

MSc Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose:

Course management, monitoring and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose:

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer:

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification and believes it to be correct. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification but reserve the right to change the content, timetabling and administration of the course whilst maintaining equivalent academic standards and quality.

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Programme Specification

1. Named Awards

MSc in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities
Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2134F
C2134P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

N/A

7. Document Control Information

June 2016

8. Effective Session

2016-2017

9. Author

Dr Julie Cherryman

10. Faculty

Science

11. Department

Psychology

12. Educational Aims

- To develop students' knowledge of the Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities
- To develop the competencies of students in the effective support of people with intellectual disabilities and their families
- To develop students' capacity for critical reflection

- To enhance the professional qualifications of practitioners who support people with intellectual disabilities
- To generally contribute to knowledge aimed at improving services to people with intellectual disabilities
- To create an environment which encourages multi-disciplinary study.

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth curricula framework (e.g., postgraduate, distance learning)
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (distance learning)

14. Learning Outcomes

- Understand key topics in intellectual disability.
- Apply appropriate analytic techniques to the study of intellectual disability.
- Communicate in a written manner appropriate to the topics and the intended audience.
- Take responsibility for own learning.
- Discuss the limits of current knowledge.
- Conduct and report upon an independent, empirical investigation.

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

1. The nature and application of theory and findings in research and practice to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.
2. The relationship between ways of knowing about disability and patterns of human services for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.
3. Principles and techniques in research and practice.
4. Ethical and methodological issues concerning research with people with intellectual disabilities
5. The topics researched in the empirical research project.

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The course is taught using distance learning materials delivered via the Internet. These materials provide students with the information for them to develop relevant knowledge and understanding (A1 – A5). Resources will include specially written text, video interviews and discussions, links to relevant web sites and electronic versions of selected readings. In order to encourage students to discuss their new knowledge with others, the teaching strategies will include online discussions and other interactive learning activities. Email and telephone tutoring, research supervision, summer conference and weekend study school all provide opportunities for students to learn about this topic. See the Unit Learning Outcomes Map for details of exactly which learning outcome is measured in the specific units.

Assessment

Knowledge and understanding are assessed by varied assessments that include; essays, reflective logs (A1, A2), practice files (A1, A2), reports, literature reviews (A1), research proposal (A3), ethical submission and research dissertations (A3, A4, A5).

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

1. Gather and synthesise information concerning intellectual disability.
2. Think analytically and critically.
3. Select appropriate themes and methodologies in intellectual disability research.
4. Evaluate evidence.

5. Develop and sustain reasoned argument.
6. Use evidence-based reasoning.
7. Analyse complex issues.

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

As mentioned above, distance learning materials are delivered via the Internet. These materials (including specially written text, video interviews and discussions, links to relevant web sites and electronic versions of selected readings) together with a small number of key readings encourage students to think critically about intellectual disability (B1-B7). Teaching strategies include online discussions and other interactive learning activities, email and telephone tutoring, research supervision, summer conference and study school. See the Unit Learning Outcomes Map for details of exactly which learning outcome is measured in the specific units.

Assessment

These cognitive skills are all assessed by; essays (B1- B7), reflective logs (B1, B2, B4, B6, B7), practice files (B1, B2, B4, B5, B6, B7), reports (B1 - B7), literature reviews, research proposal, ethical submission and research dissertations (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7).

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

1. Critically examine the theoretical underpinning for a particular practice, service provision or intervention for people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Analyse the skills needed to provide effective support or good models of practice.
3. Critically evaluate the level of skill, competence, and/or the quality of a service delivery.
4. Suggest areas for improvement and how these could be achieved.
5. Collaborate effectively with families, professionals and other supporters of people with intellectual disabilities to develop enabling services with empowering outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Students on this course may be recent graduates, or may be busy professionals who really do have competing demands. In order to try to help students we provide a 'Useful information mat' that includes a summary of the course, including all assessment deadlines for that year. The assessment dates are spread out across the academic year. For part time students, the research project is supported by a research methods unit studied in the previous year. Full time students complete the research methods component as a 'short fat unit' concurrently with their 'long thin' research project unit at the beginning of their studies. Please see the learning outcomes map at the end of this programme specification for details of exactly which learning outcomes are assessed in each of the specific units.

Assessment

These skills are assessed by practice files (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5) essays (C1, C4) and the research project (C2, C5).

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

1. Take charge of own learning.
2. Communicate in writing.
3. Apply a critical and analytical approach to theory and practice.
4. Manage a research project.
5. Analyse qualitative and quantitative data.
6. Draw appropriate conclusions from data.

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Distance learning materials delivered via the Internet, email and telephone tutoring, research supervision, study schools. The course materials have embedded within them opportunities for students to become self-directed learners who reflect on their skills (D1-D6). They have the opportunity demonstrate transferable skills within the majority of units on this course. They take control of their own research project (D4), manage data collection and analyses (D4, D5), drawing appropriate conclusions from these data (D6) and provide a written dissertation (D2, D6). See the Unit Learning Outcomes Map for details of exactly which learning outcome is measured in the specific units.

Assessment

These transferable and key skills are assessed by; essays, reflective logs, practice files, reports, literature reviews, research proposal, ethical submission and research dissertations (D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6).

15. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

Standard University Rules Apply.

This programme requires successful completion of 180 Level 7 credits. These 180 credits consist of five core units and one optional unit from a choice of two. All are 30 Level 7 credits and are delivered over one year for full time students and over two years for part time students (usually with 90 Level 7 credits being delivered in each of the two years). Students who successfully complete the 60 level 7 credits can exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities; students who successfully complete 120 level 7 credits can exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities; students who successfully complete 180 level 7 credits can exit with the award of MSc Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities.

16. Employability Statement

Some students on this course are already employed in relevant careers and some use this course as continued professional development. This course aims to enhance skills and knowledge for both students wishing to work with people with learning disabilities and for those who wish to continue their education. Some graduates go on to work in education or in health care positions, whilst some others go on to obtain advanced academic qualifications such as PhDs or professional doctorates. Students in existing related professions undertaking this course have reported significant progression in their careers. For those coming to the course straight from an undergraduate degree, this course is relevant to a wide spectrum of different careers including the police service, education, or caring professions.

17. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- The University of Portsmouth has consistently been awarded an excellent rating for student support and guidance in a number of Quality Assurance Agency inspections.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

University regulations etc.

- Feedback is provided for all assessments.

18. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

To be admitted to the PGCert/PGDip/MSc Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities students will normally have obtained an Honours degree in a relevant subject.

Students who do not meet the above criteria but have professional qualifications and experience may be admitted to the course. They will be required to satisfy the Course Team of their ability to study at the appropriate level either by completing a written assignment or taking and passing a course unit before registering for the named pathway: MSc in Applied Psychology of Intellectual Disabilities. It is preferred that students are, or have in the past been, engaged in supporting a person or persons with intellectual disabilities. This could be as a family member, by voluntary work, paid employment or advocacy.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

19. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Periodic Programme Review.
- Student Representatives
- Staff Performance and Development Review.
- Peer Review and Development Framework.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Head of Department.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires.

- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. Research Experience Survey (PRES)

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- New academic staff required to undertake APEX programme.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Academic staff new to teaching required to undertake Initial Professional Development Programme (iPROF).
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

20. Assessment Strategy

As well as enabling students to demonstrate meeting programme and unit learning outcomes, the assessments are designed to enable students to demonstrate and practice skills necessary for the workplace. Several of the units are assessed with coursework that enables students to enhance academic skills as well as expertise regarding analytical skills. Students are given formative assessments in addition to summative assessments (and some assessments include both elements). Additionally, assessment includes the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills that, as well as being useful in the workplace, helps prepare students for later assessments, for example, the practice file. Together the assessments aim to prepare students for the research component at the final level.

21. Assessment Regulations

Standard university rules apply (see [Assessment and Regulations](#)).

22. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards;
- review unit assessment strategy;
- sample assessment artefacts;
- present report to Unit Assessment Boards.

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards;
- scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment;
- ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

23. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

Not applicable.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The Department underwent Periodic Programme review in February 2012 where the fitness of purpose of the curriculum was confirmed.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*^[1]).

^[1]www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

D. Others

None.

24. Other Sources of Information

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document.
- Student Handbook.
- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework.
- University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Prospectus.
- Assessment Regulations.
- University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/>) and Department (<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/psychology/>) websites.