

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Awarding Institution:                         | Nottingham Trent University                   |
| 2. | School/Campus:                                | School of Social Sciences/City                |
| 3. | Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health |
| 4. | Normal Duration:                              | FT 1 Year, PT 2 Years                         |
| 5. | UCAS Code:                                    | Not applicable                                |

### 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health is designed for both graduates of psychology (or allied disciplines) and those who have experience of working within mental health settings. A major strength of the course is the diversity within the cohort, with 'traditional' graduates, seeking to further their education and gain a stronger understanding of theoretical application in a particular context, joining practitioners seeking to extend their theoretical and academic knowledge and understandings in order to underpin their existing practice. Those graduating with an MSc in Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health will have the necessary skills to pursue professional careers in mental health settings, and will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to be independent, ethical and culturally sensitive in your learning and future application of psychology. Students may also complete the course as a means of improving their knowledge and research skills in preparation for further doctoral training as either academic or professional psychologists (often as clinical or counselling psychologists).

The course is 1 year full time or 2 years part time, with fall back awards of PGDip (120 credits) and PGCert (60 credits). All modules are compulsory; students will also conduct an extended piece of work on a subject of their own choice, as either a dissertation or an empirical project, and also choose their own topic for a supervised extended essay supported by an underpinning tutorial programme.

We aim to produce graduates who:

1. Are enthused about the discipline of psychology and its various applications, methods and techniques to the applied topic of psychological wellbeing and mental health
2. Have extensive knowledge of theoretical and practical issues in psychological wellbeing and mental health and a critical awareness of the current philosophical, theoretical and methodological problems, debates, and insights that shape the discipline.
3. Have the necessary research knowledge and skills to apply a range of appropriate research methods and techniques in response to specific research problems in psychological wellbeing and mental health

4. Have robust understandings of the scientist-practitioner model of working, developed both through teaching and experiential learning.
5. Adopt an independent and reflective approach to their learning and future careers.
6. Are able to critically evaluate theories and empirical evidence relevant to psychological wellbeing and mental health.
7. Have a good understanding of how to apply understandings and knowledge learned during their studies to everyday settings (e.g. the workplace).

**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:

1. Demonstrate your comprehensive knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of psychological knowledge applied in the areas of psychological wellbeing and mental health;
2. Critically evaluate a range of methods and techniques applicable to research, advanced scholarship and/or practice in psychological wellbeing and mental health;
3. Demonstrate your comprehensive knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of key debates and applications of psychology in the areas of psychological wellbeing and mental health, much of which should be informed by the research and practice at the forefront of Psychology;
4. Demonstrate your comprehensive understanding of the ethical, pragmatic, cultural and legal issues related to research or advanced scholarship, and practice in psychological wellbeing and mental health;
5. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and expertise in understanding reflective practice and theory-practice links;
6. Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how research techniques and enquiry are used in the areas of psychological wellbeing and mental health to create and develop new knowledge.

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

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

1. Demonstrate expertise in the communication of information associated with psychological wellbeing and mental health in a variety of contexts;
2. Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of a range of methodological and analytical skills in the area of psychological research, advanced scholarship and/or practice in psychological wellbeing and mental health;
3. Make contemporary theory-to-practice links by applying specialist

academic knowledge to psychological wellbeing and mental health contexts;

4. Demonstrate an independent, reflexive and critically evaluative approach to the application of psychological theory and practice;
5. Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of a specialist area within psychological wellbeing and mental health whilst working effectively in a team setting;
6. Develop and apply a range of transferable skills necessary for employment;
7. Demonstrate an independent, ethical, culturally sensitive and reflective approach to the application of psychology and research to a chosen area of psychological wellbeing and mental health, by planning, designing, and implementing an independent research project or theoretical dissertation.

## **8. Teaching and Learning Methods**

A variety of teaching methods have been selected to accommodate a range of learning styles, and to support you in your development of subject-specific knowledge and understanding, and transferable skills, for example lectures, workshops, and seminars. Enquiry based learning is also integral to the course.

Whilst lectures, seminars and workshops are used throughout the course to develop your subject knowledge and understanding, small group tutorials are provided in order to support you in your development of both subject knowledge and a range of transferable skills. This includes an opportunity for you to hear about volunteering work that you can take part in whilst studying the course which is relevant to both your studies and to your future career development, as well as learning about approaches to avoidance of academic irregularity, and specific career advice related to psychological wellbeing and mental health.

We also make extensive use of Nottingham Trent University's virtual learning environment NOW, which gives students access to course materials and provides a medium for discussion groups, access to additional resources and information and provision of feedback on learning throughout the course.

## **9. Assessment Methods**

The Psychology Division pursues a policy of establishing a varied, fair and rigorous assessment regime based upon clearly specified criteria. The MSc PWMH will make use of a variety of assessment practices across its modules. Assessment of work will clearly determine whether students have satisfied the learning objectives and outcomes of individual modules and the course as a whole. Nonetheless, assessment within the Psychology Division is also

designed to encourage independent and active learning and to serve a number of 'formative' purposes:

1. To inform you of your strengths and weaknesses, thus playing a part in facilitating personal development.
2. To increase motivation by allowing you to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and skills and to benefit from the receipt of positive and constructive feedback.
3. To provide you with the opportunity to review and consolidate aspects of your learning.

The main assessment methods to be used on the MSc PWMH are as follows:

**Research Project/dissertation:** An aim of the course is to provide you with the requisite research skills to undertake further postgraduate training, or to pursue a professional career in mental health related occupations. The research project/dissertation requires you to: work independently, synthesise material, to design, plan and carry out a piece of empirical research or theoretical dissertation, to consider and meet ethical standards, and to analyse research data. It is thus a key assessment device both in terms of the formative feedback given during supervision and in terms of the summative assessment of the project report. You have a choice of whether to conduct research as an empirical project or non-empirical dissertation. Research is written up in ways that enables you to demonstrate communication appropriate for academic audiences.

**Assessed Essays:** These enable you to demonstrate an ability to focus on a particular problem and to explore its parameters in a balanced fashion. In addition, the independent 'Specialist Essay' will also allow you to demonstrate your ability to generate clear, relevant and timely questions based on your understanding of current theory and practice and is written up in ways that enables you to demonstrate communication appropriate for practitioner and lay audiences.

**Presentations:** These assess your ability to deliver arguments and information orally. They test ability to engage an audience (where appropriate using aids such as overhead projectors, hand-outs, presentational software, tapes, video clips, etc.), and to handle an appropriate range of primary and secondary source material, while presenting conclusions and practical recommendations.

**Exam:** This will test your ability to work in a time pressured environment, so providing an opportunity to illustrate your knowledge gained through the relevant module(s). In doing so, you are required to choose what information to focus on, and to write up your answers in such a way that clearly illustrates your understanding of current theory and practice.

**Research Proposal:** You will be required to select an appropriate methodology, and justify its use in answering a hypothetical scenario. Through reference to the strengths and weaknesses of other potential methodologies you will be able to illustrate an understanding of research

scenarios and the means of successfully enacting an appropriate method to investigate it.

#### 10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health consists of 180 credits with all contributing modules being 'core' and no optional modules. You will share some modules with students from other MSc courses taught within the Psychology Division, because of the overlapping aims and content of these courses. This also has the benefit of exposing you to a variety of views and experiences from across the student cohort. Specifically, you will study one module with the MRes/MSc Psychological Research Methods students and Forensic Mental Health Students (denoted below by \*). Other taught modules will only be provided on the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health, including the Specialist Essay module which is underpinned and supported by tutorials. You will also carry out either an empirical research project or a structured review that focuses on a topic of your choosing under the supervision of a research active member of staff.

In Term 1, all full time students complete one 10 credit module (Clinical Research Methods). You also commence five 20 credit modules which are then taught across both Terms 1 and 2. The modules and material covered in Term 1 lay the foundations for more advanced understandings to be developed in Term 2.

- Clinical Research Methods (10 credits)
- Assessment, Case formulation and Intervention (20 Credits, continuing in Term 2)
- Psychological Wellbeing (20 Credits, continuing in Term 2)
- Contemporary Issues in Mental Health (20 Credits, continuing in Term 2)
- Theory and Application to Mental Health (20 Credits, continuing in Term 2)
- Research & Professional Skills\* (20 Credits, continuing in Term 2)

In Term 2, all full time students continue the five 20 credit modules started in Term 1 but also complete another 10 credit module (Specialist Essay). The modules and material covered in Term 2 build on the learning established in Term 1.

- Psychological Wellbeing (20 Credits, continued from Term 1)
- Assessment, Case formulation and Treatment (20 Credits, continued from Term 1)
- Contemporary Issues in Mental Health (20 Credits, continued from Term 1)
- Theory and Application to Mental Health (20 Credits, continued from Term 1)
- Research & Professional Skills\* (20 Credits, continued in Term 1)
- Specialist Essay (10 Credits)

In order to complete the course with 180 credits, you must also complete an Independent Research Project or Dissertation (60 credits). This allows you the opportunity to carry out even an extended piece of empirical or theoretical research of your own design, under the supervision of an individual staff member who will guide you through the process.

Taught modules are completed across two 10-week terms, with classes normally scheduled from Wednesday – Friday (although this is subject to change – please contact the course leader to confirm). Term 3 onwards is for independent supervised study on the research project or dissertation. This focussed period of attendance is in recognition that many postgraduate students either live away from Nottingham, and so travel significant distance to attend, or complete the course in the context of existing familial or work-based commitments.

Part-time students on the course will divide the 180 credits over two years. This offers a degree of flexibility in order to offer an opportunity to people who wish to combine study and employment. The course team discuss this with students at induction and help organise their time appropriately across the two years.

#### **11. Admission to the course**

You will need an undergraduate degree (minimum 2.2) in Psychology or an allied discipline such as social science, nursing, health related practice or another recognised equivalent qualification.

Applicants without such qualifications will be considered on an individual basis but will be required to demonstrate how their experiences (for example working as a Nurse or Counsellor), their professional qualifications (such as RMN, RN) and / or knowledge would enable them to study this course at Masters-level in their Personal Statement.

The application form requires a written statement in which you should outline the reasons for wishing to undertake the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health course. We will be looking to ensure that you have a sound rationale for joining the course based on a realistic appreciation of the materials to be studied and the related practice areas.

For international students, if English is not your first language you need to show us that your language skills are strong enough for intensive academic study. We usually ask for an IELTS test and we accept some alternative English language tests.

#### **12. Support for Learning**

The teaching staff pride themselves on being an approachable and friendly team and the range of academic, pastoral and careers support offered to

students is a key feature of the MSc PWMH. We strongly encourage your participation and interaction in all modules and provide a dedicated fortnightly tutorial system to further support learning and encourage the development of transferrable skills. Tutorials are hour-long timetabled sessions where group size is typically eight to ten students. Tutorials are a mixture of planned and student-led sessions and are also used to support the 'Specialist Essay' in term 2. All course tutors are drawn from the lecturers on MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health. Building on these foundations, the MSc PWMH aims to foster a dynamic and supportive learning environment in which you become enthused about the academic study of psychology.

International students are able to arrange support sessions with the Psychology Division's International Student Support Officer. This is a member of staff who teaches on a variety of MSc courses within the Division and so is very familiar with the demands of these courses. Support sessions are also available specifically for students who don't have English as a first language, and these are conducted in collaboration with the Language Centre at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). These are also open to those students who good English language skills who may require support for getting used to employing discipline-specific language, so enabling them to cope with the demands of a psychology course. In addition, the study skills support is provided for those students that come from an educational environment that is very different to the UK Higher Education system.

Academic and pastoral support for students is provided in various ways, with a considerable amount of work being provided face-to-face or by email. Within the course, you will be assigned a personal tutor who will provide both pastoral and academic support throughout the year (within the Specialist Essay/tutorial module). In addition, all students are given a course handbook (via NOW) which contains detailed information related to the course, for example, module outlines, notification of exceptional circumstances, and grade based assessment information.

At induction you are provided with information from support services, for example the Students' Union, Student Welfare, accommodation, financial advice, the careers service, counselling, services to support learning (for example computer and IT resources), the Library and Learning Resources, the Learning Support Unit and you are also introduced to policies relating to health and safety, equal opportunities, harassment, codes of behaviour, assessment regulations, complaints, and appeals.

### **13. Graduate destinations / employability**

Nottingham Trent University provides many resources to students with regard to developing their employability following completion of their studies. The main university resource coordinates opportunities in both paid and voluntary employment, and arranges workshops and presentations throughout the year. In addition, the School of Social Sciences has

dedicated career consultants who can support you in planning your career, developing your CV, and reviewing applications, and will plan talks and events more tailored to social science students. The Division of Psychology has a team of academics with responsibility for further development of employability – including a dedicated postgraduate employability coordinator – who will ensure that psychology-specific opportunities and advice are available, and will provide specific information about careers in psychology through arranged events and individual conversations as appropriate.

A focus on practice areas relevant for employment is maintained throughout the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health. The course develops a range of transferable skills in students that are likely to appeal to a wide range of employers (including oral and written communication and presentation skills, effective planning and organisation, research and analytic skills, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and independence, use of IT and numeracy, and project management). Tutorials and one-to-one meetings with the Postgraduate Careers Coordinator are used to help you recognise where and how you have acquired skills such as these in order that you can best present yourself to future employers.

Employability skills are embedded throughout the modules taught on the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health but are also addressed explicitly in the Research and Professional Skills module, and the Theory and Application to Mental Health module. These modules run through terms 1 and 2 and provide you with a range of key research and dissemination skills necessary for the pursuit of an academic or professional career in psychology, as well as enabling you to solve real world problems faced by practitioners working in areas related to mental health.

These modules also teach you how best to present yourself and your work both to prospective employers and to funding bodies. In Term 2 in the Research and Professional Skills module students will develop a personal development plan and professional CV, including a reflection on the skills you have acquired throughout the course. In Term 2 of the Theory and Application to Mental Health module, students will work on a problematic issue provided by a real world relevant organisation (for example a mental health charity, hospital etc.). This will provide you with the opportunity to work on a real problem which the organisation faces and also to present your findings directly to that organisation. Not only will you benefit from developing contacts within the participating organisations but you will also advance your skills in presenting to potential employers, whilst still maintaining appropriate focus on theoretically grounded content.

The independent research project/dissertation is completed by you on the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health across the year, and in particular over the summer period. Opportunities may be available for you to conduct this project in collaboration with external organisations and in



settings outside of NTU. These collaborations may occur through particular contacts and associations available to the supervising member of staff or may be organised through contacts available to the student. Examples of past collaborative projects have included students working with schools, prisons, in healthcare settings, and with a range of voluntary caregiving organisations.

The majority of students graduating from the MSc Psychological Wellbeing and Mental Health are successful at gaining appropriate employment or progress to further study. Some students go on to pursue a range of professional careers in psychology through further specialist training, whilst others have progressed from the course to PhD study and an academic career. Some will go on develop careers in the highly competitive, high status psychology professions such as Clinical Psychology, for which this course provides a suitable foundation. You will receive support from the university's Careers Development Centre as well as Psychology's Postgraduate Careers Officer. The School of Social Sciences is active in organising careers events designed to support career planning and throughout the year the Psychology Division invite visiting speakers from different professions within psychology.

#### **14. Course standards and quality**

The quality management of the course has been developed in line with University regulations and guidelines. The course Committee (which has at least two meetings per year) oversees all quality management issues. At the first of these committee meetings, the Course Standards and Quality Report (CSQR) is presented. This is a report prepared by the members of the course management team which reflects on issues of standards and quality raised in the previous year. It also addresses feedback from external examiners and students.

The Psychology Division has a Teaching Committee which regularly addresses a range of learning and teaching issues in the context of our taught programmes.

External Examiners also play a crucial role in the quality management and enhancement of psychology provision. Their comments are invited at meetings of the Board of Examiners and their recommendations addressed through the Teaching and Course Committees.

One important aspect of quality control and enhancement operates at a local level through Module Leaders, who are encouraged to position themselves as 'reflective practitioners', critically evaluating the quality of their modules. They are required to write an annual report on their module, reflecting, on the basis of evidence, on its strengths and potential areas for development. Student feedback is part of the evidence that is used. Module Leaders' Reports have been praised by External Examiners as 'a model of good practice' and as 'refreshingly self-critical'.

Ongoing student feedback is also systematically sought via student representatives who formally report to the Course Committees and who

liaise more informally with Course and Deputy Course Leaders. Student feedback on specific modules is also sought continuously as part of a two way dialogue between staff and students. The Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Survey will be used to aid the course team's reflection on their overarching provision.

In addition a Postgraduate Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) has been created to further enhance communication between students and the teaching team. The aim of the SSCC is to enable student representatives from all postgraduate courses in psychology to meet and to discuss issues that their peers have raised. The expectation is that regular dialogue and discussion will help to inform practice in all aspects of subject provision.

**15. Assessment regulations**

There are no course specific exceptions from the University regulations

**16. Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s):	None
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	N/A
Course recognised by:	N/A
Date implemented:	<b>January 2020</b>
Any additional information:	