# Programme Specification

**Postgraduate**

Applicable to postgraduate programmes

Please click [here](#) for guidance on completing this specification template.

## Part A: Programme Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title of programme:</th>
<th>Doctor in Clinical Psychology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Programme Code:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Entry Award(s):</td>
<td>Credit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MSc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PGDip</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PGCert</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PG Award</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DPS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Other (please specify below):</td>
<td>Non-modular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DClinPsychol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Exit Awards:</td>
<td>Credit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PGDip</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PGCert</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PG Award</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exit awards will automatically bear the name of the entry award. If an exit award is to be unnamed (i.e. it will show only the qualification achieved) or if it is to have a different name from the entry qualification you must indicate this below:

|   | N/A | |

| 5. | Date of first intake: | October 1994 |
6. **Frequency of intake:** Annually, September

7. **Duration and mode of study:** 3 years full-time

8. **Applicable framework:** N/A

  **Framework exemption required:**
  - ☐ No (please go to section 9)
  - ☐ Yes (please provide a brief summary below)

  **Date exemption approved by AQSC:**

9. **Applicable Ordinance:** 59 Degree of Doctorate of Clinical Psychology

  **New/revised Ordinance required:** ☒ No (please go to section 10)

  **Date new/revised Ordinance approved by Council:**

10. **Faculty:** Health & Life Sciences

11. **Level 2**
    **School/Institute:** Institute of Learning & Teaching/Institute of Psychology, Health and Society

12. **Level 1 unit:** School of Psychology

13. **Campus:** Liverpool campus

14. **Other contributors from UoL:** None

15. **Teaching other than at UoL:** NHS placement sites in North West

16. **Director of Studies:** Acting Director of Studies Professor Peter Kinderman

17. **Board of Studies:** School of Psychology

18. **Board of Examiners:** DClinPsychol Board of Examiners, School of Psychology

19. **External Examiner(s):**
    - **Name:** Dr Richard Amlot, Public Health England
    - **Institution:** Dr Theresa Powell, University of Birmingham
    - **Position:** Dr Nicholas Wood, University of Hertfordshire
    - **Name:** Dr Emma Warnock-Parkes, University of
### Part B: Programme Aims & Objectives

#### 26. Aims of the Programme

This programme is designed to develop clinical, professional, academic and research skills to doctoral level, with a high level of independence by the end of the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Aim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To provide a programme of education and training that will equip graduates with appropriate learning experiences to enable them to practice competently as qualified clinical psychologists in the National Health Service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 27. Learning Outcomes

**No.** Learning outcomes – Doctorate degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject-based learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge and understanding of:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. psychological theory and models as applied to healthcare, including mental and physical health;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. pathways of development and functioning associated with a range of outcomes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. processes of assessment, intervention, evaluation, and service delivery informed by psychological perspectives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. relevant research and knowledge both to inform theory construction and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for appropriate application in practical settings;
v. implementation of research skills to a substantial degree of independence
vi. processes and standards of a range of the methodologies through which research is conducted and knowledge acquired and revised;
vii. the rationale for and meaningful application of evidence-based practice;
viii. National Health Service organizational structures and policies.

2
Attitudes and values demonstrated through:
i. an approach to working with others including clients of health services determined by the
ii. application of sound ethical principles, and due regard for the integrity of persons and in accordance with professional codes of conduct;
iii. an understanding and appreciation of individual and cultural diversity;
iv. awareness of self and of the reciprocal impact in social interaction between self and others, including specific issues this raises in therapeutic contexts.

3
Skills and competencies in:
i. interpersonal communication with NHS service users, and with colleagues including those from other professional groups;
ii. psychologically informed assessment and formulation of individual problems;
iii. assembling and integrating information from individuals and social contexts sufficient to inform decision-making;
iv. the development of a meaningful and constructive working alliance with service users;
v. the provision of psychological-based interventions, including psychological therapy with reference to a range of clinical services and groups of service user;
vi. both verbal and written communication of aspects of ongoing work with due regard to legal and ethical frameworks.

28. Skills and Other Attributes

No. Skills and attributes:
1 Verbal and written communication
2 Interviewing
3 Report writing
4 Finding information and applying it to practice
5 Conduct and reporting of research

29. Career opportunities:
The qualification is essential for practice as a clinical psychologist in the National Health Service. Funding for the programme is provided from that source. Almost all graduates obtain employment in NHS clinical psychology services. This has its own internal career structure and salary scales. Retention within the profession is very high. A small proportion of graduates may in due course enter NHS management positions. A few graduates enter academic posts and pursue careers combining research, teaching and clinical activity.

Part C: Entrance Requirements
30. **Academic Requirements:**

First degree in psychology awarded by a higher education institution recognised for the purpose by the British Psychological Society, sufficient to merit eligibility for its award of its Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). The majority of candidates also possess further diplomas or higher degrees, including Masters' degrees or professional qualifications, with a small proportion who already have doctorates (PhD/DPhil).

31. **Work experience:**

Competition for entry is intense (approximately 22 applicants per place) therefore almost all successful applicants have previous work experience in a mental health or other allied setting. An equivalent of one year whole-time paid experience in suitable (preferably NHS) settings is considered a minimum requirement at the time of application. Specially prepared selection criteria specify the weight to be attached to different types of previous experience. These include ratings of clinical experience, academic ability, research experience, personal qualities relevant to professional practice. Specific questions, to be asked at the interview and presentation stage of selection, are formulated with NHS colleagues and service user/carer representatives (who are also involved in the selection process) on an annual basis.

32. **Other requirements:**

Personal qualities and attributes considered important in exhibiting potential for work as a clinical psychologist. These are specified in ratings sheets prepared for use in the selection process. That process contains three elements, short listing, a presentation and interview. Selection panels include university staff, NHS colleagues, and representatives of Service Users/Carers.

**Part D: Programme Structure**

33. **Programme Structure:**

The programme is three years of full-time study and is non-modular in design.

Programme activities are divided into three inter-related primary elements:

- The academic curriculum consisting of a series of 29 inter-linked teaching units each focused on a designated area.
- The clinical curriculum involving six clinical attachments in the NHS;
- The research curriculum focused the application of evidence-based practice, research methods and a major research dissertation.

The inter-relationships of the specific learning objectives, teaching and learning strategies, and assessment methods for each element are as shown in the following flowcharts.
ACADEMIC

Learning objectives

- Psychological theory and models as applied to healthcare, including mental and physical health;
- Pathways of development and functioning associated with a range of outcomes;
- Processes of assessment, intervention, evaluation, and service delivery informed by psychological perspectives;
- Relevant research and knowledge both to inform theory construction and for appropriate application in practical settings;
- National Health Service organizational structures and policies
- An understanding and appreciation of individual and cultural diversity;
- Psychologically informed assessment and formulation of individual problems

T&L Strategies

- Comprising a total of 29 teaching units entailing a variety of teaching and learning methods
- Key skills sessions on essay writing, preparing Clinical Case Research Investigations and report-writing
- Skills-focused workshops incorporated in some teaching units

Syllabus

- Adult Mental Health
- Older Adults
- Clinical Neuropsychology
- Intellectual Disability
- Children, Young People and Family
- Psychosis & Recovery
- Forensic Clinical Psychology
- Professional Issues

Assessment

Two three-hour examinations papers (Years 1 and 2)
Three 5,000 written assignments (Years 1, 2 and 3)
Four Clinical Case Research Investigations (5,000 words each)*
CLINICAL

Learning objectives

- An approach to working with others including clients of health services determined by sound ethical principles, and due regard for the integrity of persons and in accordance with professional codes of conduct;
- Awareness of self and of the reciprocal impact in social interaction between self and others, including specific issues this raises in therapeutic contexts;
- Interpersonal communication with NHS service users, and with colleagues including those from other professional groups;
- Assembling and integrating information from individuals and social contexts sufficient to inform decision-making;
- The development of a meaningful and constructive working alliance with service users;
- The provision of psychological-based interventions, including psychological therapy with reference to a range of clinical services and groups of service user;
- Both verbal and written communication of aspects of ongoing work with due regard to legal and ethical frameworks.

T&L Strategies

- Supervised clinical experience in six NHS-based placements of six months each
- Logbook of clinical activity
- Case presentation and clinical skills development sessions (30 hours)

Assessment

Four Clinical Case Research Investigations (5,000 words each)*
Mid-placement review
Feedback on performance from placement supervisors (competence ratings and qualitative judgments of clinical and other professional competences)

Placements

- Adult Mental Health
- Older Adults
- Learning Disabilities
- Child & Family
- Elective 1
- Elective 2

RESEARCH

Learning objectives

- Processes and standards of a range of the methodologies through which research is conducted and knowledge acquired and revised
- The rationale for and meaningful application of evidence-based practice

T&L Strategies

- Teaching on research methods (30 hours)
- Submission of research proposal
- Individual supervision for major research dissertation

Assessment

Four Clinical Case Research Investigations (5,000 words each)*
A major research dissertation (25,000 words) and a viva voce examination with an internal and external examiner
Note: The clinical case study research investigations* are integrative i.e. satisfactory performance requires students to combine learning of several elements of the programme. They are therefore mentioned under more than one element. Further detail of each element of the programme can be found in programme handbooks.

34. Industrial placement/work placement/year abroad:

Students / trainees must successfully pass a series of six supervised six-month clinical placements in NHS clinical psychology services. Four of those, completed in years 1 and 2 of the programme, are mandatory and are specified by the validating body’s accreditation criteria. Two other placements completed in Year 3 are elective. The sequence of placements is pre-arranged as shown in below. The two elective placements may be carried out in the same clinical service and constitute a single extended placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 Oct-Mar</td>
<td>Adult Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 Apr-Sep</td>
<td>Older Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 Oct-Mar</td>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 Apr-Sep</td>
<td>Child &amp; Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 Oct-Mar</td>
<td>Elective 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 Apr-Sep</td>
<td>Elective 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Liaison between the Level 2 Schools/Institutes involved:

The programme is delivered through a partnership between the School of Psychology and the Institute of Psychology, Health and Society. The Head of the School of Psychology and the Head of Department of Psychological Sciences are responsible for overseeing the resourcing and academic standards of the programme. There are regular meetings between them and the Programme Directors to ensure effective and efficient organisation and management. Staff from the programme are involved in the committees in the School that oversee quality and enhancement of the academic and clinical elements e.g. Board of Studies, SSLC & Board of Examiners. The Director of Research is involved in the Institute committees related to the postgraduate student research experience.

Part E: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

36. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies:

The programme content, methods, and learning experiences provided throughout are intimately connected.

Teaching and learning has been designed so that much of the teaching on the core psychological topics is completed by the end of the first year, allowing trainees to make maximum use of this knowledge in subsequent placement experiences. The programme is broadly ‘integrative’ and is founded on a long-standing policy of giving approximately equivalent time to the major theoretical paradigms (e.g. social learning/cognitive-behavioural, cognitive analytic therapy, psychodynamic, and systemic), which have significantly informed and influenced clinical skills, theory and practice. However, in teaching sessions trainees are also encouraged to
identify common factors across different approaches, as well as the differences between them. This spirit is further reflected in the allocation of placement experiences, which requires that trainees gain ‘hands on’ experience of more than one therapeutic approach.

The time devoted to the formally taught component decreases as the programme progresses through years 1, 2 and 3. Thus, at the beginning the trainees spend five weeks in an intensive teaching block and attend teaching two days a week in term time throughout the year, whereas, by the third year, they have formal teaching on only one day a week for the first two terms.

The clinical practice component of the training programme aims to provide opportunity for the trainees to apply and supplement the learning and skills development of the academic programme. This will enable them on qualification to meet the standards of the regulatory body required for registration to practise.

Evaluation of interventions is essential for the delivery of evidence-based practice in clinical psychology. The research element of the programme aims to provide the knowledge and skills that underpin this evidence-based practice. The experience of undertaking research is excellent training to ensure that the trainees are able to use such research to inform their own practice for the future.

Note: The delivery of the research element is guided by and complies with the Postgraduate Research Handbook and Code of Practice.

36a. Learning, Teaching and Assessment methods:

Specific methods employed for teaching deliver include:
- Discussion of all aspects of the programme including specific areas of content within single sessions, and with reference to developmental sequences across sessions and modules;
- Lectures / didactic sessions, or as elements within sessions, to impart key aspects of background knowledge and explication of theory;
- Enquiry based learning
- Skills training workshops for practice of interpersonal communication in healthcare services, focused on assessment and therapeutic skills in individual and group-based practice;
- Sessions of personal and professional development designed to develop awareness within the individual of his or her functioning and of the complex interplay between private and professional dimensions of experience;
- Use of simulation and role-play exercises to recreate aspects of interaction in clinical services;
- Use of semi-structured exercises to provide opportunities for development of awareness of ethical dimensions of healthcare practice;
- Unstructured experiential sessions relevant to some forms of practice in psychological therapy;
- Direct clinical practice in a range of NHS clinical services
- Provision of individual clinical supervision whilst on clinical attachments;
- Practical experience in the design, conduct and writing up of a research project;
- Provision of individual research supervision to facilitate and support the conduct of research work.

Specific methods employed for assessment include:
- Essays
- Clinical Case Research Investigations
- Written Examinations
- Clinical logbook
- Case presentations
- Placement evaluation report
- Application for ethics approval
- Research proposal
- Dissertation
- Viva voce examination

### 37. Assessment information for students:

#### Code of Practice on Assessment

The University has a Code of Practice on Assessment which brings together the main institutional policies and rules on assessment. The Code is an authoritative statement of the philosophy and principles underlying all assessment activities and of the University's expectations in relation to how academic subjects design, implement and review assessment strategies for all taught programmes of study.

The Code of Practice includes a number of Appendices which provide more detail on the regulations and rules that govern assessment activity; these include:

- Regulations for the conduct of exams;
- Information about students’ progress, including guidance for students;
- The procedure for assessment appeals;
- The code of practice relating to external examining
- The University's policy on making adjustments to exam arrangements for disabled students.
- The Academic Integrity Policy, which covers matters such as plagiarism and collusion and includes guidance for students;
- The policy relating to mitigating circumstances which explains what you should do if you have mitigating circumstances that have affected assessment; and
- The policy on providing students with feedback on assessment.

Please click [here](#) to access the Code of Practice on Assessment and its appendices; this link will also give you access to assessment information that is specific to your cohort:

#### Marking criteria:

These can be found in the Programme Handbook.
Student representation and feedback:

One member of each of the three student cohorts (Years 1, 2 and 3) attending the programme is nominated by fellow students to attend the meetings of the Training Committee (held on a quarterly basis). Student (trainee) feedback and discussion of issues arising from it is a standing item on the agenda of those meetings.

Provisions for obtaining student feedback are as follows:

- Attendance of student representatives at regularly held meetings of the Training Committee, as previously described, and its sub-groups
- Attendance of student representatives at School of Psychology, Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings
- Written feedback recorded on a specially designed questionnaire, including ratings of teaching quality and space for open-ended feedback; these questionnaires are completed for every teaching unit.
- Meetings between programme staff and each trainee year-group once per term (i.e., a total of nine meetings per year)
- Annual Programme Review meeting (half a day) held in July or September of each year involving students, staff and representatives of NHS clinical psychology services

Part F: Status of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body Accreditation

39. Status of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body Accreditation:

- HCPC – approved in June 2011, open ended subject to annual monitoring
- BPS – accredited in June 2011

Part G: Diversity & Equality of Opportunity and Widening Participation

40. Diversity & Equality of Opportunity and Widening Participation:

The programme design, structure and content are consistent and compliant with the University’s Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policies

[https://www.liv.ac.uk/intranet/hr/diversity-equality/](https://www.liv.ac.uk/intranet/hr/diversity-equality/)
ANNEX 1

Annex Of Modifications Made To The Programme

Please complete the table below to record modifications made to the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of modification (please include details of any student consultation undertaken or confirm that students’ consent was obtained where this was required)</th>
<th>Minor or major modifications</th>
<th>Date approved by FAQSC</th>
<th>Date approved by AQSC (if applicable)</th>
<th>Cohort affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following an Faculty review in 2014-15 some rescheduling of the assessments were made to bring the assessments in line with the academic year and the progression requirements of the CoPA</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2015 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>