Birkbeck
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Programme Specification

1	**Awarding body**	University of London
2	**Teaching Institution**	**Birkbeck College**
3	**Programme Title(s)**	**MRes Psychology**
4	**Programme Code(s)**	TMRPSYCH_C
5	**UCAS code**	N/A
6	**Home Department**	Psychological Sciences
7	**Exit Award(s)**	N/A
8	**Duration of Study** (number of years)	1 year FT, 2 years PT

9	**Mode of Study**	FT	✓	PT	✓	DL	

10	**Level of Award (FHEQ)**	7
11	**Other teaching depts or institution**	N/A
12	**Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details**	N/A
13	**QAA Benchmark Group**	N/A

14	**Programme Rationale & Aims**

Main Aims:

The course aims to provide students with a range of specific and generic transferable skills necessary for conducting research at PhD level within a major area of contemporary psychology. These skills include:

- critically appreciating existing research and research methods
- formulating research questions and hypotheses
- conducting literature reviews
- designing and reporting experiments using one or both of quantitative and qualitative methods and
- general and subject specific IT skills

The course also aims to provide students with research experience through an extended supervised research project

Distinctive Features

- Combines Birkbeck's strengths in qualitative and quantitative psychological research methods
- Face-to-face teaching, with a part-time option
- The majority of taught Masters emphasise the teaching of a range of research methods. In contrast, the current programme emphasises the research component, allowing students to experience in-depth focussed research comparable to that undertaken in a PhD programme. It is ideally suited for students who already have a

range of research method skills but want to undertake a focussed research project of shorter duration than a full MPhil/PhD. This is unique in psychology within the University of London.

- Particularly attractive to students wanting in-depth research experience but unable to commit to more than 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time study.

15	**Entry Criteria**

A second-class honours degree (2:2) or above in psychology or a relevant discipline.. In addition, they will normally be expected to have *already obtained* a range of advanced research methods skills relevant to research psychology through their prior postgraduate level training or work experience.

It is expected that some students, especially non-UK students, may enter into the MRes programme with the intention of transferring into the MPhil/PhD programme prior to completing the MRes. Thus, the ability or potential to carry out in-depth research, as well as the availability of suitable long-term supervision will be important considerations in deciding on admission.

Students registered on the School of Psychology MPhil/PhD programme may apply to transfer into the MRes programme. Such students will need to have completed or show the potential to complete all of the required MRes modules.

16	**Learning Outcomes**

To gain the qualification the student will have demonstrated the following skills specified in the learning outcomes for approved modules in the programme and for the programme as a whole:

Subject Specific:
1. Practical knowledge of all phases of developing, conducting and reporting a research project
2. Understanding of conventions in psychological report writing and the purpose of each section within a research report
3. Understanding and being able to evaluate the logical flow of a scientific research project
4. Understanding the relation between research questions and research methodologies
5. An understanding of a range of research designs and the conditions under which each is appropriate
6. Familiarity with psychological experimental software (e.g. E-Prime, N6, Nvivo) as relevant to their chosen domain of research
7. Knowledge of a range of statistical procedures and/or qualitative research methodologies, the conditions under which they may reasonably be applied, and how to interpret the results of the procedures as relevant to their chosen domain of research
8. Understanding the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society and ramifications of ethical practice

Intellectual
9. A critical appreciation of contemporary research and research methodologies as relevant

to their chosen domain of research
10. Understanding alternative ways of addressing a research question and how to advance reported research
11. Critical thinking skills in relation to
• presenting and critiquing an argument
• reviewing and assimilating existing topic-specific literature and formulating a research question
12. An ability to apply research methodologies to wider work/life situations
13. The ability to formulate and test hypotheses
14. An ability to study a problem in-depth
15. Logical thinking (e.g. in relation to hypothesis testing)
16. Evaluation skills

Practical
17. Enhanced essay and report writing
18. Enhanced numeracy in relation to understanding numerical data s relevant to their domain to research
19. General IT skills (use of web browsers, email, Word, PowerPoint, EndNote)
20. Subject specific IT skills (e.g. familiarity with SPSS, E-Prime)
21. Ability to conduct literature reviews using electronic search tools, electronic journals and databases (PsycInfo)
22. Ability to summarise and assess contemporary research succinctly.
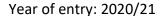An ability to file for ethical approval of research projects
23. An ability to apply a range of research methods to specific research questions
24. Data collection and analysis skills
25. Ability to present data in a meaningful way, and to transform it into different presentational formats
26. Planning and organisational skills

Personal and Social
27. Ability to work independently
28. To effectively plan and organise a substantive, medium-term, project
29. Time management skills
30. To communicate effectively through both written reports and verbal presentations
31. An enhanced ability to appreciate (and formulate) a structured argument
32. An understanding of the relevance of scientific research as reported in the media to everyday questions
33. An increased awareness of ethical issues and ethical practice
34. The ability to manage self-directed learning activities

17	**Learning, teaching and assessment methods**
	The course includes a lecture and seminar based module, a tutorial and bibliographic-based module and a supervised project. The teaching styles will be matched to the content. Teaching of the first module will have small class sizes (10-20) to encourage student participation. The two later modules will involve individual tuition from the supervisor and course director tailored to the student's domain of research.

A first module (Generic Research Skills) will involve small group learning. Students will join the MSc in Psychological Research Methods and MPhil students in attending a lecture-based generic skills course that is already in place.

A second module (Critical Review of Research Methods) will involve one-to-one supervision with both the project supervisor and the course director. The students will have an opportunity to practice their bibliographic, essay writing, and critical analysis skills through writing a critical review of contemporary research method relevant to their chosen project.

A third module (Research Ethics) will involve one-to-one supervision with the project supervisor. The student will be required to reflect on the ethical implications of their research. In conjunction with the lessons on ethics received in the Generic Skills Module, they will be required to complete, submit and have approved by the departmental ethics committee and application for ethical approval of their proposed research. Approval by the committee will result in a pass mark.

The supervised research project will be carried out under the supervision of a member of academic staff with research interests in the area of the project. This will provide students with access to a specialist in their project area who can provide expert advice on all aspects of the research. The project will also ensure that taught skills are exercised within a constructive environment during the course.

Assessment procedures will ensure that students develop a small portfolio of work over the duration of the programme, and feedback on coursework required for some of the modules will encourage personal development.
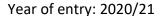
18	**Programme Description**
	The MRes Psychology comprises 2 compulsory modules of 15 credits each, 1 compulsory module of 30 credits plus a 120 credit Dissertation, totalling 180 credits. The programme may be completed in one year of full-time study, or through part-time study over two years.

19	**Programme Structure**

Full-Time programme – 1 year

Year 1

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC023S7	Critical Review of Research Methodologies	30	Compulsory
7	PSYC109H7	Research Ethics	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC024Q7	Dissertation MRes Psychology	120	Compulsory

		Part-Time programme – 2 years		
Year 1				
Level	**Module Code**	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Status***
7	PSYC062H7	Generic Research Skills	15	Compulsory
7	PSYC023S7	Critical Review of Research Methodologies	30	Compulsory
7	PSYC109H7	Research Ethics	15	Compulsory
Year 2				
Level	**Module Code**	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Status***
7	PSYC024Q7	Dissertation MRes Psychology	120	Compulsory

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module

20	**Regulations**
	Admissions This programme adheres to the College Admissions Policy: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/admissions-policy.pdf ***Credit Transfer*** Accredited Prior Learning will be considered in line with the College Policy on Accredited Prior Learning http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/accreditation-prior-learning.pdf ***Programme Regulations*** This programme adheres to the College Common Awards Scheme http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/regulations ***Programme Specific Regulations (or not applicable)*** N/A

21	**Student Attendance Framework – in brief**
	The full version of the 'Student Attendance Framework' is available on the college website. **Principle** Consistent and regular student attendance in class (or equivalent) promotes and affords student success. Inconsistent and irregular attendance is less likely to result in student success and is consistent with lower marks and degree classifications being achieved and awarded. **Attendance expectation**

Birkbeck, University of London expects you to consistently attend all timetabled sessions, including lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorials, learning support sessions, workshops, laboratories, field trips, inductions and demonstrations.

E-Registers

All Birkbeck students are issued with student cards. Students are expected to take them to classes and to assessment venues and to present them to a member of staff if requested. This is for the purpose of identifying Birkbeck students.

22	**Student Support and Guidance**
	All Birkbeck students have access to a range of student support services, details can be found on our website here: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities

23	**Methods of Enhancing Quality and Standards**
	The College has rigorous procedures in place for the monitoring and enhancing its educational provision. This includes regular monitoring of programmes drawing on feedback from various sources including external examiner's reports, student feedback, student achievement and progression data. In addition, departments are reviewed every four to five years through the internal review process that includes external input.
	For more information please see the Academic Standards and Quality website http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/about-us/operations-and-quality .

24	**Programme Director**	Prof. Denis Mareschal
25	**Start Date** *(term/year)*	October 2004
26	**Date approved by TQEC**	Spring 2004
27	**Date approved by Academic Board**	Summer 2004
28	**Date(s) updated/amended**	5 May 2015