Programme Specification

Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Where appropriate outcome statements have be referenced to the appropriate Benchmarking Statement **(BS)**

1.	**Awarding Institution**	Queen Margaret University
2.	**Teaching Institution**	Queen Margaret University
3.	**Professional body Accreditation**	British Psychological Society
4.	**Final Award**	B.Sc. (Honours) Psychology
	Subsidiary Awards	B.Sc. Psychology
5.	**Programme Title**	B.Sc. (Honours) Psychology
6.	**UCAS Code**	C800
7.	**SCQF level**	7-10
8.	**Mode of delivery and duration**	Full time, 4 years
9.	**Date of validation**	April 4th 2019

10. Educational Aims of the programme

The aims of the B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology are those of the QAA defining principles for a degree programme in psychology, which contribute to psychological literacy:

- to produce a scientific understanding of the mind, brain, behaviour and experience, and how they interact with the complex environments in which they exist;
- include knowledge and the acquisition of a range of research skills and methods for investigating experience and behaviour, culminating in an ability conduct research independently;
- develop and understanding of the role of empirical evidence in the creation and constraint of theory, and also in how theory guides the collection and interpretation of empirical data;
- present multiple perspectives in a way that fosters critical evaluation and reflection;
- develop knowledge, leading to an appreciation of theory and research findings, including relevant ethical and socio-cultural issues;
- lead to an understanding of real-life applications of theory to the full range of experience and behaviour and the application of psychological understanding to real world questions.

11. Benchmark statements/professional and statutory body requirements covered by the programme

The Benchmark Statement for psychology is available from the QAA. These are articulated directly in the content and skills recommended by the BPS in their accreditation documentation. Typical standards are given below (with their cross-reference to the Programme outcomes given in brackets where appropriate).

Subject knowledge and understanding (typical standard):

7.4.1. Understand the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline, its historical origins, development and limitations (A1, B1, B3)

7.4.2. Recognise the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning and its significance.

7.4.3. Demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning, how they are conceptualised across the core areas as outlined in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9 and how they interrelate (A2, B2)

7.4.4.   Demonstrate detailed knowledge of several specialised areas and/or applications, some of which are at the cutting edge of research in the discipline (A2, B2)

7.4.5.   Demonstrate a systematic knowledge of a range of research paradigms, research methods and measurement techniques, including statistical analysis, and be aware of their limitations (B4)

Subject-specific skills (typical standard):

7.6.1.   Reason scientifically, understand the role of evidence and make critical judgements about arguments in psychology (B2, D1)

7.6.2.   Adopt multiple perspectives and systematically analyse the relationships between them (B2)

7.6.3.   Detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and experience and evaluate their significance

7.6.4.   Pose, operationalise and critique research questions (B2, C4, D3)

7.6.5.   Demonstrate substantial competence in research skills through practical activities (C1, C2, C4, D2, D4, D5)

7.6.6.   Reason statistically and use a range of statistical methods with confidence (B4, C1, D4)

7.6.7.   Competently initiate, design, conduct and report an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision, and recognise its theoretical, practical and methodological implications and limitations (D5)

7.6.8.   Be aware of ethical principles and approval procedures and demonstrate these in relation to personal study, particularly with regard to the research project, and be aware of the ethical context of psychology as a discipline. (B4, C3)

Generic skills (typical standard)

7.8.1.   Communicate ideas and research findings both effectively and fluently by written oral and visual means (C1, D4)

7.8.2.   Comprehend and use numerical, statistical and other forms of data, particularly in the context of presenting and analysing complex data sets (C1, C4)

7.8.3.   Be computer literate and confident in using word processing database and statistical software (D4)

7.8.4.   Solve problems by clarifying questions, considering alternative solutions and evaluating outcomes (D3, D4, D6)

7.8.5.   Be sensitive to, and react appropriately to contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams (D4)

7.8.6.   Undertake self-directed study and project management, in order to meet desired objectives (D5)

7.8.7.   Take charge of their own learning, and reflect and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning. (D5)

12. Learning Outcomes of the Programme

In order to facilitate these benchmark statements and aims, a list of our Programme Outcomes follows. These Outcomes are informed by QAA guidance and have been updated to include the newest additions to the subject knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills and generic skills outlined in the 2016 Subject Benchmark Statement. All of the following Programme Outcomes are taught and assessed in our core programme over Levels 1 through 3.

A. Knowledge and understanding
1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the epistemological underpinnings, principles and features of psychology as a discipline, its historical origins, development and limitations;
2. Make critical judgements and evaluations, take different perspectives on issues and problems and evaluate them in a critical, sceptical manner;

3. Integrate concepts and findings across the multiple perspectives, methods and conventions in psychology and related areas.

B. Intellectual (thinking) skills
1. Demonstrate competence in the critique of published psychological research in terms of both conceptual and methodological considerations;
2. Make critical judgements and evaluations, take different perspectives on issues and problems and evaluate them in a critical, sceptical manner;
3. Evaluate and apply a range of epistemological and methodological perspectives in a range of psychological contexts;
4. Employ evidence-based reasoning and examine practical, theoretical and ethical problems associated with the use of different methodologies, paradigms and methods of analyses and probability in psychology;
5. Appreciate variation in behaviour from objective and subjective perspectives and evaluate their significance.

C. Practical skills
1. Carry out a variety of professional skills, including: analysing, synthesising, interpreting and evaluating data from both qualitative and quantitative sources;
2. Demonstrate appropriate skills and practices to engage effectively with the academic psychology community;
3. Demonstrate an awareness of ethical issues and current codes of ethics and conduct;
4. Tolerate unpredictability and exercise discretion in a variety of professional and research contexts.

D. Transferable skills
1. Demonstrate competence in synthesising relevant evidence and developing a cogent argument;
2. Demonstrate a capacity to initiate, evaluate and organise activity, both independently and collaboratively;
3. Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical, practical and ethical situations where information is conflicting or partial;
4. Communicate and present professionally in a variety of contexts and a range of possible audiences;
5. Effectively use personal planning and project management skills;
6. Becoming more independent, pragmatic and reflective individuals.

13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies

Skills development: Psychology as a science

From Level 1, semester one, students are given foundational skills needed in order to best understand and engage with psychology as a discipline. The year-long module *Foundations of Psychology: Core Concepts and Practices* builds those skills related to Psychological Literacy: the evaluation of evidence, communication skills, and ethical practice. This is accompanied by a grounding in the scientific method.

In both Level 1 *Introduction to Psychology* modules, students will participate in a psychology experiment and will produce lab reports as written assessments. This gives students early practice in writing a lab report, which will be a novel assessment for many students. Introducing lab reports as assessments at this stage allows students to understand the importance of (1) methodological rigour, (2) clarity and precision of written information in scientific disciplines, and (3) elements of the scientific writing style. This also gives students first-hand experience of psychological research.

In Level 2, students will continue to interact with psychological research in the module *Enquiries in Psychology*, which requires 5 hours participation in research as an assessed component. This allows students to become more familiar with a variety of research methods used by psychologists in current research.

Skills development: Research methods

This early grounding in psychological science dovetails with our approach to research methods provision. In Level 2, the module *Exploring Research in Psychology* introduces students to research methods in each of the core areas of psychology, from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. One component of assessment for this module includes a short oral presentation regarding one of the topics covered in the module.

In core area modules in Level 2, textbook readings are accompanied by occasional empirical research articles, and are guided through understanding this type of material in lectures and seminars. Students also have a component for the module *Enquiries in Psychology* which includes participation in research studies. This allows students further hands-on activities relating to research processes, ethics and procedures.

In Level 3, the module *The Skilled Researcher* aims to build students' abilities and confidence using methods of analysis, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. In this module, students learn a variety of specific skills for analysis that will prepare them for their Level 4 research projects. They will also choose their dissertation project and have an initial meeting with their project supervisor (or be assigned to one).

Also in Level 3, the delivery of core areas is accompanied by a strong focus on empirical research and evidence-based practice. Readings incorporate a greater proportion of scientific research articles and students are expected to read and interpret these with minimal assistance from lecturers/tutors. The module *Psychobiology in Context* requires students to apply psychological knowledge to a hypothetical patient in a case study, reinforcing the importance of empirical research, ethical practice and the evaluation of evidence.

Delivery of research methods culminates in the Level 4 Psychology Research Project. Students undertake original research and are often involved in conceptual stages and research design. Students complete and submit an ethics proposal, carry out data collection and analysis. Students gather data in real-world settings, for example: experimental laboratory or online settings, interviews or analysis of existing datasets. The aim of this project is to enable students to utilise the methods they have learned throughout their degree, and stand alone as confident researchers capable of independent work and/or further postgraduate qualification.

Skills development: Writing and communication skills

Students begin their academic careers by submitting short pieces of written coursework, up to a maximum of 1500 words in length in Level 1. Included here are research/lab reports and short essays which allow students to practice writing skills in a number of respects. Crucial here is the distinction between essay writing and report writing, which have distinct purposes and approaches. Having a foundation in both of these types of writing at an early stage will benefit students as they progress through the programme.

In Level 2, written assessments become longer, from 1500 words in some modules, and up to a maximum of 3000 words. Here, the variety of assessments also increases, and includes essays, literature reviews, a poster and a case study. This variation in assessment types allows students to gain practice communicating in a variety of outputs and to diverse audiences.

In Level 3, students begin to encounter assessments by written exam (one per semester). The remaining assessments again are comprised of various written forms: a case study, practical reports, essays and group work all continue to provide students with opportunities to build on their skills in a progressive and meaningful way.

Assessments for Level 4 core modules are some of the most challenging with a 10,000-word (maximum) dissertation describing original research and a 3000-word essay which applies students' psychological knowledge and skills to contemporary issues and problems facing society. These "capstone" assessments allow students to exercise the full range of skills they have developed during their first three years of study. Optional module assessments at this level also vary widely. Students are expected to be active participants in their learning, and these smaller class sizes facilitate practice in communicating ideas and concepts verbally. Some assessments incorporate this active participation, while others involve essays, exams, group work, literature reviews and reflective logs.

Ultimately, it has been our goal to provide students with a range of experiences and assessments that equip them as psychologically literate citizens: those with skills to evaluate evidence, to be confident in the use of research methods, and communicate effectively to enhance engagement with their communities. The progression of assessment depth, and the incorporation of a wide range of assessments help us to meet this aim.

Teaching and Learning Methods. The main learning and teaching methods employed are a combination of:

- **Lectures:** to present and explain information and provide an overview of key theories, issues, perspectives and methodologies in psychology
- **Seminars:** to allow guided group discussion as a means of clarifying and elaborating on theories and issues in psychology
- **Tutorials:** to allow detailed discussion about and /or feedback on a given topic or to support a specific aspect of learning and/or assessment
- **Engagement with research:** students participate in research and engage with hands-on demonstrations of research at the state of the art
- **Independent learning:** students read and prepare in their own time, building self-reliance and practicing self-guided enquiry
- **Group Projects**: to allow students to develop teamwork skills, self-discipline, respect for others, and the capacity to respond to constructive criticism
- **Essays:** to allow students to critically analyse selected issues in theatre and performance and to develop a personal critical perspective on these issues.
- **Critical reflection:** students to critically reflect on their work as a basis for personal and professional growth
- **Presentations:** to allow students to articulate their ideas and perspectives, verbally and visually, and to exchange ideas in real-time
- **Electronic learning resources:** (ejournals; internet; subscription based online platforms; videos, etc.) to enable students to develop skills of research and analysis, and to become independent learners

14. Assessment strategies

The main assessment methods employed are a combination of:
- **Written assignments/Essays:** to test students' ability through research and writing to critically evaluate theories, ideas and issues in psychology and to make connections between/judgements about these theories, ideas and issues
- **Multiple choice and short answer tests**: to test students' knowledge and encourage revision of a broad range of material.
- **Research reports**: to provide students with practice writing for the psychological discipline. These reports measure clarity and analytical ability.

15. Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements (including any periods of placement)

All assessments are summative unless otherwise indicated.
Formative assessments are denoted in **bold**.

Level 1			
Module	**Credits**	**Assessment**	
		Sem 1	**Sem 2**
Foundations of Psychology: Core Concepts and Practices	20	**Completion of workbook (20%)**	1500-word essay (80%)
Introduction to Psychology 1	20	1000-word lab report (50%) 1000-word essay (50%)	
Introduction to Psychology 2	20		1000-word lab report (50%) MCQ (50%)

Level 2			
Module	**Credits**	**Assessment**	
		Sem 1	**Sem 2**
Developmental and Social Psychology	20	1500-word essay (50%) 1500-word essay (50%)	
Exploring Research in Psychology	20	MCQ (50%) Poster and Presentation (50%)	
Biological and Cognitive Psychology	20		1500-word essay (50%) 1500-word literature review (50%)
Enquiries in Psychology	20		2000-word case study poster and **plan** (100%) Research participation (pass/fail)
Individual Differences, Wellbeing and Ethical Practice	20		3000-word case study (100%)

Level 3			
Module	**Credits**	**Assessment**	
		Sem 1	**Sem 2**
Social Psychology and Social Justice	20	Exam (100%)	
Psychobiology in Context	20	MCQ (50%) 1500-word case report (50%)	
The Skilled Researcher	20	1500-word qualitative practical reports (50%)	

Module	Credits	Sem 1	Sem 2
		1500-word quantitative practical reports (50%)	
Developmental Psychology	20		3000-word essay (100%)
Cognitive Psychology	20		Group work submission and justification (40%) Individual work and presentation (60%)
Historical Perspectives in Psychology	20		Exam (100%)

Level 4			
Module	**Credits**	**Assessment**	
		Sem 1	**Sem 2**
Psychology Research Project	40		Dissertation 100% (max 10,000 words)
Psychology for Contemporary Issues	20		3000-word essay (100%)
Students take THREE of the following; TWO in Sem1 and ONE in Sem2			
Modules may run in Semester 1 OR 2			
Memory: Origins and Structures	20	Exam (100%)	
Eyewitness Psychology	20	**Presentation and Participation (35%)** 2000-word essay (65%)	
Cognitive Science of Belief	20	Exam (100%)	
Evolutionary Psychology in the Modern World	20	**Participation in Discussion (25%)** Group presentation (75%)	
Psychology of Pain	20	**500-word brochure proposal (25%)** 2500-word brochure (75%)	
Peer Relations in Childhood and Adolescence	20	Exam (100%)	
Political Psychology	20	**MCQ and short-answer (35%)** 2000-word literature review (65%)	
Happiness and Wellbeing	20	**Participation in Discussion (25%)** Group presentation (75%)	
Community Engagement	20	3000-word reflective log and report (100%)	

Students awarded a non-honours degree will have achieved the majority of the learning outcomes above. Their knowledge will typically be less specialised, and they will typically be less proficient in higher-level skills such as independent learning and research, and they will not have completed the research project. To obtain a non-honours degree in Psychology, students must have achieved at least 360 credits in total. Of these 120 must have been at level three as a minimum including all level three core modules.

16. **Criteria for admission**

B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology entry requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum entry requirements for undergraduate programmes as set out in the University Admissions Regulations.

Typical entry
Students entering onto the programme will normally have 240/245 UCAS Tariff points comprising:

A levels (B B C);
Highers (B B C C C);
Irish Leaving Certificate (H3 H3 H3 H3 H3);
International Baccalaureate: 30 points;
Direct Entry: Year two – HNC in a related subject with A in the graded unit or HND with CB in the graded units may be considered.

Special academic requirements
Maths and English at S/Int2/N5/GCSE

Additional requirements
None

FE and Access students:
Applications are welcomed from mature students with relevant qualifications and/or experience. Applications for entry with advanced standing are referred to the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Panel.

Our programme accepts Direct Entrants from a number of local colleges, listed below. Requirements are to pass all HNC units and achieve a minimum of A in the graded unit, with a strong tutor reference.

Edinburgh College	HNC Social Science
Fife College	HNC Social Science
West Lothian College	HNC Social Science
NE Scotland College	HNC Social Science

We also have Associate Student arrangements with Newbattle Abbey College and West Lothian College.

English language requirements:
Applicants must be able to communicate in English to a standard equivalent to level 6.0 of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with no element below 5.5.

Health status:
No requirements.

17. Support for students and their learning

University support services. The University provides a range of support services to address students' academic and personal support needs. Most of these services can be accessed through the Student Services reception desk, which directs students to the best person to provide them with support.

- financial advice
- counselling and well-being support
- disability service
- careers advice

Students with disabilities or additional learning needs are supported by Disability Services, who liaise with the Subject Area Disability Coordinator who ensures that all reasonable adjustments are put in place to support the student in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Individual learning plans (ILPs) are communicated to relevant staff. Meetings are held once per semester to discuss learning plans and make adjustments to these if

necessary. The University Disability Services team provides advice and guidance to help develop the individual learning plan, and can also guide students towards additional resources and assistive technology where required.

Other University support services include:

- administrative support from the School Office and Registry
- training in academic skills from the Effective Learning Service
- English language classes for students whose first language is not English
- a range of services to aid direct entrants, including a dedicated induction week and peer mentoring
- support provided by the Library Helpdesk and liaison librarians
- welfare and representation from the Students' Union
- writing support from the Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellow, including one-to-one appointments and tailored advice
- the Wellbeing Service for wellbeing and mental health support

18. Quality Assurance arrangements

This programme is governed by QMU's quality assurance procedures. See the QMU website for more detail: https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/