Programme specification
MSc Applied Cognitive Psychology

Faculty: Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
Entry in: September 2016
Awarding Institution: York St John University
Teaching Institution: York St John University
Delivery Location: York St John University
Programme/s Accredited by: Not applicable
Exit Awards: Postgraduate Certificate in Psychology
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Cognitive Psychology
Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology
MSc in Psychology
UCAS Code / GTTR / Other: Not applicable
Joint Honours Combinations: Not applicable
QAA Benchmark Group(s): Not applicable
Mode/s of Study: Full-time: 1 year
Part-time: normally 3 years
Language of Study: English

Introduction and Special Features

Introduction

The programme enables students to gain an advanced understanding of how the scientific study of mental processes can be applied outside of academic contexts. The MSc Applied Cognitive Psychology (ACP) will thus enable students to engage with the scientific literature to not only critically evaluate the concepts and theories but to evaluate how these have been applied to ‘real-world’ concerns, and to use this understanding to propose and defend their own solutions to similar problems. The programme features advanced coverage of both the application of cognitive psychology to ‘everyday’ concerns and the application of cognitive psychology in different professional contexts. This culminates in students undertaking a major independent research project, with supervision, which draws on the principles of cognitive psychology and applies them to a ‘real-world’ concern. Transferable skills include data collection and analysis; research design; presentation skills; decision making; critical thinking; the ability to learn autonomously; an understanding of the applications of cognitive psychology; and the capacity to use psychological knowledge to propose novel solutions to existing problems.

Special features of the programme

The programme has been designed with employment in mind, allowing students to develop an advanced understanding of the scientific basis of key employability skills (e.g. decision making, problem solving, learning, communication) which are essential across diverse occupations and career routes. Students will therefore have the opportunity to not only develop an advanced knowledge of the subject area, but they will have the opportunity to also develop an understanding of how the scientific literature can help them in tackling ‘real-world’ concerns when in employment. Graduates will therefore be well placed to not only continue on to further research or study within this area, but also to adapt their understanding in a wide range of potential future careers as appropriate to their own experience and ambitions. Industry contacts, for whom applied cognitive psychology is of relevance, will also be utilised to help enable our students to gain valuable work experience in addition to, or after, their curricular studies.
Admissions Criteria

In addition to the University’s general entry criteria for postgraduate study, you must have:

- a 2(i) in Psychology or a related discipline (e.g. computer science; biology; behavioural science; geography), although in cases where exceptional performance on the final year project, mitigating circumstances or relevant professional experience can be demonstrated, applicants may be considered who have a 2(ii). Applicants whose first degree is not in psychology will be welcomed, and these will be accepted on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they have covered psychology, research methods and statistics during their first degree (this will be assessed by viewing the degree transcript). Applicants whose first language is not English should have IELTS at grade 6.5 or above (with no component less than 5.5), or an equivalent YSJ approved English Language qualification.

Programme Aims

1. To develop students’ advanced knowledge and understanding of the applications of cognitive psychology.
2. To develop students’ advanced knowledge and understanding of research methods and current issues in psychological science.
3. To develop students’ abilities as autonomous learners and independent researchers, including the completion of a substantial independent research project (with supervision).
4. To develop students’ awareness of future directions (in both employment and further study) available to them, and to facilitate their progression to their next stage of employment and/or further study.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level M / FHEQ L7

Students who gain the award of MSc Applied Cognitive Psychology will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding

1. A sustained and systematic understanding and critical awareness of key themes and recent developments in applied cognitive psychology.
2. A comprehensive understanding of a range of theoretical and methodological techniques in applied cognitive psychology.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and critique knowledge in cognitive psychology.
4. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in cognitive psychology.
5. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues of enquiry in cognitive psychology.
6. Sustained understanding of the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques in cognitive psychology.
Cognitive skills

7. The ability to deal comprehensively with complex issues in applied cognitive psychology both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and to communicate their conclusions clearly.
8. Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems using cognitive psychology, and the ability to act autonomously over a prolonged period of time when planning and implementing tasks.
9. The capacity to continue advancing their knowledge and understanding of cognitive psychology, and to develop and sustain new skills to a high level.

Practical/professional skills

10. Comprehensive understanding of advanced principles of psychological research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and an appreciation of alternative approaches to research.
11. Sustained competence in undertaking and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches.
12. Capabilities for comprehensive management of research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics.

Key transferable skills

13. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a sustained and comprehensive fashion.
14. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, sustained over a prolonged period of time.
15. The comprehensive independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Interim awards can be made as follows: Postgraduate Certificate in Psychology (candidate successfully passes 60 taught credits); Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology (candidate successfully passes 120 taught credits); MSc Psychology (150 credits when one module that is compulsory for award of the MSc Applied Cognitive Psychology has been failed). Programme outcomes for these interim awards are as follows:

Students who gain the award of MSc Psychology will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding

1. A sustained and systematic understanding and critical awareness of key themes and recent developments in selected areas of psychology.
2. A comprehensive understanding of a range of theoretical and methodological techniques in selected areas of psychology.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and critique knowledge in selected areas of psychology.
4. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in selected areas of psychology.
5. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues of enquiry in selected areas of psychology.
6. Sustained understanding of the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques in selected areas of psychology.
Cognitive skills

7. The ability to deal comprehensively with complex issues in selected areas of psychology both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and to communicate their conclusions clearly.
8. Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems in selected areas of psychology, and the ability to act autonomously over a prolonged period of time when planning and implementing tasks.
9. The capacity to continue advancing their knowledge and understanding of selected areas of psychology, and to develop and sustain new skills to a high level.

Practical/professional skills

10. Comprehensive understanding of advanced principles of psychological research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and an appreciation of alternative approaches to research.
11. Sustained competence in undertaking and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches.
12. Capabilities for comprehensive management of research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics.

Key transferable skills

13. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a sustained and comprehensive fashion.
14. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, sustained over a prolonged period of time.
15. The comprehensive independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Students who gain the award of PG Dip. Applied Cognitive Psychology (120 credits) will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding

1. A systematic understanding and critical awareness of key themes and recent developments in applied cognitive psychology.
2. A comprehensive understanding of a range of theoretical and methodological techniques in cognitive psychology.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and critique knowledge in cognitive psychology.
4. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in cognitive psychology.
5. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues of enquiry in cognitive psychology.
6. Understanding of the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques in cognitive psychology.

Cognitive skills

7. The ability to deal comprehensively with complex issues in applied cognitive psychology both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and to communicate their conclusions clearly.
8. Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems using cognitive psychology, and the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.
9. The capacity to continue advancing their knowledge and understanding of applied cognitive psychology, and to develop new skills to a high level.

**Practical/professional skills**

10. Comprehensive understanding of advanced principles of psychological research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and an appreciation of alternative approaches to research.
11. Competence in undertaking and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches.
12. Capabilities for comprehensive management of research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics.

**Key transferable skills**

13. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a comprehensive fashion.
15. The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Students who gain the award of PG Dip. Psychology (120 credits) will have demonstrated:

**Knowledge and understanding**

1. A systematic understanding and critical awareness of key themes and recent developments in selected areas of psychology.
2. A comprehensive understanding of a range of theoretical and methodological techniques in selected areas of psychology.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and critique knowledge in selected areas of psychology.
4. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in selected areas of psychology.
5. Comprehensive conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues of enquiry in selected areas of psychology.
6. Understanding of the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques in selected areas of psychology.

**Cognitive skills**

7. The ability to deal comprehensively with complex issues in selected areas of psychology both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and to communicate their conclusions clearly.
8. Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems in selected areas of psychology, and the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.
9. The capacity to continue advancing their knowledge and understanding of selected areas of psychology, and to develop new skills to a high level.

**Practical/professional skills**

10. Comprehensive understanding of advanced principles of psychological research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and
an appreciation of alternative approaches to research.
11. Competence in undertaking and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches.
12. Capabilities for comprehensive management of research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics

Key transferable skills

13. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a comprehensive fashion.
14. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
15. The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Students who gain the award of PG Cert. Psychology (60 credits) will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and understanding

1. A systematic understanding and critical awareness of key themes and recent developments in selected areas of psychology.
2. An understanding of a range of theoretical and methodological techniques in selected areas of psychology.
3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and critique knowledge in selected areas of psychology.
4. Conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in selected areas of psychology.
5. Conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new avenues of enquiry in selected areas of psychology.
6. Understanding of the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques in selected areas of psychology.

Cognitive skills

7. The ability to deal with complex issues in selected areas of psychology both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and to communicate their conclusions clearly.
8. Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems in selected areas of psychology, and the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.
9. The capacity to continue advancing their knowledge and understanding of selected areas of psychology, and to develop new skills to a high level.

Practical/professional skills

10. Comprehension of advanced principles of psychological research design and strategy, including an understanding of how to formulate researchable problems and an appreciation of alternative approaches to research.
11. Competence in undertaking and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools including mixed methods approaches.
12. Capabilities for managing research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics

Key transferable skills

13. The ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility
14. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
15. The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Programme Structure

Modules for the Programme

Full-time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Status of Module</th>
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<tr>
<td>MID182</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPY024</td>
<td>Everyday Applications of Cognitive Psychology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPY022</td>
<td>Psychological Science: Perspectives &amp; Practicalities</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPY025</td>
<td>Applying Cognitive Psychology in Professional Contexts</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID183</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Spring/Summer</td>
<td>C</td>
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Part-time:

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Status of Module</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPY024</td>
<td>Everyday Applications of Cognitive Psychology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 (yr1)</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPY022</td>
<td>Psychological Science: Perspectives &amp; Practicalities</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2 (yr1)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID182</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 (yr2)</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPY025</td>
<td>Applying Cognitive Psychology in Professional Contexts</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2 (yr2)</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MID183</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Full year (yr 3)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*C: Compulsory, CP: Compulsory for progression to the next level, CA: Compulsory for award, O: option or E: elective.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Students will experience the following learning and teaching strategies: Lectures; seminars; tutorials, workshops; use of the VLE. A particular emphasis will be placed on the use of small group discussion-based teaching methods (primarily seminars) and practical experience (workshops). Use of the VLE will draw on the principles of the Faculty’s Technology-Enhanced Learning framework.

Students will experience the following assessment strategies: essays; case studies; a research proposal and an independent research project. Assessment will be both formative and summative.

Progression and Graduation Requirements

The University’s general regulations for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

In order to be eligible for the award of MSc Applied Cognitive Psychology, candidates must have passed the modules that are compulsory for award (MPY024 & MPY025).
In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- Candidates who are awarded a minimum of 60 credits, but less than 120 credits, will be eligible for the award of PG Cert. Psychology.
- Candidates who are awarded 120 credits including MPY024 and MYP025 will be eligible for the award of PG Dip. Applied Cognitive Psychology.
- Candidates who are awarded 120 credits which do not include MPY024 and MYP025 will be eligible for the award of PG Dip. Psychology.
- Candidates who are awarded 150 credits at M-level but do not successfully complete MYP024 or MYP025 will be eligible for the award of the degree MSc Psychology.

### Internal and External Reference Points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [York St John University Strategic Plan 2012-15](#)
- [York St John University ‘Structure of Awards’ document](#)
- [York St John University ‘General Regulations for Postgraduate Awards’ (2011-12)](#)
- [York St John University ‘Programme Levels’ document](#)
- [Faculty of Health & Life Sciences Operating Plan 2013-16](#)
- [QAA Master’s degree characteristics (March 2010)](#)
- [ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2009](#)
- [ESRC, BPS, EPS & AHPD International Benchmarking Review of UK Psychology (April 2011)](#)

### Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (faculty)
- Module handbooks (faculty)

*Date written / revised: 04/07/13*

2014 first entry to the programme