

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

MA/MSc Psychology of Education and the MA Education (Psychology)

Awarding Institution: Institute of Education, University of London

Teaching Institution: Institute of Education, University of London

Accreditation

The British Psychological Society recognises the MA/MSc Psychology of Education programme in combination with the Graduate Certificate in Psychology as giving eligibility for the Graduate Basis of Chartered Membership (previously known as the Graduate Basis of Registration).

Name of final award

Master of Arts (MA) *or* Master of Science (MSc) for Psychology of Education

Master of Arts (MA) for Education (Psychology)

Postgraduate Diploma

Postgraduate Certificate

Programme title

Psychology of Education

Or

Education (Psychology)

Language of study

The Institute of Education teaches and assesses participants through the medium of the English language. Competence in English language is required of all applicants. Programme regulations may indicate the level of competence required of each applicant and may make its achievement a condition of admission.

Participants

MA/MSc Psychology of Education: Psychology graduates who want to progress to research careers or professional training; people with the Graduate Certificate in Psychology who wish to become eligible for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership from the British Psychological Society.

Both awards: Members of teaching and related professions engaged in career development, and those interested in applications of psychology to education.

Educational Aims of the Programme

- To develop understanding of selected issues in the psychology of education, both in terms of current enquiry and the application of psychology to education more generally.
- To broaden and deepen knowledge of theory and practice in two more specialised areas selected from a range of options.
- To increase understanding of, and competence in using, a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry.

- To equip programme members to evaluate evidence, claims and theory, and to challenge previously held and new views.
- To provide every programme member with an opportunity to engage in research with guidance and support from a personal supervisor.
- To prepare participants for progression to higher research degrees, employment as researchers or professional training to work with children and young people applying psychological knowledge.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the modules and programme students should be able to:

- Demonstrate how concepts, theories and evidence can be used in constructing understanding of issues and practices.
- Produce and communicate reasoned and informed argument, both in writing and orally.
- Critically evaluate theory and evidence in the psychology of education.
- Understand the role of statistical tests and modelling in the development and testing of hypotheses and theories.
- Carry out a focused empirical enquiry in the application of psychology in education.
- Reflect on and apply conceptual and theoretical frameworks and research evidence in understanding professional practice.

Evidence for the achievement of these aims and intended learning outcomes include

- Written assignments for formative and summative purposes
- Presentations, discussions and debate in lectures, seminars and tutorials

Aims and intended learning outcomes are also specified for individual modules. These are to be found in the programme and module handbooks.

Criteria for admission

MA/MSc Psychology of Education: Applicants are eligible for admission if they have a good honours degree or graduate equivalent qualification in psychology from an overseas institution recognised by the World Higher Education Database, together with satisfactory academic references. Other applicants may be required to pass qualifying assessments or take the Graduate Certificate in Psychology prior to joining the programme.

The Graduate Certificate in Psychology may be waived for graduates seeking Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society who have studied sufficient psychology that matches the coverage, content, and assessment specified in the IOE Graduate Certificate in Psychology.

MA Education (Psychology): Applicants are eligible for admission if they have a good honours degree or graduate equivalent qualification passed at second class honours degree level or better.

Applicants whose first language is a language other than English may be required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency.

The Institute of Education is committed to admitting and supporting participants with disabilities and welcomes applications from them. Participants do not need to be “registered disabled” to draw on these services, though in order to provide services in the long-term we will need to ask for medical or other evidence, as appropriate.

Disabilities Support can also support people who have a temporary mobility / dexterity impairment / other difficulty as a result of an accident, injury, illness or surgery.

We aim to treat every person as an individual, with needs which may differ from those of other people with a superficially similar disability. We do not therefore have standard procedures for participants with dyslexia, nor standard procedures for visually impaired participants: each person's needs are considered individually. All applications are considered on an individual basis. Applicants are not usually interviewed, but they are encouraged to make informal contact with the programme leader or programme administrator to discuss any aspects of the programme in greater detail.

Mode of study

Full-time students will attend up to four three-hour daytime or evening sessions per week. The number of attended sessions would depend on the term and choice of modules.

Part-time students will attend the following:

Year 1 – up to three evening sessions of three hours per week The number of attended sessions would depend on the term and choice of modules.

Year 2 – one evening session of three hours per week in one of the terms, plus dissertation support and supervision sessions. Students registered on MA Education (Psychology) can substitute the dissertation for a report plus an additional 30-credit module.

Students ordinarily start in the Autumn term. Part-time students normally take Core Topics, Methodology and Statistics, and their first option in Year 1; and the Dissertation and their second option in Year 2. Methodology and Statistics must be taken before the Dissertation or Report.

Programme structures and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The programme is international in perspective, drawing on research from a wide variety of settings, and explicitly addressing the relationship between cultural context, learning and education. It is designed to be completed in one year (full-time) or two years (part-time). The part-time option is designed for busy professionals and participants are able to create their programme of study that is timetabled entirely in the evenings. Effort is made to accommodate, where necessary, any special requirements of individual family commitments.

The programme is divided into study modules and each module counts for 30 credits, with the exception of the dissertation which is worth 60 credits. For a Masters degree to be awarded, a minimum of 180 credits must be successfully completed. Participants who complete taught modules, excluding a report or

dissertation, to the value of 120 credits, are able to exit with a postgraduate diploma; those completing 60 credits on taught modules are eligible to exit with a postgraduate certificate.

(The Institute of Education uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), as a guide to support periods of study undertaken abroad and to assist student mobility. Currently it is assumed that two UK credits equate to one ECTS. Therefore a module of 30 credits would typically equate to 15 ECTS credits).

The programme consists of

- Two compulsory core modules (30 credits each)
- Two optional modules, (for Psychology of Education the choice is restricted to one from Group 1 and one from Group 2 (30 credits each))
- Dissertation or Report (60 or 30 credits)

For the award of MA/MSc Psychology of Education, all modules must be chosen from within the programme offer, and the Dissertation must be chosen.

For the award of MA Education (Psychology), 120 credits must be completed from within the programme offer. (These must include the 60 credits of the two core modules). Up to 60 credits may be chosen from (unrestricted) modules offered on other programmes within the Institute.

The compulsory core modules are

*Core Topics in the Psychology of Education
Methodology and Statistics*

There are two Group 1 option modules, which are

*Cognitive Development and Learning
Personality and Social Psychology in Education*

Only one Group 1 option module can be chosen, and doing so is compulsory for the *MA/MSc Psychology of Education*.

There is also a set of Group 2 option modules, which comprise

*Developmental Psychology and Psychobiology
Social Development
Psychological Aspects of Counselling
Atypical Development
Literacy Development
Reading and Spelling Difficulties
Learning and Teaching for Adults*

One Group 2 option module must be chosen for the *MA/MSc Psychology of Education*; for the *MA Education (Psychology)*, more than one Group 2 option may be chosen. *Developmental Psychology and Psychobiology* cannot be taken in combination with *Cognitive Development and Learning*.

Each 30 credit module represents approximately 300 learning hours of which 30 hours are contact teaching time (except *Methodology and Statistics*, which involves

30 hours and also offers 2 extra hour-long optional sessions and 8 hours of statistics support sessions). Participants are expected to spend additional time in independent study to include background reading, individual and group based activity, engagement in online discussion/activity, self-directed study, tutorial time.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

With the exception of the Dissertation or Report, each of the modules is organised around a series of 3-hour sessions, which comprise a lecture component, group discussion (providing an important opportunity for students to consider differences in perspective and relevant past experience, as well as to explore and consolidate key concepts), and practical work. Lecture components are supported by materials placed on the programme Blackboard site, and by identified preparatory readings.

The precise balance between these different elements varies somewhat from module to module, as do the assessment strategies employed:

Core Topics in the Psychology of Education, Cognitive Development and Learning, Personality and Social Psychology in Education, Developmental Psychology and Psychobiology, Social Development, and Atypical Development predominantly emphasise lectures and group discussion with approximately a 2:1 division between these. Group discussion is often based on student presentations with respect to reading or practical work. Assessment is principally by written essays, with the opportunity to receive feedback on draft plans of these. However, *Core Topics* and *Social Development* both also employ an exercise in which students are required to provide a critique of one of a sample of journal papers. The assessed essays for *Core Topics* are written in unseen examination mode.

Psychological Aspects of Counselling also employs a written essay assignment for assessment, but the class sessions are divided roughly evenly between lecture input and practical work exploring aspects of counselling skill.

Methodology and Statistics sessions are divided between methods and statistics material, and within these sub-sessions approximately 40% of the time is spent on lecture input, and the remainder on practical activity supported by group discussion. Assessment for the methods component is via a written report on one choice from a range of small-scale data collection exercises. Statistics is assessed via analysis of and report on a prepared dataset, which is undertaken after an opportunity to undertake and receive feedback on a practice exercise of the same type.

The *Dissertation or Report* is based on a piece of individually supervised empirical research, with teaching and learning based on extensive and focused discussion at all stages from determining a research question, deciding how to address it, and collecting data, to analysing data and preparing a written account of the research (20,000 words for the dissertation, 10,000 for the report), incorporating a review and critique of relevant literature. Students receive feedback on a draft of the final output.

Information about assessment regulations

Participants must successfully complete all elements of the programme, to

achieve the minimum credits required for the award. All coursework is assessed according to the grade-related criteria for the programme level, found in the Student Handbook.

All assignments are independently marked by two staff members, who meet to discuss and reconcile the marks and comments for each individual. Assignments are graded from A to D, with D being a failing grade. Participants are permitted to represent a failed assignment on one further occasion, within 12 months of the original submission.

An external examiner is appointed by Senate and plays an important role in monitoring the quality of the programme and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and support provided for the programme participants and the reliability of the judgements made in assessing them.

Further details about assessment regulations can be found at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/Study_Home/Regulations_of_the_Assessment_of_Students.pdf

Support for learning

Students taking the programme have diverse backgrounds and experiences of higher education, and every care is taken to ensure that this diversity is acknowledged and suitable support provided. This support includes:

- Induction sessions
- Student handbook
- Programme handbook
- Academic literacy and oracy sessions, if required
- Information services induction and other programmes
- Extensive library and other learning resources and facilities
- Personal tutor for each student
- Critical and supportive feedback on written work
- Individual tutorials on request, or by suggestion of a tutor
- Academic counselling and advisory service
- Access to Student Welfare Service, if required
- Access to the University Careers Service, if required.

Methods for evaluating and improving the programme

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards

- Module evaluation by students
- Annual programme review prepared by programme team and considered by Faculty of Children and Health Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Committee
- Periodic programme review and revalidation involving external panel member, and student representation
- Programme accreditation by British Psychological Society
- Staff appraisal
- Peer observation of teaching

- External examiner reports

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Programme committee
- Faculty Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Committee
- Institute Learning and Teaching Committee
- Institute Equal Opportunities Committee
- Senate
- Board of Examiners

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Student representation on programme committee
- Student representation on Faculty Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Committee, on Academic Board, on the Learning and Teaching Committee and on the Equal Opportunities Committee
- Programme and module evaluation
- Annual student satisfaction survey
 - Encouragement of informal approaches by individual or groups of students to the programme leader and other tutors and/or to the programme administrator.

Indicators of quality and standards

- A high proportion of former programme participants have made career changes as a result of proceeding to professional psychological training, notably in educational psychology. Such training is highly demanding.
- A number have proceeded to doctoral studies in this and other institutions.
- Some have taken up careers in academic psychology both in the UK and overseas. Of these a number have attained international distinction in their field.
- Research studies undertaken as work for a Dissertation have regularly been published in academic and professional journals.

Relevant benchmark statements and other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes

In 2007 the Graduate Qualifications Accreditation Committee of the British Psychological Society (BPS), approved the programme for the Graduate Basis of Chartered Membership with the BPS.

Date of completion/amendment of specification

August 2009