COURSE SPECIFICATION

MSc Psychology and Learning Disability

COURSE SPECIFICATION

Please refer to the [Course Specification Guidance Notes](#) for guidance on completing this document.

Course Title	**MSc Psychology and Learning Disability**
Final Award	MSc
Exit Awards	PGDip Psychology and Learning Disability PGCert Psychology and Learning Disability
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	P2650PTD
Mode of study	Part time
Mode of delivery	Distance Learning
Normal length of course	2 Years
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	From September 2024 intake onwards
Awarding Body	University of Portsmouth
Teaching Institution	University of Portsmouth
Faculty	Faculty of Science & Health
School/Department/Subject Group	*School of Psychology, Sport and Health Sciences*
School/Department/Subject Group webpage	*https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/organisational-structure/faculty-of-science-and-health/school-of-psychology-sport-and-health-sciences*
Course webpage including entry criteria	https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-taught/msc-psychology-and-learning-disability
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	None
[Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level](#)	Level 7

This course specification provides a summary of the main features of the course, identifies the aims and learning outcomes of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods used by teaching staff, and the reference points used to inform the curriculum.

This information is therefore useful to potential students to help them choose the right course of study, to current students on the course and to staff teaching and administering the course.

Further detailed information on the individual modules within the course may be found in the relevant module descriptors and the Course Handbook provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the [Course and Module Catalogue](#) for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

The educational aims of the course are to:

1. provide a challenging and stimulating study environment.
2. provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible coherent programme of study.
3. equip students with the necessary transferable skills for lifelong learning, employability and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets, and higher level postgraduate study opportunities.
4. Contribute to the effectiveness of practitioners that work with, or wish to work with, people with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities .
5. develop students' capacity for critical reflection particularly with reference to learning disability and developmental disabilities.

Course Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) sets out a national framework of qualification levels, and the associated standards of achievement are found in their Framework for Higher Education Qualifications document.

The Course Learning Outcomes for this course are outlined in the tables below.

A. Knowledge and understanding of:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
A1	the nature and application of theory and findings in research and practice to the lives of people with learning disabilities, and developmental disabilities or neurodivergences, such as autism.	The Psychology and Learning Disability distance learning course team makes strategic decisions relevant to the course concerning teaching and learning methods. All modules have specially developed distance learning materials that contain embedded tasks, including online synchronous sessions and additional activities aimed at engaging students with their learning. All materials are presented via the Moodle virtual learning environment. Students are encouraged to contribute to online discussions. A tutorial system is also in place where each student is supported by a personal and academic tutor for the duration of the course.	There are both practitioner-based assessments such as reports and evaluations as well as the more typical academic assessments such as essays and critical reviews. This balance of assessment enables the students to demonstrate deeper level learning since they have to apply theory to practice. All modules have formative assessments to help to prepare students for summative assessments.
A2	principles and techniques in research concerning learning disability and developmental disabilities [MSc Stage].		
A3	ethical and methodological issues concerning research with people with learning disabilities, and developmental disabilities (e.g., Autistic Spectrum Conditions).		
A4	the relationship between ways of knowing about disability and patterns of human services for people with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities (e.g., Autistic Spectrum Conditions) and their families.		

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) skills, able to:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
B1	gather, synthesise and apply multiple perspectives to information concerning learning disability and neurodivergences, such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions.	The specially developed online distance learning materials and embedded tasks that require students to reflect on their learning. Students are challenged to examine and critically evaluate previously held views concerning people with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities.	Reports, essays, critical reviews, and evaluations all encourage the development of critical thinking skills. In these assessments, students practise writing in styles that differ according to the target audience. Students also produce and deliver presentations.
B2	select appropriate themes and methodologies to research topics in learning disability and neurodivergences, such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions [MSc Stage].		
B3	use evidence-based reasoning to develop and sustain reasoned arguments.		
B4	critically evaluate evidence and complex issues from psychological and other sources and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.		

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) skills, able to:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
C1	critically examine the theoretical underpinning for a particular practice, service provision or intervention for people with learning disabilities and developmental disabilities, such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions.	The teaching includes many varied but complimentary learning and teaching methods that are aimed explicitly at encouraging students to consider disability from the viewpoint of the individual with the disability. The heterogeneous nature of disability is a thread that is taught throughout the whole programme. Both current and ex-practitioners teach on this course and thus there is currency in its delivery.	Essays that focus on critical appraisal of practice give students an opportunity to demonstrate having developed an understanding of models of disability and how they relate to practice. Further, the critical evaluation of journal articles aims to examine the extent to which students are able to reflect on the relevance to their own practice, or prospective practice, of published research on this topic. The PowerPoint presentation aims to enhance students' ability to present ideas to wider audiences.
C2	analyse and critically evaluate the skills needed for good models of practice, competence, and/or the quality of a service delivery.		
C3	suggest areas for improvement in support or service provision and how these could be achieved (MSc stage).		
C4	collaborate effectively with families, professionals and other supporters of people with learning disabilities and neurodivergences, such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions, enabling services with empowering outcomes.		

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
D. Transferrable (Graduate and Employability) skills, able to:			
D1	communicate effectively in writing for different audiences.	The learning methods, including embedded activities and presentation encourage students to reflect on adapting their written and verbal communication to different audiences. Students are referred to the resources available on Moodle to help them to take control of their own learning and to set and monitor their individual progress. Personal tutors discuss careers and employability, and students have a Course Moodle site on this topic. Project supervisors encourage students to 'own' their project. Students provide an agenda for the regular supervisory meetings and seek advice from the supervisor.	Students have multiple opportunities (via the essays, reports, critical evaluations and PowerPoint Presentations, and the research dissertation) to develop and demonstrate these transferable skills.
D2	show good decision-making when faced with complex and developing situations such as when evaluating real-world information.		
D3	analyse data and undertake primary and/or secondary research work [MSc stage].		
D4	demonstrate independence in learning for continuing professional development.		

Academic Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth Academic Regulations: Examination & Assessment Regulations will apply to this course.

Support for Student Learning

The University of Portsmouth provides a comprehensive range of support services for students throughout their course, details of which are available at the MyPort student portal.

In addition to these University support services the course also provides each student with a personal and academic tutor who is available for telephone/ video meetings throughout their studies. An online induction is provided to help students to engage with both the technological and teaching aspects of this distance learning course.

Student learning is supported via the use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) covering all taught modules that incorporate online learning materials, student discussion boards and sources of additional information.

Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

The University of Portsmouth undertakes comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation of courses within clearly assigned staff responsibilities. Student feedback is a key feature in these evaluations, as represented in our Policy for Listening to and Responding to the Student Voice where you can also find further information.

Reference Points

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification
- University of Portsmouth Vision
- Office for Students Conditions of Registration
- University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning
- Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Quality Assurance Agency Qualification Characteristic Statements
- Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement for **Psychology**
- Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Vocational and professional experience, scholarship and research expertise of the University of Portsmouth's academic members of staff
- National Occupational Standards

Changes to your course/modules

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information provided in this Course Specification and will endeavour to deliver this course in keeping with this Course Specification. However, changes to the course may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of modules and courses.

Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University of Portsmouth will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students.

It is also possible that the University of Portsmouth may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student

registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University of Portsmouth will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

Copyright

Document Details	
CSD Template date	*October 2024*
Author	Dr Zarah Vernham
Date of production and version number	June 2018, Version 1
Date of update and version number	December 2024, Version 5
Minimum student registration numbers	15