participant-facing material
- drafting and reviewing lay summaries
- supporting data analysis
- informing and supporting dissemination activities, ensuring dissemination process is inclusive and accessible to different relevant audiences
- participating in co-development/co-production workshops
- informing and maximising impact strategy

End of Study

State anticipated end of study. This should not be before all the data has been collected and analysed. Trainees usually state the end of September in their final year of training.

Archiving

State who the data custodian will be and how long the data will be stored and in what form. The data custodian must be a University of Liverpool staff member. Information about the University of Liverpool Data Management Policy can be obtained here[8].

Publication

You should state where you intend to publish your research. Although this early indication is useful it is also recognised that you and your supervisors may review the preferred journal outlet at a later stage.

Organisation of the work

You should include a plan of work that shows the time allowed for each stage of the project.

EDI Statement

A 250-word section on equality, diversity and inclusion should be included (exempt from word count).

Research Budget Costs

Trainees should present the costs of their research that they will need to claim from Programme funds, including items such as psychometric tests, travel expenses, material costs etc. Trainees may also claim for the costs of transcription of interviews but should be aware of the normal maximum which may be claimed for research costs, and that transcription is expensive. For more details on transcription please contact the research administrator. Trainees' own travel costs are claimed in the same way as travel costs for placements and should not normally be included in the proposal.

[8] Please note, data and all appropriate documentation should be stored for a minimum of 10 years after the completion of the study unless otherwise directed by the funder/sponsor/regulatory bodies.

Only reasonable costs associated with the research that were included in the proposal can be reclaimed from the Programme. Many approved costs (such as materials required) are usually ordered on your behalf by the University finance team. For other approved costs that cannot be ordered in this manner, receipts will be required in order to claim any approved reimbursement. Please note that trainees may not spend savings from one area of proposed expenses on another research cost without submitting a revised research budget for approval. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that trainees have budgeted adequately for participant costs and these will be carefully ring-fenced. Any requested research budget amendments must be approved by the RRC in advance of any expenditure. Requests should be presented in a letter format with the project title included, the date, a clear rationale to support the request and details of costs included, including the revised total budget. Copies of the original budget and revised budget (and version) should accompany your letter to the RRC. The Research Administrator should be copied into all correspondence. Receipts must be provided to be reimbursed of any costs.

For details on preparing research costs see: Preparing Research Costings and Guidance on Claiming Research Expenses (both available on Canvas). Please ensure that you refer to these rather than previous theses to ensure you have the most up-to-date estimates.

The amount available to support the costs of trainees' research is limited by the amount included in the NHS contract which funds the Programme. Trainees may budget for up to £1000 research costs in their proposal. The amount allowable for participant prizes in return for participation is limited to £250 (individual participant payments totalling more than £250 are allowable), and the budget should not include payments that should be made to charities (such payments are not permissible as the university holds charitable status).

Statement of Responsibility

In order to ensure that all trainees are aware of their responsibilities under the University's research ethics and sponsorship arrangements, trainees are required to submit a signed statement of responsibility with their proposal.

Transcription Policy and Procedures

If your project includes transcription of interviews, then it is your responsibility to find an approved University transcriber and to manage this process. Trainees are expected to transcribe a minimum of two interviews themselves to become familiar with the data being collected. A list of administrative staff in the University who provide a transcription service and have agreed to abide by the conditions of the Programme is available on request. There are also some approved external companies that provide transcription services. Sometimes NHS Trusts have transcription services, and the Trust R&D office will be able to give you information on this. The D.Clin.Psy. RRC will expect that a transcription service will be provided via University or NHS Trust R&D approved transcribers. Transcription costs can be included in your research costs, and it is usual to estimate costs per transcription hours. Transcription costs range from £12 to £15 per hour. It typically takes 4 hours to transcribe a one-hour interview.

It is the responsibility of you as a trainee to ensure that your transcriber is acting ethically and appropriately, adhering to procedures that you have described on your approved application for ethical review and working within the Data Protection Act (2018). This includes being clear about where data will be stored and who will have access to it and ensuring that all copies, including electronic copies, of any data are destroyed when transcription is complete[9].

[9] More information about the University of Liverpool's position on the implications that the EU *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) has for research can be accessed here.

Research Data Management Policy

See the Data Storage/Destruction Guidelines (available on Canvas).

Safety Policy and Procedures

It is important that where there is a requirement for lone working or off site visits, that trainees adhere to the University of Liverpool policy on lone and late working: Lone and late working - Health and Safety Intranet - University of Liverpool.

Trainees should also refer to the Programme's Home Visits Safety Policy and Procedure (available on Canvas).

Please make sure that you abide by University policies and the home visit policy for the Trusts where you are conducting your research. It is important that you discuss this with your primary supervisor at an early stage to ensure that it will be feasible to undertake the proposed project safely. For instance, will someone be available as a contact person if you are making home visits out of office hours?

All experimental work will require a risk assessment to be completed with your primary supervisor. Risk assessments should be completed using SafetyNet.

Please review the following documents in Canvas:

- Home visit risk assessment
- Safety when working off campus
- University IPHS and Department policies

D.Clin.Psy. Research Review Committee

An RRC within the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Programme formally reviews PGR students' research proposals to ensure they are of a standard appropriate for the degree and feasible within the time constraints of the Programme. Trainees are not permitted to progress research proposals for ethical approval or sponsorship until their proposal has been approved by the RRC and they have received a formal approval letter. Any subsequent amendments to the proposal need to be approved by the RRC. Scrutiny of research proposals by the RRC Research Presentation Panels

The Chair of the RRC is the Research Director and members of the research team act as Vice Chairs.

Each proposal will be subject to review by the Research Review Committee during a Research Presentation Panel. Each panel should usually include academics in clinical psychology, an Expert by Experience, a clinical psychologist working in the NHS, and a trainee clinical psychologist.

Each trainee will be invited to attend a panel at a given time and date. When you attend the presentation panel, you will be asked to provide a short presentation, lasting no more than ten minutes, outlining the proposed research question/s, procedures for recruitment, data collection, and analysis, and any ethical issues. The written version of your research proposal will also be made available for scrutiny by members of the relevant panel.

The Research Director is responsible for selecting an appropriate chairperson for each Research Presentation Panel, and a member of each panel (one of the RRC vice Chairs or Chair) will take overall responsibility for chairing your proposal: the person selected to chair your proposal will lead the panels discussion and will be responsible for drafting the agreed list of required amendments (supported by the minute taker).

The research proposal is not a summative assessment, and as such no marks will be awarded for the proposal; rather, members of the panel will consider whether the proposed work has the potential to be of sufficient quality to merit the award of the degree. The panel will be particularly concerned with practical difficulties that may be encountered when carrying out the work. Advice may be given by the panel where appropriate. The RRC is not an Ethical Committee, but it may advise on issues which may be raised by research ethics committees to which the proposal will be submitted.

For information on the BPS guidelines on ethical principles in research go to the BPS webpages to find the revised code of conduct. For question specific guidance (QSG) regarding NHS applications see hra.nhs.uk. The BPS website also provides guidelines on conducting online studies at Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research. For guidance regarding University ethical approval, see the University Research Support Office web pages.

Approval will not be given in the event of the proposed work:

- being too ambitious to be practical
- not having appropriately qualified supervision
- not having clinical relevance
- being of insufficient academic merit to warrant a doctoral standard of research

In planning your research project, you should be mindful that some projects may be better suited to a service-related evaluation rather than a doctoral thesis. In the event of approval not being given, the trainee will be required to submit a new or amended research proposal on a date provided by the RRC.

Possible outcomes following the RRC meeting are:

RRC outcome	Deadline
Accepted	Instant
Minor amendments	3 weeks
Major amendments	6 weeks
Required to submit a new proposal (same supervisory team)	8 weeks
Required to submit a new proposal (new supervisory team)	12 weeks

If the proposal is considered to meet the required standard, then you will be ready to proceed to the next stage and seek University Sponsorship for your project (if required) and the relevant ethical approval (either from the NHS or from the University Committee of Research Ethics [CORE]). However, many trainees are likely to receive minor or major modifications, which requires them to write a letter to the RRC Vice Chairs to address points raised during the review process. If the amendments are considered to have successfully addressed the points raised (and has the signed approval of supervisor), it is likely that RRC approval to progress to the next stage of the research will be granted. You must have final RRC approval before you can proceed to apply for university sponsorship and ethical approval. If the RRC decide the proposal requires further work, you will be given feedback and a resubmission date for your revised proposal.

Occasionally, trainees are asked to submit a new project rather than revise the existing project. This normally happens when there are methodological or conceptual issues that mean the RRC does not think that the project is feasible or likely to meet the standards of the programme within the timeframe allowed. In this case, trainees are asked to submit a new proposal and associated documentation. Trainees may wish to remain with their original supervisory team, or select a new

project. Trainees may also contact the research team for advice and guidance about changing their project.

In cases where either minor or major amendments are required, an amended proposal and a letter outlining any amendments must be submitted to the research administrator for approval by the Vice Chair (or Chair) who chaired your proposal (for minor amendments) or for consideration at the next meeting of the RRC (major amendments). Your letter to the Vice Chair (or Chair) and any responses must be approved and signed by both supervisors.

There is no such thing as a perfect research design and you should certainly not feel that this is what is expected of you. At the same time, approval of the proposal by the RRC cannot guarantee that problems will not emerge with your research later on. Whether your thesis is ultimately judged by the examiners to meet the requirements of the D.Clin.Psy. will depend on your execution of the research and on the discussion of the merits and weaknesses of your work in the thesis and *viva voce*.

Following RRC approval, all research proposals will also have to be considered and approved by either NHS Local Research Ethics Committees (LREC) or the University Committee on Research Ethics (CORE) before starting the proposed work.

There may be circumstances in which the research proposal has to be modified following comments during the process of ethical review, or following initial data collection. Throughout the 3 years of doctoral training trainees should always inform the relevant RRC Vice Chair (or Chair) of any subsequent proposed modifications and request the Chair's action. If required, the Chair may submit your request to the wider RRC for approval before changes to your research may be implemented. Any proposed research amendments must be approved by the relevant RRC Vice Chair (or Chair) before being submitted to the relevant Ethical Committee and University sponsorship.

The proposal (and revisions) will be kept in the trainee's academic file and in principle can be made available to examiners and auditors. In instances in which the research has varied from its originally proposed plan this will serve to clarify the position for the examiners.

Sponsorship, Governance, Data Protection and Ethics Approval

The Research Curriculum in year 1 includes information and guidance on the procedures you will need to go through regarding your research, but some points to think about at the planning stage are included here.

Many Trusts where you wish to collect data will insist that you have an honorary contract with that Trust, a research passport or a letter of access and this may include providing a DBS check. In some cases, they will accept the check carried out when you joined the Programme so **KEEP YOUR COPY SAFE**. Unfortunately, other Trusts will insist on a more recent DBS check, so be aware of this in your time planning.

Applications for NHS ethical approval are made through the online IRAS system. IRAS has the following features:

- It is a single system for applying for the permissions and approvals for health and social care/community care research in the UK
- It enables you to enter the information about your project once instead of duplicating information in separate application forms
- It uses filters to ensure that the data collected and collated are appropriate to the type of study, and consequently the permissions and approvals required
- It helps you to meet regulatory and governance requirements

- It retains familiar aspects of the NRES form system

The HRA application will be reviewed by an NHS Research Ethics Committee (NHS REC). Any proposal that requires an HRA application for NHS ethical approval must be accompanied by notification from the University of Liverpool that the University will sponsor the research for insurance purposes. Sponsorship forms are obtained from sponsor@liv.ac.uk and are submitted electronically to the University.

In non-statutory agencies, such as voluntary bodies, there may be different requirements and it is important to be aware in advance of the procedures to be followed in relation to the proposed setting of the work.

Trainees conducting research that does not require an NHS application must submit an ethics application to the relevant University of Liverpool Committee on Research Ethics (CORE) . All NHS projects, including NHS staff projects, require university sponsorship. NHS staff projects may require university ethical approval rather than NHS ethical approval, usually depending on where the research will take place and if participation will be during NHS staff time.

Thesis Format, Submission, Viva Voce Examinations

1st Submission of Thesis & Viva Voce Examination

For first time submissions, two dates are usually set for submission. For trainees who submit in early June, their vivas will be held in July and for those who submit in early January, their vivas will usually held in February or March (depending on examiner availability).

Thesis Format on Submission

Trainees are required to submit their research thesis based on the format instructions presented to the cohort with whom they commenced training. Thesis Instructions and Guidelines are updated yearly and are available on Canvas.

The Major Research Thesis Format

The University's Ordinances governing the degrees of MPhil, PhD and MD include the D.Clin.Psy. major research thesis. This specifically allows for candidates to submit a thesis as a series of published or submitted papers embodying the results of their research.

There are three main reasons for this format. One is that, properly followed through it should increase the likelihood of publication, as converting a traditional thesis into a journal paper format is time consuming and for that reason becomes difficult to do once trainees are qualified and have entered full-time working. The second is that in many respects it represents a more 'ecologically valid' training exercise, in that the vast majority of research reports are published in the form of journal articles. The third is that, given that participants have contributed time and effort in being involved in research, it provides further justification for their having done so.

The typical contents of a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology thesis written in this format comprise:

1. An Introductory Chapter providing an overview of the research thesis and describing how the remaining sections relate to each other. This is not for publication.
2. Literature Review paper, which will most likely be a systematic review or narrative review that draws on systematic methods.
3. Optional Bridging Chapter, which links the review and empirical chapters.
4. Empirical Paper, which reports the major research project itself.
5. Appendices

For the review and empirical papers, trainees are required to specify a target journal to which they would submit the paper. The specified journal will be based on discussion with supervisors. After a target journal has been identified for each chapter, the review and empirical papers should be formatted for submission in a style that is consistent with the author formatting guidelines for the chosen journal.

The maximum word count for the research thesis is **25,000 words**. The maximum word count includes footnotes and appendices but not the bibliography (references). However, the word count and presentation for the review and empirical chapters should adhere as closely as possible to the word count stated in the author instructions for the target journal. There are two exceptions, (i) tables and figures are presented in the main text for examination purposes and (ii) the cover pages of the review and empirical chapters should only include the title, the target journal, and word count (do not list co-authors). The trainee's name and respective supervisor names are listed only on the thesis cover page. Supplementary material can be included in the appendices[10].

Research thesis guidelines - larger and related projects

Where trainees have completed a joint project, for example, where data collection was completed as a pair and/or data are overlapping, trainees should provide a document that clearly highlights the ways in which the projects are similar or different, and the independent contribution of the trainee to the specific research question, design of the project, and data collection. This document should be clear, and where data collection and/or some data are overlapping, diagrams or flowcharts may be helpful to show clear differences between the projects. In the interests of openness and transparency, this document will be sent to examiners alongside the thesis so that they can consider the independence of the two projects, including the independent contributions of the trainee.

Research literature review

The conduct of the literature review should be completed to a publishable standard. That means it would be reasonably thorough but not necessarily exhaustive, with features of a systematic review including:

- Identifying the databases to be searched, and/or other sources
- Stating search terms
- Listing inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Recording numbers of 'hits' extracted
- Specifying method of analysis (narrative review/meta-analytic/meta-synthesis)
- Critical evaluation of key studies identified
- Summarising conclusions
- Linking the review to the objectives of the thesis research

Presentation of Research Thesis

The major research thesis must be presented in the format required by the Publication Manual of the APA. An exception to this is where the chapter is intended for publication in a journal which uses a different referencing and presentation style. In these cases, the style required by the journal should be adopted for the chapter. The review and empirical chapters should always be written with a journal in mind.

Language

Language should be non-sexist. Avoid using sex-specific forms generically and avoid specifying the

[10] Trainees are required to submit their research thesis based on the format instructions given to the cohort with whom they commenced their doctoral training in clinical psychology. Thesis instructions and guidelines for each cohort are available on Canvas.

sex of the referent unless relevant. Human participants in psychological research should be referred to in a way which respects their dignity. The term 'subject' should not be used to describe human participants (although it is acceptable in design and analysis statements where no alternative exists, such as to describe a between-subjects statistical test).

Confidentiality and anonymisation

The careful safeguarding of confidential information is a centrally important aspect of sound clinical practice. Full interview transcripts must not be included in the research thesis appendices, nor must any confidential material or third-party material but may be included for **examination purposes only**. Similarly, presentation of anonymised excerpts from transcripts may be included in some chapters, but it should be ensured that these excerpts pose no risk to confidentiality. Also ensure that sharing of data does not violate any restrictions on data use, such as using cohort data from a larger study or a longitudinal study. Also, trainees should be aware that copyrighted information may not be shared.

Submission of research thesis

Further details regarding submission of your thesis, data file and accompanying forms are provided in your third year of training. Trainees are required to submit an electronic version of their research thesis. On submission trainees are required to complete and submit the following forms (available on Canvas):

- Declaration of Academic integrity form
- Submission of Electronic Data Set form

The Viva Voce Examination

Where possible, the DClinPsy programme adheres to the processes and procedures laid out in the Post Graduate Research Code of Practice, available here: PGR Code of Practice - Academic Quality and Standards Division - University of Liverpool

Internal and external examiners will be appointed to examine your thesis. The external examiner is one of a panel of external examiners to the D.Clin.Psy. Programme and the internal examiner is normally a member of the D.Clin.Psy. Programme team or of the Department of Primary Care and Mental Health. They will read your thesis and prior to the examination both examiners will complete an independent pre-viva report form. The examiners will meet and discuss their independent evaluation of the thesis and the points they wish to cover in the examination.

The examiners will discuss the research with you and may ask questions about any aspect of the work and how it has been analysed and presented. They also have the right to ask to see additional materials, such as raw data or analytic work.

Trainees are advised to make sure that they are familiar with all aspects of their research work (including statistics) before going into the examination. Trainees should not be overly anxious about this and should not be afraid to indicate how they might, with the benefit of hindsight, have carried out some piece of work in a different way.

Examiners' Recommendations

Following the *viva,* the examiners will discuss their evaluation of the work and complete a joint examiners report. At the Board of Examiners meeting that follows the completion of all the *vivas*, the examiners will make a recommendation. The examiners may recommend:

- That the candidate has passed the major research component of the D.Clin.Psy.[11]
- That the candidate has passed the major research component of the D.Clin.Psy., subject to minor corrections which should be made to the satisfaction of and within a time limit set by the examiners (usually not more than three months from the date of the oral examination).
- That the candidate has passed the major research component of the D.Clin.Psy.., subject to major corrections which should be made to the satisfaction of within a time limit set by the examiners (usually not more than six months from the date of the oral examination).
- That the candidate is required to revise and re-submit the research component of the D.Clin. Psy.[12] within a time limit set by the examiners (usually not more than twelve months from the date of the oral examination).
- That the candidate has failed the major research component of the D.Clin.Psy.

Post-viva

Where modifications to the thesis are required a written summary of these will be prepared which will be emailed by the research administrator to the trainee's University email address, normally within one week of the viva review board meeting.

In the case of amendments, trainees are required to submit a letter to the examiners which outlines how they have responded to each of the points raised by the examiners, along with their amended thesis. It is important to discuss revisions with your supervisors and for them to have an opportunity to review your letter and amended thesis before resubmission.

Trainees should be aware that it is very usual for at least minor modifications to be required by the examiners and that it is advisable to make plans to be available to undertake these modifications. Trainees should also be aware that in order to graduate in December after a *viva voce* exam in July they will need to have all revisions approved and submit a final version of their thesis to the research administrator and deposit their thesis on the University Liverpool Elements site in time to meet the deadline.

Until confirmation is received that all components of the Programme have been satisfactorily completed trainees have not and should not claim to have completed their D.Clin.Psy. degree. A trainee who has not satisfactorily completed the research component of the Programme cannot register with the HCPC and would need to be employed on Band 6 post in the NHS until successful completion of the programme. You must tell your employer that you have not yet completed all components of your D.Clin.Psy. training.

Failure Criteria for the Major Research Thesis

Outright failure to pass the major research thesis will result in Programme failure. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the research thesis may be re-submitted only once. Where re-submission is required, a statement will be provided regarding issues to be rectified or addressed in the re-submission.

[11] Trivial corrections that can be completed in no more than one day are allowable within this recommendation.

[12] In the case of revise and resubmit a mandatory second oral examination will be held upon examination of the revised thesis.