

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Professional Doctorate Occupational Psychology (DOccPsy) <i>with provisional enrolment on</i> MRes Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology (Level 8 – Doctorate /Level 7 – MRes)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	MRes Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology PG Dip Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology PG Cert Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Business School
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time (3 years minimum – 5 years maximum) January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	British Psychological Society Health and Care Professions Council (MRes Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology only): (hcpc-uk.org)
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	RMROCCPS - MRes RDPOCCPS– Professional Doctorate
HECoS Code	100950 occupational psychology
Start date of programme	2019/20
Date of programme approval	Spring 2019
Date of last programme amendment approval	December 2022
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Programme Director	Rachel Lewis/ Joanna Yarker
Date of last revision to document	01/12/22

Admissions requirements

Students admitted to this course will hold a Graduate Basis for Chartership and an Accredited Masters degree in Organizational/ Occupational and/or Business Psychology (at Merit or above). This ensures that students have a high level of skills in research methods upon entry. All students will be in relevant employment and able to apply their learning to the workplace as an integral part of the programme. They will be competent in their use of written and spoken English and have good social and communication skills.

Students entering the programme who have already completed Stage Two of the BPS Chartership process (and are therefore, or are eligible to be, both Chartered and hold Registered Psychologist status with the HCPC) will be exempt from Part One (Professional Practice Portfolio) which includes 6 modules at Level 7.

Selection to the course will be through completion of an application form, and a face to face or telephone interview. The interview is a process of mutual selection: for applicants to discuss how the course meets their needs and the course team to judge their suitability for the course.

Course aims

Birkbeck has always had a prominent role as it had the first Organisational Psychology department and the first MSc in the field. In fact, Birkbeck's modular structure was responsible for the 'areas of competence' which has underpinned the standards for MSc and post MSc training. The practice of psychology at work has changed fundamentally over the last 20 years, as large 'occupational psychology' units or departments have become defunct, paralleled by a growth in independent and smaller scale consultancy practices. The work of practitioners and researchers is diverse, including leadership development, change management, training and development, assessment and selection, psychometric testing, well being, risk management or 'big data' analysis. There are varied and growing employment opportunities within large organisations, large and small consultancies, government departments, the NHS, as well as across training, coaching, behavioural science and data analytics.

The prerequisite for training in occupational psychology (OP) is a society accredited BSc in Psychology (HE6), which remains one of the most popular degree choices offered by 137 providers including Birkbeck. The next step is a society accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology, which is stage 1 of training at HE7, Birkbeck offers the largest and most successful of its kind. Individuals with a society accredited first degree, or a conversion degree, can then elect to study further at post MSc level and complete a 'stage 2' qualification to be able to apply for registration with Health and Care Professions Council which confers the title "practitioner Occupational psychologist"; and the British Psychological Society (BPS) to obtain eligibility for Chartered status'.

The Professional Doctorate in Occupational Psychology aims to:

- Enhance students' knowledge and understanding of Occupational Psychology, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.
- Develop students' critical awareness and ability to synthesise ideas.
- Develop students' ability to critically reflect on, and develop, practice in core areas of expertise and across the consultancy cycle.
- Develop students' abilities to design, conduct, evaluate and present research of a doctoral standard.

- Enable students to communicate and disseminate work appropriately in a range of different written and oral formats, tailoring the information accordingly to achieve impact.
- Enable students (with a previous accredited Psychology undergraduate degree) to obtain Stage Two of the BPS route for Chartered Psychologist (CPsychol) and to obtain HCPC accreditation to become a Registered Psychologist.
- Enable students to obtain a Professional Doctorate in Occupational Psychology.
- Enhance employability in the area of occupational psychology and wider professional industry.
- Provide an international qualification in Occupational Psychology, which would be highly relevant our student population (note the BPS qualification is UK specific)
- Foster a research-led approach to practice and encourage life-long learning and the continual engagement of practitioners in reporting and disseminating their work to the wider audience.

Course Description and Structure

The professional doctorate in organizational psychology offered by the Department of Organizational Psychology is available to students, to complete within 3 -5 years (except those who are already Chartered and Registered Occupational Psychologists who will be exempt from Part One of the doctorate). All students will be in related employment to enable them to apply their learnings directly in the workplace and use their work experience to inform their research. The programme is comprised of two stages: Part One focuses on Professional Practice and Part Two focuses on Research.

The first part of the programme, the MRes in Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology, can be completed on a full-time or part-time basis. The full-time MRes is estimated to take one year, the part-time MRes is estimated to take two years. The decision-making process for full-time or part-time mode of study will depend upon: access to appropriate practice based learning opportunities, autonomy in role to select practice-based learning opportunities and maximise time spent on appropriate skill development in alignment with the Standards of Proficiency outlined by the HCPC and Standards of Practice as outlined by the BPS and client management experience. We recommend the full-time route only for those who have been working in the field for a number of years and are returning to study while the part-time route is suitable for those who have completed their MSc more recently. Programme directors will discuss the most appropriate mode of study with you at interview.

The programme aims to develop professional competence with a focus on evidence-based practice. Weekend masterclasses will incorporate taught components, aim to develop reflexive practice, and provide advanced professional education building on their previous qualification in Occupational Psychology. The first two years establish the platform for the student to engage in independent practice.

Given that the student satisfactorily completes their assessments on the MRes in Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology and makes good progress, they will proceed to the second part of the qualification. If they are successful in the Research Planning and Preparation stage, they will be upgraded to the doctoral route.

Those students who choose not to progress to the professional doctorate will be awarded an MRes in Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology if their performance justifies such an award. The MRes is awarded on a **Pass/Fail** basis. In exceptional circumstances, students may be allowed to resit assessments. Students who exit with an award of MRes in Professional Practice in Occupational Psychology (and have GBC meaning an accredited undergraduate

degree in Psychology) will be eligible to apply for Registered Occupational Psychologist status with the HCPC.

The second part of the programme, the Research Thesis, is available in part time mode only. estimated to take two to three years. It aims to develop advanced research expertise. Students will initially complete a research planning and preparation stage to include a summary of a completed literature review (usually systematic), a reflective essay, a full research proposal and a verbal presentation. This will need to be passed to progress to the research thesis stage of the doctorate. The doctorate then includes a research thesis where students include the full literature review and a full empirical study, and a reflective process report. Students will be given the opportunity to undertake a 360 degree feedback assessment as part of the reflective process. Students will be encouraged to aim for publication of both the literature review and empirical study in peer reviewed journals.

At the end of their fourth/fifth year, students will submit a 40 – 50,000 word research thesis and that will be assessed by viva voce examination as the basis for the award of the Doctorate in Organizational Psychology. Following successful completion of part 1 of the Doctorate in Organizational Psychology students who have GBC (already hold an accredited undergraduate degree in Psychology) will be eligible to apply for Registered Practitioner Psychologist (Occupational) status with the HCPC. Once they have completed part 2 they will be eligible for Chartered Status and full Membership of the Division of Occupational Psychology.

It is intended that the student’s research will meet two criteria: relevance to their current or prospective career and advancing knowledge and practice in the domain of Organizational Psychology.

Students will be supervised by appropriate Internal and External advisers. There is expertise within the Department and strong professional networks will ensure that students are provided with right blend of professional and research education.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time programme					
Part 1 – Year 1-2					
L7	BUOB072S7	Professional practice portfolio: Psychological Assessment at Work	30	Core	T1-3
L7	BUOB073S7	Professional practice portfolio: Learning, training and Development	30	Core	T1-3
L7	BUOB074S7	Professional practice portfolio: Work Design, Organisational Change and Development	30	Core	T1-3
L7	BUOB075S7	Professional practice portfolio: Leadership, Engagement and Motivation	30	Core	T1-3
L7	BUOB076S7	Professional Practice portfolio: Wellbeing and Work	30	Core	T1-3
L7	BUOB077S7	Professional practice: Extended Case study and presentation	30	Core	T1-3

Part 2 – Years 3-4	
L8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Planning and Preparation • Research Thesis

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about your programme and each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Throughout the course students will conduct work based learning consistent with the qualification. In addition, the programme is taught over five weekend day master classes per year, each of which include expert briefings and masterclasses from leading academics and practitioners around each of the five key areas in Organizational Psychology, seminars and workshops on evidence-based practice, research methods training to extend the knowledge and skills above that of their previous learning and developing reflective practice; peer-learning and group supervision (5 days annually) as well as self-learning as appropriate to a research-focused degree. In addition, students are allocated a personal supervisor to provide ongoing support and guidance, have access to a wide range of taught courses and professional training courses, and networking opportunities offered by the Department of Organizational Psychology. Students will also have access to a virtual learning environment, providing students with access to supplementary materials. The aim is for these different methods to complement one another in a managed fashion with a balance between teaching and learning.

The programme design, and therefore teaching, learning and assessment, on this programme focus upon the integration and contextualisation of theoretical knowledge into professional practice in Occupational Psychology. The teaching and learning, for those in the Professional Practice part of the Programme (Part 1, Level 7) is further complemented by number of expert academics and practitioners in the field who will facilitate seminars and workshops at each of the five face-to-face weekends per year. Each of these seminars/workshops will focus on one of the five core areas of Occupational Psychology and will ensure the dissemination of ‘cutting edge’ knowledge and the development of students’ professional skills and knowledge. The teaching and learning strategy has been designed to reflect both the experience and needs of the cohort and therefore, rather than an authoritative approach to teaching, structured sessions will place the teaching team in the role of facilitators and managers of learning and knowledge, encouraging active discussion, flexibility of approach and peer learning.

As students move into Part 2, (Level 8) Research Thesis Portfolio, the teaching and learning in Research Methods will again reflect the experience and particular needs of the cohort, building upon previous research methods training, and include a combination of small group workshops on particular methodologies (the contents of which will be prescribed by the cohort and study designs used but include Structural Equation Modelling, Hierarchical Linear Modelling,

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Discourse Analysis) and small group and one-to-one research supervision sessions. Students will also have access to the Research Methods element from the MSc Organizational Psychology course. This use of one-to-one and small group sessions from the beginning of the programme will enable students to build confidence and develop their research skills in a highly supportive manner. To continue to build upon the evidence based practice built at Part1, students will be observed and assessed on their work-based learning.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it.

Assessments will be designed to meet pre-existing professional standards as set by the HCPC, BPS and Doctoral level. Throughout the programme, students will be provided with opportunities for formative assessment. They will be expected to make oral presentations to their peers and to the course team and invited guests, through peer and tutor/expert discussions, submission of draft assessments for comment, and one-to-one sessions with their research supervisors.

The summative assessments are:

Part 1 (HE7):

- An evidence based practice portfolio, with five separately assessed modules covering all of the 5 key areas in Occupational Psychology
- An extended piece of work demonstrating depth of evidence based practice – to include a case study working through the consultancy cycle and presentation

The assessments across all modules for part 1 is undertaken on a **pass/fail basis** as aligned to the relevant professional and regulatory standards.

Part 2 (HE8):

- Research planning and preparation portfolio (to include an extended systematic review protocol, research proposal for subsequent in depth piece of research, reflective essay and verbal presentation)
- 40 – 50,000 word Research thesis to include:
 - Background to research area, justification for, and links, between studies
 - Extended methodology section
 - Full systematic review
 - Empirical study
 - Implications section
 - Reflective process report
 - Viva voce examination

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

The Professional Doctorate is a research degree that meets the educational objectives outlined in the QAA Descriptors for Qualifications at Doctoral Level (2001). It has also been designed to meet the requirements of the British Psychological Society's Stage 2 Training in Occupational Psychology, and the Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Education and Training for Occupational Psychologists, qualifying those who are eligible (GBC) and successfully complete the programme to achieve Registered and Chartered Status.

For the MRes part of the programme, the module content, delivery and assessment is aligned to ensure that all students meet standards of practice through workbased learning, where attainment is assessed against a number of predefined criteria as set by the accrediting bodies.

The course is taught and supervised by qualified and research active faculty, as well as registered practitioner psychologists, who have current ongoing commitment to applied psychological consultancy provision on a part-time basis, in addition to a network of professionally qualified external partners, in compliance with the HCPC and BPS's requirements.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completion of the course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of different ontological and epistemological perspectives in organizational psychology, and the value of different perspectives
- Demonstrate knowledge of issues concerning knowledge acquisition and dissemination in organizational psychology including the ability to evaluate existing research and practice critically and to design and implement their own programme of research or practice
- Use a variety of techniques of data collection and analysis for both quantifiable and non-quantifiable forms of data
- Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the practical implications of research in organizational psychology
- Demonstrate an ability to work with theoretical/research knowledge at the forefront of the organizational psychology at peer reviewed/publication standards
- Demonstrate command of relevant knowledge at the 'cutting edge' of organizational psychology and the capacity to apply this knowledge in investigation of practice in occupational psychology across the Occupational Psychology Stage 2 curriculum
- An ability to analyse and manage the implications of ethical dilemmas in research and practice, working with individuals, teams and organisations; working within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession

Intellectual skills

On completion of the course you will be able to:

- Think in a critically reflective and creative manner
- Analyse and solve complex problems
- Organise and synthesise complex information
- Produce and justify a coherent proposal and review for a Doctorate in Organizational Psychology thesis which identifies a contribution to both theory and practice
- Synthesise new approaches to practice in organizational psychology in a manner that will contribute to the methodology or understanding of the area
- Make informed judgements on complex issues in work and business environments, often in the absence of complete data
- Demonstrate the capacity to apply professionally relevant knowledge at the 'cutting edge' of the field of organizational psychology

Subject Practical skills

On completion of the course you will be able to:

- Critique research literature in organizational psychology
- Identify appropriate research methods or investigative approaches for a chosen research topic or client project
- Conduct analysis of data using appropriate methods and present the results of the analysis to others
- Conduct, direct, monitor and evaluate the implementation of applications of organizational psychology
- Generate, plan, validate, execute, report and evaluate two research projects (one a systematic literature review, or other type of established literature review; and the other an empirical study) which are professionally relevant and which create new knowledge
- Write research for an academic audience with the intention of submitting their work to peer reviewed journals
- Bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge in organizational psychology and practical implementation of that knowledge within work settings
- Act professionally and largely autonomously and with initiative in complex and unpredictable situations

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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