

Programme Specification

Research Methods in Psychology (2021-22)

Subject to Revalidation

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Awarding Institution	University of Southampton
Teaching Institution	University of Southampton
Mode of Study	Full-time
Duration in years	1
Accreditation details	Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Final award	Master of Science (MSc)
Name of Award	Research Methods in Psychology
Interim Exit awards	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma
FHEQ level of final award	Level 7
UCAS code	
Programme Code	4880
QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference	
Programme Lead	Hayward Godwin
Pathway Lead	

Programme Overview

Brief outline of the programme

This MSc Research Methods in Psychology (RMP) programme is designed to equip you with a wide range of methodological skills to enable you to become a successful PhD student or professional researcher in psychology. The programme provides advanced training in a variety of research methods and data analytic techniques. The main aim of this Master's in Research Methods in Psychology is to equip you to conduct research in your chosen field that is of high quality and impact. We have designed a programme in which you apply the skills you are taught to your own research questions. Therefore, in addition to classroom instruction, you will receive structured support as you develop your research questions, plan and execute the research, analyse the data, and prepare reports describing your findings.

Your contact hours will vary depending on your module/option choices. Full information about contact hours is provided in individual module profiles.

Learning and teaching

The modular structure of this Master's in Research Methods in Psychology provides breadth of exposure to a wide range of methods and research-related issues, ensuring that you acquire understanding and experience of these methods (through group and hands-on sessions). Equally, the structure permits you to pursue your particular interests, which we find is an excellent means of promoting intrinsic motivation and initiative in the learning process.

Teaching and assessment on each of the MSc Research Methods in Psychology modules has been very carefully

designed to ensure integration and complementarity, logic and coherence in the order in which different aspects of research are taught, and progression in the complexity of the concepts and skills learned. For example, in the first semester of your programme, you will be taught the fundamental principles of statistical analysis, which ensures that you are equipped to understand the more advanced teaching on multivariate statistical analysis in the second semester.

Assessment

Assessment on this MSc Research Methods in Psychology programme is based entirely on substantive pieces of research-related work carried out on in the student's area(s) of interest. Students taking the MSc then complete a further piece of independent research (Dissertation).

Special Features of the programme

Students will be given detailed training regarding a wide array of research methods. In addition, they will be given advanced training in a number of modern 'data science' methods, such as the use of the statistical software package R. Moreover, students will be trained in leading developments in the field, such as open science practices in modern research.

Please note: As a research-led University, we undertake a continuous review of our programmes to ensure quality enhancement and to manage our resources. As a result, this programme may be revised during a student's period of registration; however, any revision will be balanced against the requirement that the student should receive the educational service expected. Please read our [Disclaimer](#) to see why, when and how changes may be made to a student's programme.

Programmes and major changes to programmes are approved through the University's [programme validation process](#) which is described in the University's [Quality handbook](#).

Educational Aims of the Programme

The overarching purpose of this programme is to equip and motivate students to undertake high quality original research, by providing advanced training and structured support, while encouraging and enabling students to apply the concepts, methods and skills they are learning to the topics which specifically interest them.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Gain an understanding and practical experience of a broad range of psychological research methods
- Develop advanced research-specific and generic skills needed to carry out high quality research and to pursue a career which employs these skills
- Acquire an in-depth knowledge and specialisation of specific topics, issues and methods
- Develop the ability to relate your research to the wider context of issues and approaches adopted within and beyond the discipline of psychology

The programme provides the foundation needed to undertake a PhD, and to engage in other routes into a research career in psychology. It fosters advanced intellectual and practical skills that are relevant to any employment environment which requires the ability to analyse and communicate complex ideas, and creatively plan and manage projects.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

On successful completion of this programme you will have knowledge and understanding of:

- A1. Research design, validity and generalizability.
- A2. The theoretical foundations, nature and purposes of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative

methods of data collection and analysis.

- A3. Current concepts, debates, and methodological issues in contemporary psychological research.
- A4. Ethical, legal and practical considerations relevant to research.
- A5. The context of psychological research within the history of science and the other social sciences.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The principle teaching and learning methods used on the programme are lectures, seminars, workshops, independent study, and e-learning tasks.

Assessment Methods

Assessment methods include: research papers, presentations, quizzes, problem sets, exams (including multiple choice and essay questions), and completion of a research dissertation. Details are provided in the attached Learning Grid.

Subject Specific Intellectual and Research Skills

On successful completion of this programme you will be able to:

- B1. Formulate timely, appropriate and feasible research questions and designs.
- B2. Compare and integrate different research perspectives and approaches.
- B3. Anticipate, debate and resolve ethical and practical issues arising from research.
- B4. Critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in psychology.
- B5. Place research in historical, philosophical, social and disciplinary context.
- B6. Access a variety of information sources and critically evaluate them to develop their knowledge of psychological research methods.
- B7. Evaluate and critically appraise the relative benefits of different methods and approaches in psychological research and, where appropriate, propose new methods.
- B8. Apply creatively psychological research methods within chosen areas of inquiry and show practical understanding of how these methods are used to create and interpret psychological knowledge.

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Transferable and Generic Skills

On successful completion of this programme you will be able to:

- C1. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively
- C2. Communicate your conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- C3. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving research problems
- C4. Act collaboratively in planning and implementing collective tasks and projects at a professional or equivalent level
- C5. Act autonomously in planning and implementing personal tasks and projects at a professional or equivalent level
- C6. Think critically and reflectively, and to generalise and synthesise prior knowledge and experience in

- order to apply them in complex and novel situations
- C7. Engage in independent learning to promote continued professional development

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Assessment Methods

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Subject Specific Practical Skills

On successful completion of this programme you will be able to:

- D1. Select and apply appropriate methods of data collection, management and analysis for qualitative, questionnaire and experimental research.
- D2. Appropriately manage the ethical, legal and practical aspects of research projects.
- D3. Provide critical evaluation of research (e.g. Written review, constructive feedback).
- D4. Anticipate, analyse and resolve intellectual, practical, ethical and legal problems.
- D5. Produce high quality presentations and manuscripts.
- D6. Plan and manage research projects, independently and as part of a team.

Programme Structure

The programme structure table is below:

Information about pre and co-requisites is included in individual module profiles.

Where optional modules have been specified, the following is an indicative list of available optional modules, which are subject to change each academic year. Please note in some instances modules have limited spaces available.

Part I

Typical Programme content

All students on the Master's in Research Methods in Psychology complete eight modules across two semesters (eight months), which cover the theory, practice and context of a wide range of research approaches, using a combination of lectures, workshops, small group discussions, collaborative group research projects, and independent study. Students receive personal guidance and feedback from experts in the methods used and the research topics in which the student wishes to specialise.

Programme details

The programme is normally studied over 12 months full-time. The taught component of the programme consists of 30 study weeks divided into two semesters during which time students study eight modules (60 ECTS/120 CATS). Students also undertake a three-month period of supervised research for a Master's dissertation at a value of 30 ECTS/60 CATS.

Part I Compulsory

Code	Module Title	ECTS	Type
PSYC6136	Open Science in Psychology ()	10	Compulsory
PSYC6055	Statistical Programming in R ()	10	Compulsory

Part I Core

Code	Module Title	ECTS	Type
PSYC6046	Advanced Statistical Methods in Psychology ()	10	Core
RESM6011	Applied Research Methods (ARM): Correlational Methods ()	5	Core
RESM6012	Applied Research Methods (ARM): Planning & Designing Research ()	5	Core
RESM6009	Applied Research Methods: Qualitative Methods ()	5	Core
RESM6010	Applied Research Methods: Statistical Analysis of Comparisons & Group Differences ()	5	Core
PSYC6109	Concepts & Skills ()	10	Core

Part II

Part II Core

Code	Module Title	ECTS	Type
PSYC6022	MSc Dissertation ()	30	Core

Progression Requirements

The programme follows the University's regulations for [*Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes*](#). Any exemptions or variations to the University regulations, approved by AQSC are located in [*section VI of the University Calendar*](#).

Support for student learning

There are facilities and services to support your learning some of which are accessible to students across the University and some of which will be geared more particularly to students in your particular Faculty or discipline area.

The University provides:

- library resources, including e-books, on-line journals and databases, which are comprehensive and up-to-date; together with assistance from Library staff to enable you to make the best use of these resources
- high speed access to online electronic learning resources on the Internet from dedicated PC Workstations onsite and from your own devices; laptops, smartphones and tablet PCs via the Eduroam wireless network. There is a wide range of application software available from the Student Public Workstations.
- computer accounts which will connect you to a number of learning technologies for example, the Blackboard virtual learning environment (which facilitates online learning and access to specific learning resources)
- standard ICT tools such as Email, secure filestore and calendars.
- access to key information through the MySouthampton Student Mobile Portal which delivers timetables, Module information, Locations, Tutor details, Library account, bus timetables etc. while you are on the move.
- IT support through a comprehensive website, telephone and online ticketed support and a dedicated helpdesk in the Hartley Library.
- Enabling Services offering support services and resources via a triage model to access crisis management, mental health support and counselling. Support includes daily Drop In at Highfield campus at 13.00 – 15.00 (Monday, Wednesday and Friday out of term-time) or via on-line chat on weekdays from 14.00 – 16.00. Arrangements can also be made for meetings via Skype.
- assessment and support (including specialist IT support) facilities if you have a disability, long term health problem or Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)
- the Student Services Centre (SSC) to assist you with a range of general enquiries including financial matters, accommodation, exams, graduation, student visas, ID cards

- Career and Employability services, advising on job search, applications, interviews, paid work, volunteering and internship opportunities and getting the most out of your extra-curricular activities alongside your degree programme when writing your CV.
- Other support that includes health services (GPs), chaplaincy (for all faiths) and 'out of hours' support for students in Halls and in the local community (18.00-08.00).
- A Centre for Language Study, providing assistance in the development of English language and study skills for non-native speakers.

The Students' Union provides

- an academic student representation system, consisting of Course Representatives, Academic Presidents, Faculty Officers and the Vice-President Education; SUSU provides training and support for all these representatives, whose role is to represent students' views to the University.
- opportunities for extracurricular activities and volunteering
- an Advice Centre offering free and confidential advice including support if you need to make an academic appeal
- Support for student peer-to-peer groups, such as Nightline.

Associated with your programme you will be able to access:

- Module co-ordinators support. Module co-ordinators will be available at designated times during the week to discuss issues related to the particular modules you are studying at the time. This will be in addition to class contact time.
- Personal academic tutor. As soon as you register on this programme, you will be allocated a personal tutor. S/he is a member of the academic team and will be available to discuss general academic issues related to the programme as well as offer advice and support on any personal issues which may affect your studies.
- Module handbooks/outlines. These will be available at the start of each module (often in online format). The Handbook includes the aims and learning outcomes of the module, the methods of assessment, relevant background material to the module and a session-by-session breakdown of the module together with appropriate reading lists.
- Within the Faculty, administrative support is provided by your Student Office which deals with student records and related issues and with queries related to your specific degree programme.
- Students will be members of a community of over 130 postgraduate students in a department which has one of the largest groups of psychologists in the UK engaging in international level research providing expertise in the fields of behavioural, clinical, cognitive, and developmental, health and social psychology. There are extensive computing and laboratory facilities, research participant pools and a team of full-time staff providing IT and technical support.

Methods for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning

You will have the opportunity to have your say on the quality of the programme in the following ways:

- Completing student evaluation questionnaires for each module of the programme.
- Acting as a student representative on various committees, e.g. Staff/Student Liaison Committees, School Programmes Committee OR providing comments to your student representative to feedback on your behalf.
- Serving as a student representative on Faculty Scrutiny Groups for programme validation.
- Taking part in programme validation meetings by joining a panel of students to meet with the Faculty Scrutiny Group.

Further details on the University's quality assurance processes are given in the [Quality handbook](#).

Career Opportunities

Completion of the MSc Research Methods in Psychology will demonstrate your ability to work at a Postgraduate level and may enhance your application for further postgraduate study toward a doctoral degree. You will develop useful transferrable skills, including teamwork, task management, planning, cultural awareness, literature search, writing, presentation, and computer programming. This means that, regardless of your ultimate career destination, you will be able to develop, manage, and evaluate new projects. Individuals with a Postgraduate degree in Psychology can go on to study for a PhD in Psychology, and can also work as applied psychologists, teachers, consultants, and researchers within a variety of settings such as the NHS, Higher Education, health promotion, schools, or industry.

External Examiner(s) for the programme

Name: Dr Angela Rowe - University of Bristol

Students must not contact External Examiner(s) directly, and external examiners have been advised to refer any such communications back to the University. Students should raise any general queries about the assessment and examination process for the programme with their Course Representative, for consideration through Staff: Student Liaison Committee in the first instance, and Student representatives on Staff: Student Liaison Committees will have the opportunity to consider external examiners' reports as part of the University's quality assurance process.

External examiners do not have a direct role in determining results for individual students, and students wishing to discuss their own performance in assessment should contact their Personal Academic Tutor in the first instance.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information can be found in the programme handbook.

Appendix 1:

Students are responsible for meeting the cost of essential textbooks, and of producing such essays, assignments, laboratory reports and dissertations as are required to fulfil the academic requirements for each programme of study. In addition to this, students registered for this programme also have to pay for:

Additional Costs

Type	Details
Conference expenses	Travel: One module (Concepts and Skills) may include a visit to a one-day conference. The Psychology Department normally covers the cost of travel and admission. This will be specified in the module profile.
Stationery	You will be expected to provide your own day-to-day stationary items, e.g. pens, pencils, notebooks, etc.). Any specialist stationery items will be specified under the Additional Costs tab of the relevant module profile.
Textbooks	Where a module specifies core texts these should generally be available on the reserve list in the library. However due to demand, students may prefer to buy their own copies. These can be purchased from any source. Some modules suggest reading texts as optional background reading. The library may hold copies of such texts, or alternatively you may wish to purchase your own copies. Although not essential reading, you may benefit from the additional reading materials for the module.
Laboratory Equipment and Materials	You are eligible for a £50 research allowance to help you cover the cost of your dissertation research. Normally you would be expected to cover any additional costs.
Approved Calculators	Candidates may use calculators in the examination room only as specified by the University and as permitted by the rubric of individual examination papers. The University approved model is Casio FX-570 This may be purchased from any source and no longer needs to carry the University logo.
Printing and Photocopying Costs	In the majority of cases, coursework such as essays; projects; dissertations is likely to be submitted on line. However, there are some items where it is not possible to submit on line and students will be asked to provide a printed copy. A list of the University printing costs can be found here: http://www.southampton.ac.uk/isolutions/students/printing-for-students.page

In some cases you'll be able to choose modules (which may have different costs associated with that module) which will change the overall cost of a programme to you. Details of such costs will be listed in the Module Profile. Please also ensure you read the section on additional costs in the University's Fees, Charges and Expenses Regulations in the University Calendar available at www.calendar.soton.ac.uk.