

## MSC THEORY AND PRACTICE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY WITH CLINICAL/RESEARCH PLACEMENT FAQS 2025-2026

### ACCREDITATION

#### **Is the MSc TPCP programme accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS)?**

No, only postgraduate programmes linked to professional pathways, such as the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology are accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS). There is no mechanism for accreditation by the BPS and no UK programme of this type is currently accredited.

#### **Does the MSc lead to accreditation as a psychological therapist?**

Completion of the MSc Theory and Practice in Clinical Psychology does not confer accreditation to practise as a therapist in the UK. In the UK, training to deliver psychological therapies takes several years, and is accredited by professional bodies such as the HCPC (Health Care Professions Council) and BABCP (British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapists). Through completion of the Masters, students will gain relevant knowledge and work-based experience to assist with any applications for further training

#### **What if I want to do a BPS-accredited MSc?**

We offer an MSc Psychology Conversion degree, which is accredited by the British Psychological Society and provides Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership. This programme is for graduates who would like to have a career in a psychology-related field, but who don't have: an undergraduate degree in psychology

OR

Those who do not have GBC from the British Psychological Society. This may be the case for some Psychology graduates who completed their Bachelor's programmes outside the UK/EU and whose programmes weren't BPS accredited.

The MSc Psychology Conversion course is a one-year programme.

### TPCP COURSE STRUCTURE AND TEACHING

#### **What are the core course modules and are there any choices?**

The core modules offer a busy and varied program across the year. There are a number of core modules which all students must take, and there are also optional modules from which you can choose. Please visit the programme description page for more information:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/Ready-to-Study/study/Subject-area/psychology-pg/msc-theory-and-practice-in-clinical-psychology>

#### **Core modules**

The following compulsory modules are designed to provide a sound scientific understanding of the nature of modern clinical psychology.

- Advanced methodologies in Psychology
- Empirical Project
- Introduction to CBT

- Evidence-Based Treatments Across the Lifespan
- Clinical or Research Placement (320 hours of placement activity and 80 hours for assignments)

**Optional modules:**

Students can select one optional module. Available modules vary from year to year, but an indicative list is below. Further information about the modules can be found in the course catalogue.

- Theories and Models About the Brain
- Gathering Data for Cognition and Cognitive Neuroscience
- Analysing Data Using R

**When do lectures and seminars take place?**

The UoR teaching week is Monday to Friday, 9am – 6pm, and teaching will fit within this timetable. Timetables are generated by the University and are not finalised until the start of the academic year, and so it is not possible to provide students with a timetable prior to that. As far as possible, MSc teaching is grouped into 2 – 3 days per week. There is comparatively little teaching in the summer, when students are focusing on activities relating to their project and placement.

**Where are the lectures and seminars held?**

All timetabled teaching takes place on Whiteknights campus.

**How much 'contact time' is there?**

Full-time students are expected to be available between Monday and Friday, 9am – 6pm during their enrolment (September – September). Total study hours for the program is 1800 hours. A student's precise 'contact time' will depend on the modules selected. As a rough average, contact time for a typical set of modules on this programme is 180–200 hours. [Module descriptions](#) provide an indication of the 'contact time' for specific modules.

**What about the research project?**

Project selections are made in semester 1 and as far as possible, students are allocated their top choices. Students then work with a supervisor to design, carry out and analyse a research study relating to a clinical population or question. Each year, a number of high-quality projects have been submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals.

**How are students assessed?**

In order to provide students with opportunities to show their developing skills, modules employ a range of assessment methods, such as essays, clinically relevant reports, posters and the research dissertation. [Module descriptions](#) provide guidance about the assessments for specific modules.

**PLACEMENTS****What kinds of placement are there?**

We work closely with numerous stakeholders (such as researchers and local health and social services) to offer a variety of placements, although the precise availability will vary from year to year. Examples of settings where placements (both research and clinical) might take place include working with children and adolescents with anxiety disorders, working with at-risk families (e.g., those with mental health problems which impacts parenting), and within a

specialist eating disorders service.

### How many placement hours are required?

In both clinical and research placements, students undertake 320 hours of activities which are agreed at the outset with the Placement Provider. These activities will include relevant training as well as research and clinical activity. An additional 80 hours are allocated for preparation of assignments, bringing the total to 400.

### What are the differences between Research and Clinical placements?

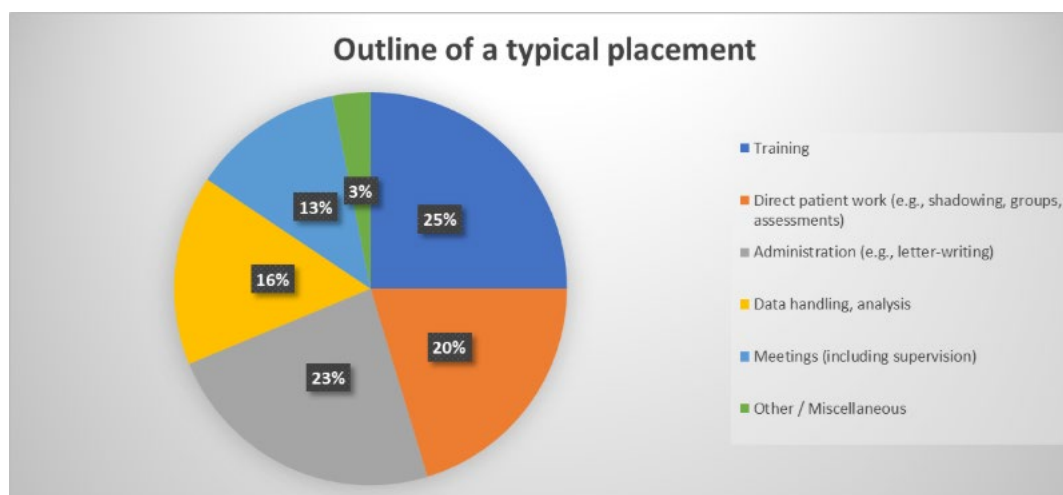
Both programmes aim to help students develop the diverse skills and experience required for Clinical (or other applied) Psychology roles. The placements complement the taught elements of the course, which do not differ between programmes.

### Clinical Placements

Students on TPCP with Clinical Placement will have exposure to a clinical environment to help develop skills such as clinical observation, delivery of psychoeducational activities, clinical interviewing, assessment and psychological formulation. Placement students can expect some direct client contact as part of their placement such as shadowing or supervised opportunities for face to face work, though this will vary from placement to placement. As well as supporting you to develop skills in reflective practice through training, supervision and self-directed learning, other clinical activities could include clinical administration, such as participation in referral and team meetings and report writing. There may also be opportunities to support service evaluation and research.

As shown below, on average, students spend about 1/3 of their 320 placement hours in training and supervision, about 1/5 of their time (about 60 hours) in direct client contact. The remainder is spent in self-directed learning, clinically related administration, research or service development.

*Please note these proportions are indicative and may vary from placement to placement.*



### Research Placements

The Research Placements also have a strong clinical focus and are highly suitable for students intending to pursue further training in Clinical Psychology. These placements allow students to enhance their skills in research with clinical populations and may involve activities such as assisting with literature reviews, ethics applications, recruitment, data collection and analysis. TPCP with Research Placement would complement the skillset of students who already have

clinical experience and who wish to develop their proficiency in clinical research, an important skill in pursuing Clinical Psychology training in the UK and elsewhere.

**Where are placements located?**

The majority of research placements will be around the Whiteknights Campus, as will some clinical placements. Other placements will be across Berkshire. Students will be expected to undertake reasonable travel to placements using public / independent transport. Students who have restrictions relating to travel to placements should inform us when expressing preferences about placements.

**Are placements paid?**

No, students receive academic credit for their work on placement so they are not paid.

**When do placements run?**

Placement activity usually takes place between 9 and 6, though there may be opportunities for placement work at different times such as evenings and weekends. Most placements are likely to require students to undertake activities on one or two days per week, although this might vary according to the needs of the service / supervisor. Similarly, some placement providers will want students to undertake placements throughout the academic year, perhaps on specific days, while others will want placement hours to be undertaken in blocks of time. Where students have preferences, these will be considered when allocating placements and we will aim to satisfy them wherever possible.

**When will placements be allocated? When will I know what placement I am on?**

Academic staff allocate students to clinical placements so we will contact offer-holders regarding their preferences prior to the start of the academic year, then, as far as possible, match students' experience and interests with available placements. Research placements are usually allocated in the first semester of study, once student preferences have been gathered. Placements vary from year to year, and some are not finalised until late summer, so it will not be possible for us to provide details about specific placements prior to the start of the academic year. Students' preferences will be considered alongside other factors but, due to elements beyond our control, it is not possible for us to provide detailed information about specific placements, or allocation to placements, sooner than the start of the academic year.

**Do placements offer supervision?**

Ongoing supervision will be provided by the placement provider, and students can contact the Placement Module Convenors for additional guidance and support. The exact nature of supervision provided will depend on the placement.

**Will students be able to practise therapies during their placement?**

This will depend on the nature of the placement although students on TPCP with Clinical Placement can expect some direct patient contact as part of their placement. Some clinical placements may offer exposure to psychological therapy under close supervision, but this will depend on the client group and, importantly, the abilities demonstrated by the student.

Students enrolled on TPCP with Research Placement will be contributing to clinically relevant research, typically conducted directly with populations such as older adults, children, and adolescents.

Furthermore, taught modules relating to psychological therapies and psychiatric disorders will provide all students (those on Clinical and Research Placements) with the opportunity to

develop therapeutic skills via role play and group work with peers.

**Are there any additional costs?**

Students should expect to bear reasonable travel costs to placements as this is not funded. Any other costs associated with modules can be found in the [Module Descriptions](#).

**Will I need a DBS Check?**

You will be required to apply for a Criminal Records Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and receive a satisfactory enhanced Certificate. Further details will be sent by the department.

If you live outside the UK, or have done for six months or more in the last 5 years, in addition to the DBS Certificate you will need to provide a certificate/ letter of good conduct from the relevant local police office. Offer holders will be sent further information in due course.

**OTHER QUESTIONS****Can I work alongside the MSc?**

For the University policy relating to work and study for full-time students, visit the [university website](#). Student are permitted to work for a maximum of 20 hours a week during semesters.

It is important to ensure that you achieve a balance between your academic work and other activities. Undertaking an MSc requires substantial commitment and while the summer is less intensive in terms of teaching, students are expected to undertake and complete projects and placements that together contribute more than half of the credits for their degree.

While students may choose to have part-time jobs while studying, it is unrealistic for most students to successfully complete the programme if they work full-time.

**How is part-time study configured?**

Part-time study is offered over two years. Students will usually complete all taught modules in the first year, with the placement and research project (dissertation) taken in the second year.

The majority of the second year is taken up with placement work and completion of the dissertation. The amount of 'scheduled' teaching is less, but students will have 'informal' teaching through attendance at placement and meetings with project supervisors, for example.