MSc in Clinical Aspects of Psychology
For students entering in 2012/3

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: 03/Dec/2012
Programme Director: Dr Sarah Halligan
Programme Advisor:
Board of Studies: MSc Programmes in Psychology
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 and associated psychological treatments. Students are introduced to topics in clinical psychology. This is done in substantially more depth, and with greater emphasis on current research and treatment innovations, than is typically possible in the course of an undergraduate degree in psychology. Students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods, culminating in the completion of a piece of original research relevant to clinical/abnormal psychology. It is intended that the majority of graduates will go on to clinical or research posts, or further clinical training.

Transferable skills

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
PYM0S1	Data Collection and Analysis 1	10	7
PYM0S2	Data Collection and Analysis 2	10	7
PYMINT	Introduction to Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment	20	7
PYM4PT	Psychological Treatment	20	7
PYM3P2	Topics in Developmental Psychopathology	10	7
PYM0CP	Methods in Clinical Psychology	10	7
PYM0PP	Project Preparation	10	7
PYM0EP	Empirical Project	60	7

Optional modules
Additional modules should be selected to bring the total to 180 credits, from a list such as the following:

PYM0QQ	Applying Qualitative Methods in Psychological Research	10	7
PYM3P1	Development of Psychopathology	10	7
PYM2CL	Clinical Neuropsychology	10	7
PYM0RT	Research Methods and Transferable Skills for Psychology	20	7
PYM0DP	Methods in Developmental Psychology	10	7
PYM0CG	Methods in Cognition	10	7
PYM0NS	Methods in Neuroscience	10	7
PYM0FM	fMRI Data Analysis	10	7
PYM2N2	Cognitive Neuroscience	20	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. Modules must be begun and completed in the same academic year.

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).

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

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

Mark Interpretation

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

Failing categories:

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

For Masters Degrees (180 credits)

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

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

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

For PG Certificates (60 credits, without a Project)

Award of PG Certificate will follow University of Reading published criteria (www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx). A certificate in Research Methods in Psychology may be awarded if that is a more appropriate reflection of the modules completed.

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

Admissions Tutor: Dr Anastasia Christakou

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.

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

Career prospects

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

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

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

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

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

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

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

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to:*

1. Use advanced evidence-based reasoning to argue or evaluate a claim about clinical psychology.
2. Apply multiple perspectives and levels of explanation to understanding and treating psychological disorder.
3 Design and plan clinical research.
4. Critically evaluate the design and conduct of psychological research into clinical issues.
5. Write well-structured and well-argued essays at graduate level.
6. Understand the theoretical framework(s) in which psychological research, especially clinically relevant work, is conducted.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1-3, and 5, are explicated in seminars.
- Coursework assignments and class tests give opportunity for formative feedback.
- Feedback to students on coursework in ‘Methods' modules (one of which is compulsory) assists students in the deployment of their intellectual understanding to practical research related issues, supporting 1-4, and particularly 3.
- The conduct of an empirical project (PYM0EP) and associated planning (PYM0PP) assist the student in developing all of the above intellectual skills.

Assessment
Assessed via coursework, class tests, seen examinations, and empirical project.

C. Practical skills - *able to:*

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

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 PYM0CP Methods in Clinical Psychology; they are then consolidated by direct supervision of a research project and associated dissertation.
- 5 is supported by classroom exercises in PYMINT and PYM4PT.
- Support for 6 is delivered by special seminar.

Assessment
- 1 and 2 are assessed by the requirement to undertake a project planning assignment.
- 1-4 and 6 are assessed in the main by the student undertaking an empirical research project relevant to the understanding of psychological disorder, and then writing this up as a dissertation.
- 5 is assessed through classroom based tests associated with modules PYMINT and PYM4PT.

D. Transferable skills - *able to:*

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

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 a major component of optional modules PYM0QQ Qualitative Methods,

information.

8. Manage time.

PYM0CG Methods in Cognition, and PYM0NS Methods in Neuroscience.

- 4 and 5 are explicated in the compulsory module PYM0CP Methods in Clinical Psychology, and further consolidated by the supervised empirical project.
- 7 is inherent in the attendance of seminars up by the student.
- 6 and 8 pervade all aspects of the course.

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

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