

Programme Specification

Doctorate of Counselling Psychology

<i>School:</i>	Education, Language and Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Psychology
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of:</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	College of Allied Educators
<i>Delivery location:</i>	College of Allied Educators
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Therapies and Interventions MA in Psychological Therapies and Interventions
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Psychology
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	5-years part-time study
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with foundation year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Placement year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The *Doctorate of Counselling Psychology* (DCounsPsy) provides a postgraduate training pathway for those wishing to pursue a career as a counselling psychologist. Counselling psychology focuses on the application of psychological and psychotherapeutic theory and research to clinical practice. Counselling psychologists adopt a humanistic position towards provision of a range of evidence-based therapeutic modalities aimed at reducing psychological distress and promoting the wellbeing of children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, and other groups. Counselling psychologists work across a diversity of health and social care providers e.g. outpatient and inpatient units, community organisations, educational institutions, forensic settings, and independent practice.

You will have the opportunity to learn a range of psychological theories and develop your skills under the supervision of experienced practitioner psychologists. This programme will provide you with professional training in relevant theory, research, therapeutic skills, and focus on your personal development. The focus of the programme is on a diversity of approaches to reducing psychological distress and promoting the wellbeing of children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, and other groups. As a graduate of this course, you may be eligible to apply for registration as a Practitioner Psychologist with your national Professions Council.

This programme primarily focuses on the modality of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Person-Centred Humanistic approaches as a secondary modality.

The programme is designed to be studied part-time over a period of 5 years. As a part-time student, you may choose to work in a context or service which aims to promote wellbeing and reduce psychological

distress, giving you the opportunity to further develop your ability to reflect on your clinical skills and to apply your learning as your progress through the programme.

Psychological assessment, practice and supervision

As a student on an academic programme delivered by the College of Allied Educators (CAE) and leading to a degree awarded by York St John University (YSJU), you will have access to a wide variety of relevant resources.

In the first year of the programme, you will undertake coursework modules, each comprising a 4-hour weekly seminar including teaching and skills practice. Our modules develop the professional skills required of leaders and supervisors, and for working in diverse, multi-disciplinary teams. Alongside this, you will undertake a total of 450 hours of client-facing practice of supervised clinical practice and 4 hours per week of clinical supervision. In the second year up until the final year, you will complete further coursework modules in parallel with up to two clinical placements in community settings. Placements from your second year onwards will enable you to complete your hours of clinical practice and you will have 2 hours per week of supervision. Supervision is provided by appropriately qualified psychologists using a combination of 1:1, face-to-face, and small group sessions.

In the first year of the programme, you will undertake a Foundation Placement (PSY8112M), which begins in Semester 2. The sourcing of the Foundation Placement, supervisor, and payment arrangements is your responsibility as the trainee, under the approval of the year 1 placement co-ordinator. CAE will provide 1 hour of supervision a week to ensure consistency and to maintain quality standards.

Research opportunities

During the third, fourth and fifth years of the programme you'll undertake an individual research project designed to advance your knowledge of counselling psychology. Under the supervision of an academic member of staff, you'll demonstrate your ability to undertake high-quality rigorous empirical research and be required to write a 35,000-45,000-word thesis, comprising of two original studies.

It is expected that you will work on a range of new and existing clinical projects of benefit to the local community. These may be based in your current workplace, or require you to work in new settings, either online or face-to-face. All thesis research will require ethical approval and review from the YSJ Ethics Committee.

As part of the programme, you will be expected to produce impactful research outputs, contributing to the changing landscape of innovative practice-based evidence and evidence-based practice. Your learning and training will be facilitated by Practitioner and Academic teams with extensive healthcare experience who embody and relay the values of being reflective scientist-practitioners:

- Working creatively, compassionately and collaboratively
- Working ethically and effectively
- Commitment to social justice.

Personal development

Personal development is a professional requirement as a counselling psychologist and is integral to this programme. The programme requires you to become a self-reflective evaluator of your own clinical skills; be able to develop strategies to build resilience to handle the impact of clinical practice; and to undertake personal therapy. Through personal therapy you'll be able to understand the therapy experience, facilitate strong therapeutic relationships, and monitor and evaluate your own therapeutic practice.

You will be required to find your own registered therapist who you feel comfortable with and who can commit to provision of a minimum of 40 hours of personal therapy, by the end of Semester 1 of Year 4, with an appropriate psychotherapeutic practitioner (clinical or counselling psychologist or psychotherapist). These must be completed across the training as a counselling psychology trainee. The cost for the personal therapy will need to be met by the doctorate student.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition, you must have:

- A good undergraduate degree, with honours, in psychology (normally a 2.1 or above, although applicants with a lower degree classification and other postgraduate qualifications and/or experience will also be considered).
- Satisfactory Certificate of Clearance (provided by the Singaporean Police Force).
- A commitment to undertake personal therapy and clinical supervision.
- Evidence of working in a one to one helping role (e.g. experience in the health and social care field in the public, private or voluntary areas) supported by a clinical reference.
- A requirement for some clinical experience and or relevant training.
- The capacity to undertake Doctoral level research - supported by two academic/clinical references
- Maturity and robustness to undertake work that is emotionally and academically challenging, a willingness to engage with feedback on your development and a commitment to self and professional growth.
- Two references and a personal statement (1,200 words maximum) which includes a small statement of intent that takes into consideration work life balance.
- Research proposal (500-words maximum). This should include a research question applicable to an area of Counselling Psychology, with clearly defined methodology and a plan for analysis.
- Your current most up to date CV that makes clear both your clinical work experiences and qualifications.
- Admission to the course is competitive, and shortlisted applicants are required to attend interviews as the selection process strives to consider multiple aspects and qualities of the applicants. In accordance with the values of Counselling Psychology, the interview process is underpinned by principles of social justice and humanism.

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/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The Doctorate of Counselling Psychology programme aims 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

- 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 learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 8

- Understand and critically evaluate the philosophical paradigms which underpin the psychological theories relevant to counselling psychology
- Demonstrate knowledge of human, cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physiological functioning, and apply this understanding to the use of psychometric tests and diagnostic frameworks relevant to counselling psychology
- Initiate, develop and maintain purposeful therapeutic relationships as conceptualised by different models of psychological therapy, and conduct evidenced-based psychological assessments, case formulations and case presentations
- Conduct psychological interventions across a range of clients, including children, adolescents, adults, couples, families and groups (under the supervision of a suitably qualified practitioner psychologist) using a range of cognitive behavioural and humanistic therapeutic approaches
- Evaluate practice and outcomes of psychological therapy at an individual level and understand broader evaluation processes at organisational and systemic levels
- Demonstrate and apply knowledge of research inquiry, research integrity and research design by conducting and reporting on a substantial original research investigation relevant to counselling psychology
- Understand best practices for working with diversity and cultural competence and demonstrate social inclusion and equal opportunities in clinical practice
- Understand and demonstrate ethical values, personal integrity and the professionalism required by a counselling psychologist
- Understand and demonstrate effective communication, influencing, teaching and leaderships skills

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					compulsory or optional to take C or O	noncompensatable or compensatable NC or X
Year 1						
PSY8107M	8	1	Counselling Psychology: Theory and Practice	30	C	NC
PSY8109M	8	1	Professional Practice in Counselling Psychology	30	C	NC
PSY8108M	8	2	Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice	30	C	NC
PSY8112M	8	2	Psychological Interventions Over the Lifespan: (Theory, Practice and Placement)	30	C	NC
Year 2						
PSY8110M	8	1	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Theory and Practice	30	C	NC

PSY8111M	8	1	Research Methods in Counselling Psychology	30	C	NC
PSY8270M	8	2	Group Psychotherapy	30	C	NC
PSY8209P	8	1&2	Placement 1	30	C	NC
Year 3						
PSY82010M	8	1	Counselling Psychology in Context and Systems	30	C	NC
PSY8307M	8	2	Psychopathology & Relational Psychotherapy Practice	30	C	NC
PSY8208M	8	1&2	Doctoral Thesis 1	60	C	NC
PSY8211P	8	1&2	Placement 2	30	C	NC
Year 4						
PSY8310M	8	1	Professional Counselling Psychology	30	C	NC
PSY8308M	8	1&2	Doctoral Thesis 2	30	C	NC
PSY8309P	8	1&2	Placement 3	30	C	NC
Year 5						
PSY8311M	8	1&2	Doctoral Thesis 3	30	C	NC
PSY8312P	8	1&2	Placement 4	30	C	NC

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme aims to be inclusive and accessible and recognises that training to be a counselling psychologist is an active, constructive and contextual process. The programme is structured such that your knowledge and skills continually develop across the levels of the programme, assuming prior knowledge of undergraduate psychology, but not counselling. All students will be supported across the five years by a course leader, module leaders, lecturers, research supervisors, and placement supervisors, in addition to an individual programme tutor.

All modules are delivered at doctoral level (level 8). There are six modules related to the acquisition of counselling and psychotherapy skills (PSY8107M, PSY8110M, PSY8112M, PSY8207M, PSY8201M, PSY8307M), with two modules completed in Year 1, two included in Year 2, and two in Year 3. Each of the therapy modules builds on the last, ensuring that you cover the common cognitive behavioural and humanistic approaches across the lifespan.

You will be taught both Person-centred and cognitive behavioural modalities in the following modules: PSY8107M, PSY8108M, PSY8110M, PSY8112M, PSY8209P, PSY8211P, PSY8309P and PSY8312P. Person-centred and cognitive behavioural modalities are core taught modalities on this programme. In addition to these, as evidenced by the range of modules, you will also be taught psychodynamic and systemic models (e.g. PSY8109M, PSY8210M and PSY8307M).

A variety of clinical placements strengthen the competencies that you will acquire throughout this five-year programme. The therapy modules are complemented by a module covering the theory and practice of psychological assessment (in Year 1) and two modules including the ethical and professional aspects of the profession of counselling psychology (in both Years 1 and 4).

Research competencies are covered in four modules: commencing with instruction in research methodology and design (in Year 2) and followed by three research thesis modules (across Years 3, 4 and 5). The thesis modules require you to conduct a programmatic research project in an area related to

counselling psychology under the supervision of an academic member of staff and culminate with the production of a 35,000-40,000-word thesis.

Instruction comprises didactic teaching, seminars, scaffolded skills practice sessions, virtual learning environments (i.e., Moodle), and placement activities (a minimum of 450 hours working as a trainee counselling psychologist). You will be supported to complete therapeutic practice in cognitive behaviour and humanistic therapies with appropriate face-to-face clinical supervision, in all placements (Placements 1, 2, 3 and 4).

There is a mix of written (e.g., theoretical papers, case reports, examinations), oral (e.g., case presentations), and videoed assessment. Clinical experiences and therapy competencies conducted on placement, are monitored using a Clinical Folio.

Attendance and programme expectations

The Doctorate of Counselling Psychology is subject to an 80% module attendance rate in order to pass and progress.

Please be aware that full attendance is the expectation across all aspects of the programme. All attendance is in-person, unless explicitly stated by the module lead. However, if illnesses and personal circumstances impact on your studies at any point over the duration of the course, there are mechanisms within the University for you to follow for you to receive appropriate support (subject to the 80-% overall module attendance). There may also be some blended learning class delivery, and weekend classes subject to module lead and CAE timetabling.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general [regulations](#) for professional doctorate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- All assessment items must be passed to satisfy progression, that is, only those successfully completing all components will be allowed to progress to the next year of study.
- The Doctorate of Counselling Psychology will be awarded on completion of all modules and a dissertation, alongside documentary evidence of supervised practice and personal therapy (this aspect is assessed in various modules).
- The Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Therapies and Interventions will be awarded to students who exit with at least 120 credits from taught modules.
- The MA in Psychological Therapies and Interventions will be awarded to students who exit with at least 180 credits which include successful completion of PSY8209P Placement 1, PSY8211P Placement 2 and PSY8208M Doctoral Thesis 1.

Late result modules

This programme contains the following modules, where the result of the first attempt may not be known in time for the July School Assessment Panels (SAP) (or equivalent level progression point for non-standard entry points). This may delay progression to the next level of study.

PSY8108M Psychological Assessment Theories and Practice

PSY8112M Psychological Interventions Over the Lifespan

PSY8209P Placement 1

PSY8270M Group Psychotherapy

PSY8211P Placement 2

PSY307M Psychopathology & Relational Psychotherapy Practice

PSY8308M Doctoral Thesis 2

PSY8309P Placement 3

PSY8311M Doctoral Thesis 3

PSY8312P Placement 4

Internal and external reference points

Please note that all module specification documents and programme handbooks reference BPS and HCPC as indicative for UK students only.

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2026](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#)
- [The University's Approach to Dignity and Respect](#)
- [BPS Standards for the accreditation of Doctoral programmes in Counselling Psychology \(2019\)](#)
- [Health & Care Professions Council Standards of education and training \(2014; 2022\)](#)

Date written / revised: 02/07/2025

Programme originally approved: 27/03/2023 (University approved)