

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: | BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology)
BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology) (SW) |
| 4. | Normal Duration: | 3 years for
BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology)

4 years for
BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology) (SW) |
| 5. | UCAS Code: | C800 for FT / C801 for SW (work placement) |

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The BSc (Hons) Psychology course is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS), the main professional body for psychology in the UK, as conferring eligibility for Graduate Membership of the Society with the Graduate Basis for Chartership, provided you achieve the minimum standard of qualification of second class honours and passing the final year research project. Accreditation holds for all varieties of BSc (Hons) Psychology offered.

The course aims to produce graduates who:

1. Are skilled and competent psychologists, in both theory and research;
2. Have developed a range of transferable intellectual and personal skills; including independent learning skills, skills of critical evaluation, oral and written presentation skills, group work skills, ICT skills;
3. Are able to apply knowledge of psychological theory;
4. Have competence in the use of empirical techniques of investigation relevant to the study of psychology;
5. Have developed their own knowledge, values, understanding and skills in order to enhance their employment prospects.

The aims and learning outcomes of the course are consistent with the national qualifications framework, and with subject specific psychology benchmarking. The BPS and external examiners have repeatedly commended the course on its standards and quality, including the sound, broad and balanced curriculum, which is regularly renewed and updated; the imaginative and innovative forms of assessment that are used; the e-resources that are available to students; the strong recruitment to the programme from high quality applicants; the way in which staff research

informs the curriculum; and the approachability and responsiveness of staff.

The psychology course is designed to provide you with a thorough grounding in basic knowledge, skills, and understanding in psychology at levels four and five, including biological psychology, cognitive psychology, individual differences, developmental psychology, and social psychology.

Thereafter a distinctive aspect of the provision is the balance between diversity of choice and opportunities for specialisation that you have at level six with regard to option modules in your final year. These modules are strongly related to the diverse areas of research expertise that are represented within the psychology department (for example, addiction, health psychology, psychiatric disorders, offending behaviour, criminal justice, language development and developmental disorders, visual cognition, social and personal relationships).

The course also provides you with a rigorous training in research methods and has a substantial practical component throughout the three years of teaching. Designing and running research studies as well as data analysis and interpretation are all part of your learning experience. Not only are these skills used for your final year research project, but also proficiency in this area can be crucial for postgraduate development and future employability.

The BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology) is specialised variant of a Psychology degree, with modules in Level 4 and 5 tailored towards a Forensic Psychology emphasis and in Level 6 a focus on our psychological understanding and response to offending behaviour, encompassing the police, the courts, the prison system and offenders.

The course is designed to provide an excellent preparation for the set of MSc courses that the Psychology Department offers.

You have the option of integrating studies abroad with your degree by expanding the three year course into a four year sandwich course (SW). Between levels five and six, you can decide to use NTU's exchange schemes to study in another country for a year. Studying abroad typically takes place under the Erasmus scheme at European partner universities and results in an Erasmus certificate in addition to the sandwich degree title. Other options for studying abroad are also possible. Strong and active support for managing a year abroad is provided directly by NTU Psychology. More information can be found in the section on course structure. All students who use a study abroad option start out on the full time version of the course (UCAS code C800).

It is also possible to apply directly onto a four year sandwich course in which you will undertake a work placement between levels five and six. Note that a sandwich course that includes a work placement requires direct

entry (UCAS code C801). Strong and active support for managing a work placement is provided directly by NTU Psychology. More information can be found in the section on course structure.

Further training in psychology after your undergraduate degree can lead to Chartered Psychologist status. About a third of psychology graduates (nationally) who go into permanent employment as psychologists enter public services such as the health service, education, the Civil Service and the Armed Forces, and a third go into industry or commerce. Of the remainder, about a tenth teach and research in schools, colleges and universities. Around 15-20% of psychology graduates end up working as professional psychologists according to BPS figures. Graduates who do not enter psychology as a profession are well equipped with a rounded set of key transferable skills.

The degree caters for both students who wish to become professional psychologists and those who wish to pursue other careers. Throughout the course you will receive training on a range of skills that will appeal to employers, such as training in research methods, numeracy training in statistics, as well as gain experience developing and critically analysing ideas and arguments in written form or oral presentations. During the first two years we will also encourage you to reflect on your skills and potential career paths to enable you to shape your university experience and development appropriately. In addition, in your final year you will gain work related experience through our Work Based Psychology Practice module. In the Work Based Psychological Practice module students undertake a short work placement and consider how psychological theory and practice can be applied to work-based settings. The course therefore will give you a set of skills and experiences that we believe will benefit you in your future careers. Importantly, across all three years you will be supported in your development by a comprehensive tutorial system

Throughout the degree the University Careers Centre provide a range of employment related initiatives, and in addition to this NTU Psychology organises careers talks and events. The department has numerous long-standing links with employers and external organisations, ranging from prisons to charities and emergency services that we make use of during the delivery of the course.

The course also has a strong international perspective. During the degree you will discuss psychological theories and ideas that have been developed in different places around the world at different times. Where appropriate, modules will also take international perspectives and consider how behaviour differs between different countries and cultures. Our students and staff also come from a variety of backgrounds and the perspectives that our international students and staff bring to the course are valued and feed into the curriculum's international perspective.

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:

The general outcomes for BSc (Hons) Psychology apply to all versions of the course.

1. Critically evaluate psychological theories and psychological evidence within the core knowledge domains of psychology.
2. Critically evaluate current issues in psychology and core psychological debates
 - a. *For BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology):* with particular reference to forensic psychology.
3. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the applications of psychology
 - a. *For BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology):* with particular reference to forensic psychology.
4. Critically reflect on the relations between psychology and related disciplines and the integration within psychology across different perspectives.
5. Critically evaluate the scientific method and empirical methodology within psychology.
6. Critically evaluate the role of brain function in human behaviour and experience.
7. Critically reflect on the social context and the conceptual and historical perspectives in psychology, taking into account the international setting of the discipline.
8. Critically evaluate the role psychology plays in engaging with organisations and wider society.

All course outcomes in this section have a specific reference to the QA Psychology Benchmark Statements.

Skills, qualities and attributes

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

The general outcomes for BSc (Hons) Psychology apply to all versions of the course.

1. Apply multiple perspectives to psychological issues outside an academic context, including organisational contexts, in order to make practice-based recommendations
 - a. *For BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology):* with particular reference to forensic psychology.
2. Apply an evidence-based approach to critically evaluate patterns of behaviour, psychological functioning, and experience, taking into account distinctive psychological approaches and the international setting of the discipline
 - a. *For BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology):* with particular reference to forensic psychology.
3. Critically appraise a range of resources, including primary research papers, and retrieve and organise information effectively.

4. Make critical judgements and evaluations using evidence-based reasoning to present and evaluate research.
5. Apply scientific method and formulate relevant research questions in psychology.
6. Carry out empirical studies involving a variety of methods of data collection and appreciate the practical, theoretical, and ethical issues related to different methodologies.
7. Carry out data analysis using both qualitative and quantitative methods.
8. Demonstrate high levels of teamwork.

All course outcomes in this section have a specific reference to the QA Psychology Benchmark Statements.

8. **Teaching and Learning Methods**

A variety of teaching and learning approaches are used to support you in your development of subject-specific knowledge and understanding and transferable skills. The pattern of teaching and learning methods across the three levels reflects the principles of progression and development outlined below. As you progress through the course you are encouraged to become increasingly responsible for your own learning and you are expected at level six to develop independence and autonomy with respect to learning, thinking and research. This is an important skill to develop for future employability or postgraduate study.

For about two thirds of the modules in Levels 4 and 5, your learning is focussed around lectures and tutorials. Lectures develop your subject knowledge and understanding. Tutorials provide the opportunity to develop both subject knowledge and a range of transferable skills. The tutorial system extends over all three levels, or years, of taught studies on the course. In Level 4, tutorials focus on a range of study skills which prepare you for the kind of academic work you need to do successfully in order to complete your degree. In Level 5, your academic tutorials offer practical support for the assessments in your core modules as well as helping you to develop your own interests in psychology, which you will then pursue in the final year of your studies (Level 6). At Level 6, tutorials take into account your increased independence and specialisation as well as your ambitions after graduation. Final year tutors support you in your final year project and offer practical guidance and support related to your future employment prospects.

About a third of Level 4 and 5 is taken up by research methods and statistics classes. These are partly preparation for your final year independent project. In these classes in Level 4 basic skills of doing and reporting empirical work. In Level 5, a similar model is used but you will have more responsibility for certain aspects of the tasks you are expected to undertake. You will also learn to work effectively in teams and have the opportunity to practise making informal presentations.

In terms of the Forensic Psychology specialism, a Level 4 module on Psychology in Context explores the academic and professional context of psychology, with a particular focus on Forensic Psychology. At Level 5 a

Critical Thinking in Forensic Psychology provides you with the opportunity for discussion and debate on key issues in the field. Further specialisation takes place in the final year where most modules will be related to the specialism. Levels 4 and 5 are designed to provide you with a thorough grounding in all core areas of psychology, you then have the option of taking a year to study in another country before moving straight into the final course year. Students on a work placement sandwich course will have a work placement year before moving into the final year of study.

The final year modules vary greatly in terms of teaching and learning methods as appropriate to the subject matter and the skills required for success. Some modules are lecture-based while others involve working in groups or individually. An important part of the final year is the research project in which you undertake a substantial piece of empirical work. An apprenticeship approach is taken in supervising students on these projects, so you develop your research skills in a supportive and carefully directed environment. All modules in this year are characterised by their close alignment with the professional and research expertise of staff members.

Throughout your degree the course team actively encourage you to work with your peers to ask questions, solve problems and make suggestions. There are both formal and informal opportunities within the curriculum for this to happen. This experience of working with others to reflect on your own learning not only is important for successful completion of the degree, but also has positive outcomes when you apply for jobs and pursue careers.

An additional tool used by the teaching team is NOW (the Virtual Learning Environment). Staff members use NOW not only to provide supplementary information to lectures, and tutorials, but also to point students to useful topics for discussion and questioning.

The psychology department's 'Teaching and Learning Committee' oversees strategies and systems related to issues of teaching, learning and assessment across all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Discussion of issues by this committee is informed by discussion and decisions made at the School level through the School's Teaching and Learning Committee.

9. **Assessment Methods**

The course makes use of a variety of assessment practices across its modules including written examinations, online multiple-choice tests, a range of different kinds of essays, oral presentations, laboratory reports, research projects, and poster presentations. This range of assessment tools has been highlighted by the BPS Accreditation Committee and by External Examiners as one of the strengths of the course.

The design of the assessment tasks follows the following principles:

1. Patterns of assessment are carefully planned both within individual levels and across the whole course, such that you have opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychology and a range of specific transferable skills throughout the course.
2. The type of assessment selected for each module is appropriate to the level and learning outcomes of that module and preparation for these assessment tasks is developmental. For example, multiple choice assessments and examinations are used earlier in the programme to test your knowledge and understanding of the discipline. Coursework at Level 4 enables you to develop a range of academic skills that will be important to you in Level 5 and 6. In contrast, examinations and coursework at Level 6 provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate fully your skills in presenting a well-structured argument, synthesising information from a range of sources and critically evaluating evidence. For the final year, you will have developed skills and other attributes which enable you also to succeed on more demanding assessment tasks such as oral presentations and your final year project.
3. Criteria for assessment tasks are made clear to you and follow a developmental progression through the three years of teaching.

You will receive feedback on your progress and development during the year as well as at the end of each year. In Levels 3 and 5 this comes regularly during the year via the tutorial modules and research methods modules. In Level 6, you receive formative feedback during the year about your progress from module leaders.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The BSc (Hons) Psychology (Forensic Psychology) course is studied on a full-time basis. The curriculum is structured around the following guiding principles:

Level 4: Foundation - you acquire a sound, descriptive knowledge of basic concepts of psychology. Most learning is directed, with a limited amount of self-directed learning. A key strand of modules provides the opportunity for you to develop, and be assessed in, academic and transferable skills within supportive small groups. Here you will be given individual feedback about your progress.

Level 5: Development and application - analytical skills are developed in the application of basic principles of psychology to the study of human behaviour. You are expected to accept a greater level of responsibility for your learning. As in level four, you will get individual feedback about your progress through the strand of small group teaching you receive.

Level 6: Critical evaluation and analysis - you develop, at a deeper, more critically aware level, knowledge of the discipline and the ability to evaluate

arguments and assumptions. Self-directed learning and autonomy (with respect to research and the consultation of primary sources) is expected.

Students who do not progress to the final stage may receive a Certificate of Higher Education (Level 4), Diploma of Higher Education (Levels 4 and 5) or an Ordinary Degree (Levels 4 and 5 and 60 credits at Level 6).

Course outcomes are consistent with QAA subject specific benchmarking in psychology and the standards set by the British Psychological Society. When you graduate you will possess a range of transferable skills which will put you in a strong position for the world of work.

All modules in Levels 4 and 5 are compulsory. These are as follows:

Level 4

Psychology Tutorials (20 credits)

These tutorials aim to develop your academic skills, including in critical thinking, evaluating psychological research, research, debating and presenting.

Psychology in Context (Forensic Psychology) (20 credits)

This module examines the diversity of psychology within its current academic and professional context with an emphasis on (but not limited to) Forensic Psychology

Research Methods 1 (20 credits)

A suite of laboratory practicals that provides hands-on training for a range of psychological research approaches.

Statistics 1 (20 credits)

Provides the understanding necessary to carry out quantitative data analysis.

Cognitive and Biological Psychology 1 (20 credits)

Addresses the questions: How do humans think? What are the biological underpinnings of human thought and behaviour?

Social and Developmental Psychology 1 (20 credits)

Addresses the questions: How do humans behave in context? How do we change during the course of our lives?

Level 5

Research Methods and Statistics 2 (40 credits)

Similar to level 4, laboratory practicals and data analytical techniques continue at an advanced level.

Cognitive and Biological Psychology 2 (20 credits)

An in-depth treatment of the areas, linking back to level 4 content as well as covering new topics.

Social and Developmental Psychology 2 (20 credits)

An in-depth treatment of the areas, linking back to level 4 content as well as covering new topics.

Individual Differences and Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology (20 credits)

Addresses the questions: How does personality explain human behaviour? What are the wider debates surrounding psychology and its history?

Critical Thinking in Forensic Psychology (20 credits)

In-depth discussions of current issues in specific areas of psychology.

Opportunities in between Levels 5 and 6

With Levels 4 and 5 designed to provide you with a thorough grounding in all core areas of psychology, you then have the option of taking a year to study in another country (turning your full time, FT, degree into a sandwich, SW, degree). Alternatively, if you started out on the SW degree, you would be expected to take up a work placement instead of moving straight into the final course year.

You will receive strong support from NTU Psychology for plans to study abroad for a full year. The department has exchange agreements in place with European partner institutions under the Erasmus scheme. The scheme allows to study in another country for a year, and afterwards to return to your studies at NTU for a final year. In consequence, your degree title will be BSc (Hons) Psychology (SW). The awarding classification will be based on three years of NTU modules. In addition, students will receive an Erasmus certificate. Exchanges are overseen by the department's own internationalisation officer and are further supported by the university's Erasmus Office. Possibilities for non-EU studies also exist.

Going on a year-long work placement will lead to the degree title BSc (Hons) Psychology (SW). Placements follow NTU regulations to ensure quality standards and appropriate links with Psychology during the placement year. Placements last for a minimum of 36 weeks and a maximum of 48 weeks and would normally pay at least the minimum wage. It will be your responsibility to secure a placement. For this, you will receive support from the Placement Co-ordinator in Psychology and from the university's Careers and Placements Team.

Note that preparations for studying abroad and a year-long placement are both time consuming and require a sufficiently long planning stage. You will receive timely information during the first year of your studies to guide you through the process. Numbers are limited for study abroad options, and details of the selection procedure will be made clear to you well in advance. Work placements require a direct entry (UCAS code C801).

Level 6

At level 6, the main specialisation takes place. Two thirds of the credits at this level are directly related to your area of specialisation. This includes your research project and two more modules taken from the catalogue of

option modules. You still have free choice over one option module which can be unrelated to your pathway.

Research Project in Forensic Psychology (40 credits)

Your own, personally supervised, year-long project, leading to a dissertation

Work Based Psychology Practice (20 credits)

This considers how psychological theory and practice can be applied to work-based settings. Students develop the skills and knowledge that characterise professional psychologists within a range of work roles and domains. Part of the module includes a short (currently 40 hr) work based placement

Two pathway-specific modules (20 credits each)

Modules currently on offer include: Criminological Psychology and then either Psychopathology and Offending Behaviour or The Psychology of Sex Offending

One optional module from Set B (20 credits)

Availability of optional modules may change from year to year depending on staff availability

The full catalogue of optional modules currently OFFERED in Set B includes:

SET B

Biological Perspectives on Psychiatric Disorders

Community, Health and Applied Social Psychology

Evolutionary Psychology

Infant Development

Person Perception

Psychology, Educational Needs and Inclusion

Psychology of the Paranormal

Psychology of the Family

Statistics III: Advanced Statistics for Research

The Psychology of Sleep

The Psychology of Aging and Neurodegenerative disease

Black and Cultural Psychology

11. Admission to the course

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the `Applying' tab on the course information web page.

12. Support for Learning

Academic and pastoral support is provided in various ways in addition to the mechanisms described above, with considerable amount of work being done face-to-face or by email. Within the course, each year you are assigned a personal tutor who will provide both pastoral and academic support. At Level 4 you will meet your tutor at an induction event organised

on arrival. The events throughout induction week also provide the opportunity to meet a range of other teaching staff and receive information about:

1. Services to support students, for example the Students' Union, Student Welfare, accommodation, financial advice, the Careers Service, counselling
2. Services to support learning, for example computer and IT resource services, the Library and Learning Resources, the Learning Support Unit
3. Policies relating to health and safety, equal opportunities, harassment, codes of behaviour, assessment regulations, complaints and appeals

At the beginning of the course you will receive a Course Handbook. This handbook provides a range of information about studying psychology at Nottingham Trent University. Specifically the handbook includes:

1. The programme structure and assessment details
2. Module descriptions
3. Information relating to your responsibilities as a student including information about academic misconduct, attendance and student behaviour
4. Information about how to inform us if you have special situations which you feel might have an effect on your work at university
5. Details about how to contact members of staff
6. Information on BPS requirements and accreditation

The University, the School of Social Sciences and its Departments will ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are provided for the course. All students will have access to the University's library and computer facilities. On-line teaching and learning resources are updated frequently by the dedicated Social Science Librarian. The School also has a number of learning resource rooms with ICT equipment and technicians. In addition, all modules use the University's NOW to provide on-line resources to support other modes of teaching and learning.

13. **Graduate destinations / employability**

The degree provides eligibility for graduate membership of the British Psychological Society with the Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC) provided the minimum standard of qualification of second class honours is achieved and the final year research project is passed. As well as this the study of psychology will enable you to develop a wide range of analytical abilities, a proficiency in research methods and analysis, as well as good written and verbal communication skills.

The majority of students graduating with a degree in psychology from Nottingham Trent University are successful at gaining employment. Some graduates have broken into the highly competitive, high status psychology professions (such as Clinical Psychology and Forensic Psychology). Several

students each year go on to pursue a range of professional careers in psychology following further training. A number of our graduates are now either career researchers or academics working in the subject area of psychology in higher education. The skills and knowledge acquired during the programme are also suited for careers in, for example, research, social and youth work, advertising and marketing, human resources and teaching.

If you have applied for the four year course you will be expected to take a psychology-related placement between Level 5 and 6 of your studies. This is a year-long placement lasting a minimum of 32 weeks and a maximum of 48 weeks and would normally pay at least the minimum wage. Organising your placement will be your responsibility, but you will receive considerable support from the university careers and placements team as well as the designated psychology placement co-ordinator.

All our students receive support from the University's Careers Service who put on careers events throughout the year, provide careers guidance and develop initiatives that give students the chance to develop work related skills. In addition, the Psychology Department holds careers events during the year that include visiting speakers representing the main psychology career paths, general graduate employment and volunteering organisations. For this, the Department also makes use of established links with employers and external organisations, ranging from prisons to charities and emergency services. Students also have tutor led support throughout the degree in examining the skills that employers are looking for and reflecting on progress with such employability skills.

14. **Course standards and quality**

The quality management of the psychology course has developed in line with University regulations and guidelines. The Course Committee which meets once a term oversees all quality management issues. Each year an Interim Course Report and Course Development Plan is prepared. This is a report prepared by the members of the course management team throughout the year which reflects on issues of standards and quality raised. The Psychology Department also has a Teaching and Learning Committee which addresses a range of learning, teaching and assessment issues.

External Examiners 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 Learning Committee and the Course Committee. External Examiners have commended the motivation of the course team to respond to their recommendations and to enhance the provision on the course.

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 from each year of the course who formally report to the Course Committee and who liaise more informally with Course and Deputy Course Leaders.

In addition a Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) operates to further enhance communication between students and the teaching team. The aim of the SSCC is to enable student representatives from all year groups and across all programmes in psychology to meet and to discuss issues that their peers have raised. The expectation is that regular dialogue and discussion helps to inform practice in all aspects of subject provision. Issues raised by the SSCC are taken seriously by the course team and feedback from students about this process is very positive.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#)). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

There are no programme specific exceptions from the University regulations.

16. Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s):	None
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	Psychology
Course recognised by:	British Psychological Society
Date implemented:	March 2018
Any additional information:	