

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

| Basic Course Information | | |
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| 1. | Awarding Institution: | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. | School/Campus: | School of Social Sciences, City campus |
| 3. | Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | MSc Cyberpsychology |
| 4. | Normal Duration: | 1 year FT or 2 years PT |
| 5. | UCAS Code: | |

| 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course | | |
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| <p>The MSc Cyberpsychology is an opportunity for you to develop the relevant academic and professional skills to commence a successful career in the area of cyberpsychology. The course is designed to provide you with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A critical understanding of the theory and practice of cyberpsychology, and the organisational and social context of cyberpsychology.• The academic skills to undertake novel research.• The experience of working within a cyberpsychology setting through eight week placements in an organisation. <p>This blend of research and practical learning is reflected in the course team, which consists of professionals working in the area of cyberpsychology and academics who have considerable experience working in the field of cyberpsychology across the UK and other countries. This course will provide an ideal launchpad for any student interested in pursuing a further career in cyberpsychology. As a graduate of the MSc you will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychology scientists, able to critically appraise and apply key features of cyberpsychology research.• Scholars of cyberpsychology in practice, with an advanced understanding of key features of cyberpsychology applications.• Reflective academics, able to use an awareness of their own experiences and characteristics past and present to inform their knowledge and skills with regard to the science and practice of cyberpsychology. <p>Taken together, these three elements will provide you with an ideal foundation for the next stages of your academic and professional development and a solid framework for your professional careers in the area of cyberpsychology and allied professions. Your development on this course will ensure that you have the knowledge, skills, and attributes required to embrace and succeed in your further careers, and an openness to learning from the practice of cyberpsychology.</p> | | |
| 7. Course outcomes Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide. | | |
| Knowledge and understanding By the end of the course you should be able to: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically analyse the academic knowledge base associated with the context of practice in cyberpsychology;• Critically appraise key debates regarding the application of psychology to online and digital technology contexts and technology users and providers; | | |

- Demonstrate an integrative and critical understanding of the ethical, cultural, political and legal issues arising in cyberpsychological practice and research;
- Synthesise theoretical knowledge with an experiential understanding of applied practice and make theory-to-practice links;
- Critically evaluate a range of research designs, methods and analytic techniques applicable to advanced scholarship in cyberpsychology.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Produce formulations to address cyberpsychology practice issues;
- Produce a cyberpsychological research project;
- Demonstrate an ability to act as a practitioner in relation to cyberpsychology practice;
- Demonstrate a capability to work appropriately in a cyberpsychology setting;
- Communicate cyberpsychological information effectively.

8. Teaching and learning methods

A variety of teaching methods have been selected to enable you to learn the wide range of topics covered by the course. Contact time with lecturers might variously be provided in the form of lectures, workshops, seminars, via the virtual learning environment (VLE) or through laboratory or field work. In each module, you will be directed to appropriate web addresses, specialist texts and primary literature. You are also expected to undertake independent studies without direction from tutors as part of your independent learning time. Examples of this include revision of course material and independent reading in the appropriate subject areas.

By studying on this course, you will benefit from the biweekly tutorial groups which will underpin the entire course. This tutorial is based on an experiential learning strategy, in that you will be asked to think about your developing professional identity, course material and independent study, your personal experiences of the course, ethical issues and so on. This tutorial will be facilitated by staff members, with a gradual movement towards you taking a more self-directed mode of leading the tutorial sessions as the course progresses.

Your experience of working within a cyberpsychology setting will be a foundation for the development of core employability skills including team-working and effective communication.

9. Assessment methods

The Psychology Division pursues a policy of establishing a varied, fair and rigorous assessment regime based upon clearly specified criteria. The course duly makes use of a variety of assessment practices across its modules. The assessment methods on the MSc Cyberpsychology include practical and research reports, assessed essays, portfolios, oral presentations, and a research project.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The MSc Cyberpsychology consists of 180 credits completed within a single academic year (full-time). The following modules are completed over the course of the year:

- *Research Skills for Cyberpsychology* (core module) will introduce you to a range of key research methods and research dissemination skills necessary for the pursuit of an academic or professional career in psychology (or related disciplines). The main aim of the module will be to establish a critical understanding of data and evidence used in the field and to explore research methods and techniques used in relevant research. This ensures that you are capable of planning and carrying out ethically sound, independent research projects in a psychological setting, and that you are able to present the results of that research to both professional and non-professional audiences.
- *Computer Forensics* is a 20-credit core module taught at Clifton campus with MSc IT Security students. It highlights the breadth of Cyberpsychology by incorporating a multidisciplinary approach to online behaviours. The aims of this module are (i) to develop a critical appreciation of both the theoretical and practical issues in the field of computer forensics; (ii) to consolidate knowledge of various computing systems and understand their importance to computer forensics investigations; and (iii) to develop the necessary skills, methodologies, and processes to conduct an initial computer forensics investigation within an organisation. Module content typically includes: (i) computer crime and the role of computer forensics in law enforcement and the organisation; (ii) legal and ethical issues; (iii) investigation processes and procedures; (iv) documentation and reporting in computer forensics; (v) the computer forensics environment; (vi) hard drives and storage media; (vii) operating Systems, e.g. Windows and Linux; (viii) computer forensics tools and techniques; (ix) file system and deleted data analysis; (x) investigating electronic files and meta-data; (xi) network forensics.
- *Professional Skills* (core module) will introduce you to a range of key professional skills necessary for the pursuit of an academic or professional career in psychology (or related disciplines). The main aim of the module will be to ensure that you are capable of planning, carrying out and evaluating professional skills in a psychological setting, and that you are able to present your skills and abilities for both professional and non-professional audiences.
- *Psychology of Cyberspace and Online Behaviours* is a 20-credit core module (à 2 hours/week) and will introduce you to various aspects of cyberspaces (both online and digital technology environments) and behaviours mediated by technology. This module will include different content, such as specialist lectures and seminar sessions on online and video gaming, cyberspace, cybersecurity, and online relationships, delivered by experts in their field.
- *Applied Psychology of Digital Technologies* is a 60 credit core module which runs across terms 1, 2, and 3. This module encompasses 2 hours of taught sessions per week in Terms 1 and 2, a one-hour bi-weekly tutorial, and an 8-week practice placement in Term 3. The taught elements in Terms 1 and 2 will cover topics such as: New Technologies, Digital Technologies in Education and Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Online Research Methods. Tutorials will scaffold both the coursework element preparation, as well as prepare you for the placements in Term 3, and your individual placement report. The placement element will involve an eight-week

placement for three or more days per week where you will work in cyberpsychology-relevant organisations, contribute to the everyday professional work in these organisations.

- *Research Project* (core module). You will choose to explore and critically examine a psychological research question in the area of cyberpsychology. The research can be an empirical project or take the form of a non-empirical dissertation; in both cases regular supervision will be provided to guide you in the planning, preparation, conduction and write up of the research. The empirical project is written up as article targeted at a real journal (there is no obligation to actually submit the article to the journal). The journal must be an academic peer-reviewed journal. Supervisors will assist you in selecting appropriate journals once the topic and design of the project have been agreed. The non-empirical dissertation takes the form of a structured literature review around a specific research question which is also written up as if for publication in an academic peer-reviewed journal.

A Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) and Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Cyberpsychology are also available as interim/exit awards. Students achieving 60 credits will be awarded a PGCert, 120 credits are required for award of a PGDip.

This course is available with both a full-time and a part-time option. The course has been designed in such a way that teaching, independent learning, placement and assessments are balanced across terms/years for both full-time and part-time students. Moreover, modules are scaffolded in both the full-time and part-time options to enhance the learning and teaching experience for you.

Students on the work-based placements are representatives of NTU and might be involved in complex work. NTU has committed to only sending students who have engaged with the taught MSc content, providing assurances to our organisational partners that students will be appropriately competent in the required skills. In order to fulfil this assurance, attendance will be monitored.

11. Admission to the course

The course is designed to attract high calibre students with appropriate academic skills. As the course is intended to be a support for students looking to pursue a career in cyberpsychology, applicants must already possess an Honours degree in a related subject (e.g., Psychology, Media Studies, IT). A first class or 2:1 degree award is desirable.

Places on the course will be given to the best students only, and so a competitive recruitment process is employed to select appropriate students. To apply for the MSc Cyberpsychology, students are required to complete the NTU standard postgraduate application form. All applications will be reviewed by the course team, and scored according to pre-prepared criteria related to the study and practice of cyberpsychology; this score will form the basis for selecting individuals to be invited for the next stages of selection. The admissions process thereafter will involve a face-to-face interview with members of the course team, and may involve completion of psychometrics, a problem-based task, and/or group work on the day of the interview. Appropriate theoretical knowledge, work experience or an interest in working in the area of cyberpsychology will be considered advantageous, alongside personal attributes, such as interest in

technology and good communication skills, which are essential for a career in cyberpsychology.

Students wishing to join the course (UK, EU or overseas) will need to be accepted by the Course Leader or Associate Course Leader and/or the general admissions team or the overseas admissions teams, based on having successfully completed a relevant undergraduate degree.

Accreditation of Prior Learning for Admission

Accreditation of prior learning will be compared against the learning outcomes for the MSc Cyberpsychology by the course team and in accordance with NTU regulations.

Accreditation of Prior Learning for Admissions with Advanced Standing

As above.

International Students

This course requires students to have an undergraduate degree, and is open to overseas students who hold the entry requirements related to postgraduate study in the UK. Applicants from overseas are expected to have a good command of spoken and written English. International applicants will be required to have IELTS 6.5. Non-UK academic qualifications will be assessed in comparison to their UK equivalents. The Division of Psychology has its own international student officer who looks after the interests of international students within the Division.

12. Support for learning

Students will be assigned a personal tutor who will provide pastoral and academic support throughout their study. Students will meet their tutor (and a range of other teaching staff) during an induction event which will be organised before the course begins. Students will also be provided with a Course Handbook which will include a range of information about studying psychology at Nottingham Trent University. Additionally, students will meet with the teaching staff from across the course team on a weekly basis at the reflective practice group. A weekly reflective session is akin with the support often available in clinical practice, and aims to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on practice and experiences.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

The course will be of particular interest to graduates seeking to pursue a career in cyberpsychology, either in research/academia or any organisation that uses any form of cyberpsychology (i.e., has a web-presence).

The *Applied Psychology of Digital Technologies* module with the integrated 8-week placement will provide students with invaluable experience to work as a cyberpsychologist in a cyber-industry or other professional work place, engaged in cyberactivities. The placement will allow students to have first-hand experience engaging with cyberactivities and to reflect on them from a psychological position, think creatively about possible ways to develop their knowledge, as well as enabling them to apply relevant research and theory to their experiences. Examples of the type of company

where we expect students might work are: gaming industry, online dating/social networking companies, a cybersecurity/filtering software company, academia, healthcare settings, education. This module is designed to increase students' employability to the mutual benefit of the industry and the students' choices in the future whether they wish to proceed directly into employment or to further study/research.

14. **Course standards and quality**

Responsibility for the standards and quality of the course will rest with the course committee which meets once a term. Other groups that will input into the quality assurance for the course are the Psychology Learning and Teaching Committee and the Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC). The Psychology Learning and Teaching Committee meet several times each term to monitor and discuss quality issues across courses. The Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meets twice a term to discuss matters arising of concern or interest about particular modules, the overall course, Divisional facilities or beyond. This committee has been successful in effecting good communications between psychology students and staff, and consists of student reps (one of which will be a student enrolled in the MSc Cyberpsychology) and staff members. Issues raised by both students and staff are able to be addressed promptly, and proactive initiatives can be raised to improve the learning experience of students.

At a more local level, quality assurance and enhancement issues are monitored by module leaders, who are encouraged to position themselves as 'cyberpsychology practitioners', critically evaluating the quality of their modules. Part of this role involves their writing an annual report on their module, which requires them to reflect, on the basis of evidence, on the module's strengths and potential areas for development. Psychology Module Leaders' Reports in other postgraduate courses within the Division have been praised by External Examiners as 'a model of good practice' and as 'refreshingly self-critical'.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

Relating to the placement, students will be required to sign and perform to an honorary contract issued by the host organisation. Should a student fail to perform to the professional standards expected by their host organisation, they can expect to face disciplinary measures within the organisation, which could lead to the termination of their contract; the course leader will be an active participant in the decision-making process in such an event. Students may also be held to further account by the university with reference to the Student Code of Behaviour. Should a placement be terminated through the choice of, or conduct by, the student, the university will not normally agree to arrange an alternative placement. The roles and responsibilities for students, staff and placement providers are as follows. The student's placement report should reflect the activities engaged in during placement. The academic supervisor will ensure the placement report is a true reflection of the placement activities carried out by contacting the placement provider, whose role is to confirm the student's engagement with the placement.

Attendance at timetabled teaching and placement will be recorded, and students are required to attend their sessions (unless they provide documented proof of why it may not be possible in certain cases, in line with the Psychology Division's general procedure to apply for exceptional circumstances).

16. **Additional Information**

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| Collaborative partner(s): | N/A |
| Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statements: | Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (2015) |
| Course recognised by: | N/A |
| Date this course specification approved: | July 2017 |

Any additional information:

This course does not lead to BPS accreditation.