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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

School of
Psychological &
Social Sciences



DOCTORATE
OF
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

Programme Prospectus

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Introduction

What is Counselling Psychology?

Counselling Psychology focuses on the application of psychological and psychotherapeutic theory and research to clinical practice. Counselling Psychologists use psychological theory and research in therapeutic work to help clients with a range of mental health issues and distress. Clients can include children, adolescents, adults, families, couples and groups.

What does it mean to be a practising Counselling Psychologist?

Counselling Psychologists adopt a humanistic position towards provision of a range of evidence-based therapeutic modalities aimed at reducing psychological distress and promoting wellbeing. They work across a diversity of health and social care environments (e.g., NHS, outpatient and inpatient units, community organisations, educational institutions, forensic settings), and in independent practice.

How do I become a Counselling Psychologist in the UK?

The first step is to complete an undergraduate degree (or masters conversion) programme that is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS; <https://www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses>) and meet the requirements for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC; <https://www.bps.org.uk/join-us/membership/graduate-membership>). Once you have gained GBC, you must complete a BPS accredited and Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) approved (<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-relevant-to-education-and-training/set/>), post-graduate training programme, such as, a Doctorate of Counselling Psychology, or complete the qualification pathway (www.bps.org.uk/qualifications). Upon successful completion of these requirements, you will be eligible to apply for practitioner registration as a Counselling Psychologist in UK.

Overview

The Doctorate of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsy) at York St John University (YSJU) provides a postgraduate training pathway for those wishing to pursue a career as a Counselling Psychologist. The programme places an emphasis on both cognitive-behavioural and humanistic approaches to the development of counselling and psychotherapy skills.

The 3-year, full-time programme includes training in psychological assessment; psychotherapeutic interventions over the lifespan; clinical research methods; ethics and professional practice; a doctoral research dissertation; and requires a minimum of 450 hours of placement in clinical settings. Trainees undertake modules that develop the professional skills required of leaders and supervisors, and for working in diverse, multi-disciplinary teams. The programme is accredited by the BPS and approved by HCPC and graduates will be eligible to apply for registration as a Practitioner Psychologist (i.e., Counselling Psychologist).



Programme Team



Dr Elizabeth Edwards
Programme Director

Elizabeth is a Counselling Psychologist. She completed her practitioner training and PhD in Psychology in Australia. Her research is devoted to understanding individual differences in cognitive performance (e.g., memory, attention, decision making etc) under situational stress. Elizabeth's latest work has explored whether cognitive control training can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.



Dr Emma Bradshaw
Senior Lecturer

Emma is a Counselling Psychologist. She completed the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at Teesside University. Emma's research interests explore the links between self-care and emotional wellbeing and the impact of self-compassion. She is an EMDR practitioner working with individuals who have experienced complex trauma.



Dr Emily McGeown
Senior Lecturer

Emily is a Counselling Psychologist. She completed the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at City University, London. She has a wealth of experience as a practitioner psychologist; conducting assessments, writing reports and delivering therapy to children, adolescents and adults. Emily has a strong interest in issues related to attachment, trauma and emotional regulation.

Elizabeth, Emma and Emily constitute the core teaching team and are assisted at various points by specialist visiting practitioners and lecturers.

Aims of the Programme



The aims of the DCounsPsy at YSJU are to produce graduates who will:

1. be competent, reflective, ethically sound, resourceful and informed practitioners of counselling psychology able to work in therapeutic and nontherapeutic contexts;
2. value the imaginative, interpretative, personal and collaborative aspects of the practice of counselling psychology;
3. commit themselves to ongoing personal and professional development and inquiry;
4. understand, develop and apply models of psychological inquiry for the creation of new knowledge which is appropriate to the multi-dimensional nature of relationships between people;
5. appreciate the significance of wider social, cultural, spiritual, political, and economic domains within which counselling psychology operates;
6. adopt a questioning and evaluative approach to the philosophy, practice, research and theory which constitutes counselling psychology; and
7. develop and demonstrate communication, influencing, teaching and leadership skills by applying psychological knowledge and skills in a range of professional, clinical, organisational, and research contexts.

Programme Structure

YSJU has two semesters each academic year. Specific dates vary due to the calendar and statutory holidays but broadly Semester 1 runs from September to January and Semester 2 runs from February to June. Placements and dissertation work may be continued over the summer break (June – Sep) by prior agreement.

YEAR 1	
SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
DCP112 Counselling & Psychotherapy Skills	DCP122 Individual Psychotherapy
DCP113 Psychological Assessment Theories & Practice	DCP121 Research Methods in Counselling Psychology
DCP110 Professional Practice in Counselling Psychology	DCP123 Psychological Interventions Over the Lifespan
YEAR 2	
SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
DCP212 Group Psychotherapy	DCP222 Psychological Interventions for Couples & Families
DCP211 Doctoral Dissertation 1	DCP221 Doctoral Dissertation 2
DCP210 Placement 1	DCP220 Placement 2
YEAR 3	
SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2
DCP312 Psychopathology & Advanced Psychotherapy Process	DCP323 Professional Counselling Psychology
DCP311 Doctoral Dissertation 3	DCP321 Doctoral Dissertation 4
DCP310 Placement 3	DCP320 Placement 4

All modules are compulsory and all assignments on all modules must be passed. The pass mark is 50.

YEAR 1

DCP112 – Counselling & Psychotherapy Skills (30). This module develops students' core counselling and psychotherapy skills. The module takes a critical thinking approach to the primary philosophical paradigms underpinning counselling psychology and develops an evidence-informed approach to evaluation of therapy. Students undertake formal academic training in interviewing, counselling, developing the therapeutic alliance and explore the complex factors informing the therapeutic relationship.

DCP113 - Psychological Assessment Theories & Practice (30). This module provides students with the skills to complete comprehensive psychological assessments within adult and child professional contexts. Students will acquire skills for the selection, interpretation, and integration of assessment findings for some of the most commonly used psychological assessment measures with adults and children/adolescents and will develop skills to write integrated psychological reports.

DCP110 - Professional Practice in Counselling Psychology (30). This module will emphasise professional development as a psychologist. Ethical awareness and professional competencies will be developed. Topics include the practice of psychology in diverse settings, inter-and intra-professional relationships, risk assessment, case formulation, evaluation and professional practice issues.

DCP122 - Individual Psychotherapy (30). This module focuses on advanced individual psychotherapy, with particular emphasis on cognitive behavioural and humanistic therapies. Students will develop and refine professional skills in the multimodal assessment process. Students will explore current research on models of intervention. The emphasis is on the integration of theory, case formulation and the practice of psychotherapy.

DCP121 - Research Methods in Counselling Psychology (30). This module focuses on models of science that underpin research in counselling psychology, specifically, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods design. Students will explore data collection, analysis and methodological approaches in the behavioural sciences. Students will examine the common flaws in quantitative research approach and develop appropriate solutions.

DCP123 - Psychological Interventions Over the Lifespan (30). This module provides theoretical knowledge in counselling psychology and psychotherapy. It integrates knowledge of developmental psychology across the lifespan with key theoretical perspectives. The unit develops knowledge and skills in planning interventions for a number of specific developmental issues that are addressed as exemplars of each stage of the lifespan.

YEAR 2

DCP212 - Group Psychotherapy (30). This module builds on student knowledge and skills for working with individuals and extend these to working with common theme groups. Key models for understanding group processes are examined and practical skills in group leadership are developed. Students are encouraged to participate in group experiences and are involved in the planning of a common theme group in the community.

DCP211 – Doctoral Dissertation 1 (30). This module commences an individual programme of research designed to advance students' knowledge of Counselling Psychology. Students embark on a two-part investigation (or a series of smaller studies), under the supervision of an academic member of staff. In this module, students are required to prepare a draft of the Introduction and Method sections of the dissertation that includes a literature review, formulation of the research questions, the research design (including the selection of participants), and proposed data analytic techniques and make application to the University Research Ethics Committee for approval of their proposed project. To receive an un-graded pass in this module, students will obtain approval from the ethics committee for their project, and complete a draft of the Introduction and Method sections of the dissertation.

DCP210 - Placement 1 (30). This module is the first of four practicum modules students undertake as part of their doctorate. Together, these modules will provide placement opportunities across a range of contexts. Each module has similar requirements but they are applied to different treatment groups and scenarios to which the student is exposed. This module contains a total of 144 hours of supervised clinical experience. Students will have the opportunity to practise core clinical skills such as assessment, case conceptualisation and treatment of individuals, and groups under the supervision of a registered psychologist. Students will engage ethically with clients and other professionals in a dynamic professional setting. Students complete a Clinical Folio and competency assessments reflecting their work undertaken throughout the semester.

DCP222 - Psychological Interventions for Couples & Families (30). This module builds on student knowledge and skills in individual therapy and interventions across the life-span and extends these to the areas of family therapy and couples therapy. Key frames for examining interactional patterns and strategies for bringing about change are considered. It focuses particularly on developmental and attachment based approaches to couple and family therapy. Family life-cycles, the influences of parental style, history and distress on couple and family relationships and the bi-directional co-constructive nature of parent child interactions are focal points of the module. The module develops knowledge and skills in couple, parent-child relationship and family assessment and interventions.

DCP221 – Doctoral Dissertation 2 (30). Under the direction of their supervisor, in this module students will implement the methodology of their research project approved by the ethics committee (obtained in Doctoral Dissertation 1). Students will collect at least 60% of the data required for the dissertation (this may represent the first part, or the first study). To receive an un-graded pass in this module, students will provide evidence to their supervisor that the data collection requirement has been met, analyse the data, and complete a draft of the Results section for the first study in their dissertation.

DCP220 - Placement 2 (30). This is the second practicum module and builds on the skills developed in Placement 1. This module contains a total of 144 hours of supervised clinical experience. Students will have the opportunity to practise core clinical skills such as assessment, case conceptualisation, and treatment of individuals, groups and families under the supervision of a registered psychologist. Students will engage ethically with clients and other professionals in a dynamic professional setting. Students complete a Clinical Folio and competency assessments reflecting their work undertaken throughout the semester.

DCP312 - Psychopathology & Advanced Psychotherapy Process (30). This module addresses psychopathology through a thorough review of psychological disorders based on relevant diagnostic frameworks such as DSM and ICD. It includes consideration of predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors. Psychopharmacology will be addressed in relation to each of the disorders. In addition, the unit addresses some of the more advanced psychotherapy skills and concepts that are required for working with more complex client populations, including ruptures in the therapeutic alliance, defences, transference, and counter-transference. Such psychotherapy processes are linked to understanding the personality structure, developmental processes, and psychopathology of the client, as well as the research on evidence-based practice.

DCP311 – Doctoral Dissertation 3 (30). Under the direction of their supervisor, in this module students will finalise their data collection (including all parts, phases or studies), analyse their data, and write up the results of these analyses. Students will complete the Results section, write-up a draft of the Discussion section, and submit a draft copy of the dissertation in its entirety. To receive an un-graded pass in this module, students must provide evidence to their supervisor that they have fulfilled these requirements.

DCP310 - Placement 3 (30). Building on the skills developed in Placement modules 1 and 2, this module contains a total of 100 hours of supervised clinical experience. Students will have the opportunity to practise core clinical skills such as assessment, case conceptualisation and treatment of individuals, groups and families under the supervision of a registered psychologist. Students will engage ethically with clients and other professionals in a dynamic professional setting. Students complete a Clinical Folio and competency assessments reflecting their work undertaken throughout the semester.

DCP323 - Professional Counselling Psychology (30). This module brings together the skills of clinical work and ethical and interpersonal competencies. The module covers legislative requirements relating to the practice of counselling psychology and the requirements for registration and maintaining registration as a Counselling Psychologist. The module extends into leadership, supervision, mentorship, inter-professional work and clinical accountability. It engages students in the evidence-base around these advanced practice concepts, equipping them with tools and ways of engaging with the knowledge base as well as with healthcare settings and structures, in order to practice effectively.

DCP321 – Doctoral Dissertation 4 (30). In this module, students will complete the write-up and final preparation of the dissertation. The dissertation will conform to APA format, it will take the form of a traditional thesis with chapters, and it will be approximately 30,000 words in length. The dissertation will be submitted for examination by Friday 4pm of Week 8.

DCP320 - Placement 4 (30). Building on the skills developed in Placement modules 1, 2, and 3, this module contains a total of 100 hours of supervised clinical experience. Students will have the opportunity to practise core clinical skills such as assessment, case conceptualisation and treatment of individuals, groups and families under the supervision of a registered psychologist. Students will engage ethically with clients and other professionals in a dynamic professional setting. Students complete a Clinical Folio and competency assessments reflecting their work undertaken throughout the semester.

Selection & Admissions Process

Entry Requirements

We explicitly do not require counselling related experience for programme entry. The ethos of the programme is to select applicants on the basis of their potential rather than existing proficiency and/or experience in counselling.

To be eligible for entry to the programme, applicants should:

- Have a good honours degree which confers GBC or other undergraduate degree with an accredited conversion course. This would normally be a minimum of 2:1 in Psychology; applicants with a lower degree but supplemented by additional postgraduate study or relevant experience may also be considered.
- Have a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure.
- Have a commitment to undertake personal therapy and clinical supervision.
- Be prepared to attend a selection interview process.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

Personal Statement

Applicants are required to submit a Personal Statement (max 1000 words). The statement provides an opportunity for applicants to state their motivations for undertaking the programme, describe their experience/s and demonstrate academic writing.

References

Applicants must nominate two referees. We encourage applicants to select referees that can speak of their scholarly abilities including knowledge of the discipline and skills in psychological research, and of their aptitude for training as a practitioner psychologist. Referees are integral to the shortlisting process, therefore, references that clearly evidence academic capacity, extra-curricular activities and relevant experiences will show the applicant in the best light. If in doubt – include it!

Age, Gender, Ethnicity

There is no upper or lower age limit. No gender is considered more appropriate than another. The UK is culturally diverse, as such we welcome applications from a range of cultural identities. The selection process is undertaken in a way which seeks to attract the best applicants and all applications are treated equally.

Interviews

Admission to doctorate level psychology programmes is competitive, and selecting trainees with the best prospects for success make for challenging decisions. Recruitment to the programme therefore strives to consider multiple aspects and qualities of individuals and to encourage applications from a variety of potential students. In order to identify candidates with such potential a multifaceted, multiple mini interview (MMI) selection process is employed alongside psychometric assessment, references and qualifications.

Interviewing is conducted using a 6-station MMI process assessing qualities, skills and attributes suitable for training as a Counselling Psychologist (e.g., communication with empathy; boundaries, ethics and power; leadership, teamwork and initiative; research and data interpretation).

In accord with MMIs in other health professions, interviewers are academics with expertise in the area being evaluated (e.g., in 2018 the interviewers included two clinical psychologists, a counselling psychologist, a lawyer, a counsellor, a senior lecturer in business leadership, and a senior lecturer in research methods for psychology). The DCounsPsy Programme Team are responsible for ranking the interviewed candidates and selecting the 12 most suitable for the annual intake.



Research Expectations

Doctoral Dissertation

Trainees are required to design a programmatic research project, collect data, report findings and to submit a Dissertation representing individual research. Across the Dissertation modules (DCP211, DCP221, DCP311, DCP321), trainees assume responsibility (under supervision) for a project that he/she develops and designs, collects data, and issues a scholarly report. The Dissertation must involve the scientific analysis of a problem relevant to Counselling Psychology. Theses devoted primarily to secondary data analysis, including the analysis of research databases, are acceptable but not recommended. The rationale, design, procedures and analysis undertaken within the project must lead to a coherent thesis that is a defensible piece of research in its own right. Where a thesis relies on archival or secondary data, it should include a defence of the adequacy of the data for the purpose of addressing the research question(s) and a discussion of the implications of any data limitations for the interpretation of results.

Choice of Research Supervisor/Topic

In Semester 2 of Year 1, trainees are provided with a choice of research topics and supervisors. YSJU Psychology research supervisors with expertise and interests relating to Counselling Psychology (i.e., mental health, personality, social, cognitive, developmental and biological psychology), coupled with a strong and committed YSJU-NHS (TEWV Trust) partnership, affords a unique and world-class research environment. Trainees are inspired to become exceptional scientist-practitioners.

Dissertation projects emanating from one or more clearly stated hypotheses are required. Purely descriptive, survey type projects aimed at establishing a data base are not generally acceptable. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs and well-conceived correlational studies are best. Alternatively, a project may be of the type that seeks to validate a test instrument or evaluate a treatment technique.

Professional Bodies

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

The HCPC regulate the Counselling Psychology profession maintaining a register of professionals who meet their standards. By monitoring standards and the use of such protected titles, the HCPC protect the public from being misled into thinking a person is a registered professional when they are not. Students on the DCounsPsy may use the term 'Trainee Counselling Psychologist' as there is no intention to deceive by using the prefix. Trainees are made aware of the HCPC Standards of Proficiency and such standards guide the curriculum, learning objectives and assessment in the DCounsPsy programme.

British Psychological Society (BPS)

The BPS is the learned society and professional body of Psychology in the UK. The BPS is a registered charity representing Psychology and Psychologists in the UK, and is responsible for promoting the discipline. Trainees are encouraged to become familiar with their Code of Ethics and Conduct, and Practice Guidelines (amongst others). Trainees are made aware of the BPS Competencies for Counselling Psychologists and such competencies guide the curriculum content learning objectives and assessment in the DCounsPsy programme.



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Why YSJU?

The DCounsPsy at YSJU contributes to the university's three strategic pillars: Impactful Research, Inspiring Teaching and Learning, and Clear about Career. In pursuit of our strategic pillars, YSJU has partnered with the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust to develop a thriving teaching, research and knowledge exchange community. In 2020 the TEWV will open a purpose-designed 72 bed Mental Health Hospital in York and a shared Psychology Clinic will be established on their Huntington House site.

Impactful Research. Counselling Psychology Trainees will undertake practical and research elements of their programme in partnership with TEWV. For example, the requirement for trainees to undertake programmatic research related to Counselling Psychology will generate impactful research in areas of mutual interest and strength, for the benefit of local, national and international mental health communities. YSJU academics, trainees and TEWV practitioners will come together to exchange ideas, enhance practice and develop mutually beneficial research collaborations.

Inspiring Teaching and Learning. The programme grows the post-graduate Psychology offer at YSJU. It encourages continuation of undergraduate students through to post-graduate study and into professional practice. The DCounsPsy builds on the successful addition of the undergraduate Psychology with Counselling programme and further strengthens intra-school collaborations within the School of Psychological and Social Sciences.

Clear about Career. The DCounsPsy provides an opportunity for students to take the journey from novice to registered practitioner psychologist at one institution. Trainee's involvement with the TEWV during their training means they will have established networks in mental health settings and third-sector providers which will enhance employment opportunities.

More information can be found on our website (www.yorks.ac.uk), and by contacting our admissions team on admissions@yorks.ac.uk. We look forward to receiving your application for the DCounsPsy at YSJU and wish you well with your career.

