MSc in Development and Psychopathology
For students entering Part 1 in 2011/2

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	23/Aug/2011
Programme Director:	Dr Sarah Halligan
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

The purpose of the course is to prepare graduates in Psychology and allied disciplines for academic, clinical, educational, health, and research careers entailing familiarity with abnormal psychological functioning in infancy, early childhood and adolescence, or (with suitable project topic) older adults. Students are introduced to topics in the temporal development of psychopathology. This is done in more depth, and with greater emphasis on current research, than is typically possible in the course of an undergraduate degree in psychology.

Students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods, culminating in the completion of a piece of original research. This research may encompass an issue in developmental psychopathology from either end of the human age span. The course prepares students for careers requiring insight into the genesis of both normal and abnormal psychological functioning in early life and, if the student wishes to pursue this topic, late adulthood. It is intended that the majority of graduates will go on to clinical or research posts, or further clinical training.

Transferable skills

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

Programme content
Compulsory modules

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
PYM0RT	Research Methods and Transferable Skills for Psychology	20	7
PYM0S1	Data Collection and Analysis 1	10	7
PYM0S2	Data Collection and Analysis 2	10	7
PYM1CD	Child Development	10	7
PYM3P1	Developmental Psychopathology	10	7
PYM3P2	Topics in Developmental Psychopathology	10	7
PYM0PP	Project Preparation	10	7
PYM0EP*	Empirical Project	60	7

And at least one of the following:

PYM0DP	Methods in Developmental Psychology	10	7
PYM0CP	Methods in Clinical Psychology	10	7

*PYM0EP Empirical Project must be undertaken in a relevant field
Optional modules
Additional modules should be selected to bring the total to 180 credits, from a list such as the following:

PYM0CG	Methods in Cognition	10	7
PYM0NS	Methods in Neuroscience	10	7
PYM2CS	Cognitive Neuroscience	10	7
PYM2CL	Clinical Neuropsychology	10	7
PYM0QQ	Applying Qualitative Methods in Psychological Research	10	7
PYM0PL	Placement	20	7

Part-time or modular arrangements

The course may be undertaken over two years on a part-time basis. Selection of modules between the two years will be agreed between the student and the Board of Studies, at the commencement of the course. It is anticipated that students will normally complete at least 80 credits' worth of modules in Year 1. Modules must be assessed in the year that they are studied. The Empirical Project (PYM0EP) must be undertaken in Year 2.

Progression requirements

Acceptance onto any module is conditional on the student having attempted all assessments set in previous modules. The Empirical Project will normally be the last piece of work to be submitted for assessment (by dissertation).

Assessment and classification

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

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

Mark Interpretation

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

Failing categories:

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard
0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees (180 credits)

Award of MSc degree will follow University of Reading published criteria (see www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx); in addition students must have marks not below 40 in module PYM3P1 or PYM3P2.

For PG Diploma (120 credits: as MSc but without a Project)

Award of PG Diploma will follow University of Reading published criteria (see www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx); in addition students must have marks not below 40 in module PYM3P1 or PYM3P2.

Admission requirements

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

Admissions Tutor: Dr. Aileen Ho

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

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

Career prospects
Graduates will have good prospects in careers which involve the psychological understanding of infants and young children, and in particular, the manner in which infants and young children may develop psychopathologies. Such careers occur in a wide variety of academic, clinical, educational, health, and research fields. It is anticipated that approximately half of graduates will to into careers involving clinical work, further clinical training, or research (interpreted broadly). The remainder will be able to use skills and insights gained on the course in areas as diverse as health care, health policy, education, international development, and counselling.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements
Opportunity for first-hand research involvement is available to students on the course through volunteer placements in laboratories at the Department of Psychology and the Winnicott Research Unit, where there are numerous researchers and clinicians working in the field of developmental psychopathology.

Programme Outcomes

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Knowledge and Understanding

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A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Advanced concepts, theories, and evidence in the core domains of: research methods, theoretical issues for psychologists, early cognitive and social development, and the development of psychopathologies.
2. A broad variety of methods and approaches in the psychological understanding of young children and adolescents. This to be at a graduate level of understanding.
3. Applications of psychological understanding of infancy, the preschool years and early childhood, and adolescence.
4. Particular difficulties inherent in the psychological study of infants.
5. Ethical issues in psychological study, particularly of young children and adolescents.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1-5 are covered in lectures and seminars. 2, 4 and 5 are further supported by practical experience, most notably in the completion of an empirical project.
1 and 2 are supported by the requirement to attend a number of departmental seminars given by visiting speakers, who are generally leaders in their field.

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

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to:*

1. Use advanced evidence-based reasoning to argue or evaluate a claim about developmental psychology pertaining to the early childhood and adolescence.
2. Apply multiple perspectives and levels of explanation to understand behaviour of children and adolescents.
3. Critically evaluate the design and conduct of psychological research into clinical issues in childhood and adolescence.
4. Write well-structured and well-argued essays at graduate level.
5. Abstract complex orally presented material.
6. Understand the theoretical framework(s) in which psychological research, especially clinical work with young people, is conducted.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1-3, and 6, are explicated in seminars.
6 is supported by self-paced study using web-based teaching.
Coursework essays give opportunity for formative feedback.
Feedback to students on coursework in 'Methods' modules (one of which is compulsory) assists students in the deployment of their intellectual understanding to practical research related issues, supporting 1-4, and particularly 3.

Assessment
1-4 and 6 are assessed in coursework essays, and, in the case of 'Methods' modules (one of which is compulsory) other assignments (e.g., critical evaluation, literature review, and project planning), and seen examinations.
5 is assessed by students handing in a number of abstracts of departmental seminars.
6 is assessed by coursework assignments.

C. Practical skills - *able to:*

1. Perform advanced searches for information relevant to specific topics.
2. Choose and apply appropriate data analytic techniques.
3. Plan and carry out, with supervision, psychological research relevant to developmental psychopathology.
4. Write up empirical research relevant to the understanding of human children/adolescents.
5. Make an application for ethical approval.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Dedicated seminars, practical classes, and exercises deliver 1 and 2.
A dedicated library and resources session supports 1.
3 and 4 are initially explicated as part of the compulsory module PYM0DP Methods in Developmental Psychology; they are then consolidated by direct supervision of a research project and associated dissertation.
Support for 5 is delivered by special seminar.

Assessment
1 and 2 are assessed by the requirement to undertake a project planning assignment.
1-5 are assessed in the main by the student undertaking an empirical research project relevant to the understanding of human children/adolescents, and then writing this up as a dissertation.

D. Transferable skills - *able to:*

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

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are integrated in subject-based teaching. 1 is learned, with formative feedback, through essays and other written assignments.
2 is included in seminars.
3 forms a natural part of the compulsory module PYM0S1 Data Collection and Analysis 1, and is additionally a major component of the optional Methods courses PYM0CG Methods in Cognition, PYM0NS Methods in Neuroscience.
4 and 5 are explicated in the compulsory module PYM0DP Methods in Developmental Psychology,

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and further consolidated by the supervised empirical project.
6 and 7 pervade all aspects of the course.
8 is supported by formative feedback on research seminars written up by the student.

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

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