

**Royal Holloway, University of London**  
**Course specification for an undergraduate award**  
**MSci Psychology (C801)**

**Section 1 – Introduction to your course**

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

The MSci Psychology is delivered in four stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow modules to the value of 120 credits. The curriculum is based around a core of mandatory modules. Stage one provides a foundation for the later stages by providing a grounding in the main areas of psychology. In stage two, several of these areas are developed further and in greater depth. In stage three, students are given the opportunity to study specialist areas of psychology, and develop advanced research skills. In stage four, students are given further opportunity to study specialist areas of psychology, including ones at an advanced level, and to undertake an original research project.

The MSci Psychology course is to be accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as providing Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC)\*. Successful completion of the third year PS3194 Micro project and the achievement of a minimum degree classification of second class (lower) honours (2ii) is a British Psychological Society requirement for GBC recognition and therefore GBC status will not be given to any student who does not meet both of these requirements.

The following is brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

*Degree course* – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

*Module* – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	March 2022	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	MSci Psychology	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	3158	UCAS code	C801
Year of entry	2020/21		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Psychology	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time Part-time (for existing students only)	Duration of the course	Four years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	Assuming the application is approved, in order to be eligible for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society you must achieve a minimum of a lower second class honours degree and pass PS3201 Research Project.		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	<a href="https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/">https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/</a>	For queries on admissions:	<a href="mailto:study@royalholloway.ac.uk">study@royalholloway.ac.uk</a> .

Section 3 – Degree course structure										
3.1 Mandatory module information										
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study										
Year	Module code	Module title	Contact hours*	Self-study hours	Written exams	Practical assessment	Coursework	Credits**	FHEQ level	Module status (see below)
1	PS1010	Understanding Psychological Research	60	240	60%	0%	40%	30	4	MNC
1	PS1030	Understanding Individuals and Groups	20	130	50%	0%	50%	15	4	MC
1	PS1040	Understanding Development across the Lifespan	20	130	50%	0%	50%	15	4	MC
1	PS1070	How to be a Psychologist	25	125	0%	10%	90%	15	4	MC
1	PS1080	Understanding Perception and Cognition	20	130	80%	0%	20%	15	4	MC
1	PS1090	Understanding Neuroscience	20	130	80%	0%	20%	15	4	MC
1	PS1110	Understanding Mental Health and Wellbeing	20	130	80%	0%	20%	15	4	MC
2	PS2010	Psychological Research Methods and Analysis	84	216	40%	0%	60%	30	5	MNC
2	PS2021	Cognitive Psychology	20	130	80%	0%	20%	15	5	MC
2	PS2030	Social Psychology	20	130	70%	0%	30%	15	5	MC
2	PS2040	Developmental Psychology	20	130	0%	0%	100%	15	5	MC

2	PS2050	Personality and Individual Differences	20	130	70%	0%	30%	15	5	MC
2	PS2061	Brain and Behaviour	20	130	80%	0%	20%	15	5	MC
3	PS3201	Research Project	20	430	0%	0%	100%	45	6	MC
3	PS3193	Advanced Statistics	20	130	0%	0%	100%	15	6	MC
3	PS3194	Micro Project	20	130	0%	5%	95%	15	6	MC
4	PS4210	MSci Research Dissertation	20	580	0%	10%	90%	60	7	MNC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example; where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

\*Contact hours come in various different forms, and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff. It is intended that these contact hours will be face-to-face as far as possible, but in certain unavoidable situations, these may take place virtually.

\*\*The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary, however, the assessments listed above are all 'summative', which means you will receive a mark for it which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed. 'Coursework' might typically include a written assignment, like an essay. Coursework might also include a report, dissertation or portfolio. 'Practical assessments' might include an oral assessment or presentation, or a demonstration of practical skills required for the particular module.

### 3.2 Optional modules

In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. The following table lists a selection of optional modules that are likely to be available. However, not all may be available every year. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example; where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection, so it is important that this specification is read alongside your department's Student Handbook, which you can access via their [webpage](#).

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
None	PS2110: How can psychology change the world: Applied and developmental perspectives	PS3022 Communication in the Social World	PS4201 Psychology in Applied Settings
	PS2120: How can psychology change the world: Clinical and neuroscience perspectives	PS3031 Methods in Cognitive Neuroscience	PS4202 Intergroup and Interpersonal Processes
		PS3041 Advanced Developmental Psychology	PS4207 Neuroscience of Emotion and Decision Making
		PS3050 Health Psychology and Wellbeing	PS4208 Neuroscience in the Real World
		PS3230 Psychology of Brain Injury	PS4301 Topics in Psychological Science
		PS3061 The Ageing Brain	PS4303 Cognitive, Social and Neuroscience Approaches to Forensic Investigations
		PS3090 Social Psychology in the Real World	PS4306 Clinical Assessment and Treatment Approaches
		PS3110 Adult Psychopathology	
		PS3121 Developmental Disorders	
		PS3191 Social and Affective Neuroscience	

### 3.3 Optional module requirements

In year 3 you must take optional modules to a total value of 90 credits. These may be selected entirely from available Psychology third year options (as listed in the departmental student handbook) or you may substitute up to a maximum of 30 credits with appropriate modules in other departments. Students wishing to take an option (s) from another department(s) must check with the other department to ensure there is space available on the relevant module, and then discuss this with the Director of Undergraduate courses (Psychology) to clarify that the module is at an appropriate level and to agree the choice.

In year 4 you must take 60 credits from available FHEQ level 7 options (as listed in the departmental student handbook).

#### Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

All first year undergraduate students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to progress into the second year of study (unless their course includes the alternative mandatory SS1000 module). The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

Most students will be enrolled full-time on our courses; however, in exceptional circumstances students may complete the course on a part-time basis with the approval from the Head of Department. A part-time course will be developed in consultation with the Director of Teaching and Learning to suit the student's needs.

#### Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of the MSci Psychology degree are:

- to produce a scientific understanding of mind, brain, behaviour, and experience, and of the complex interactions between these;
- to allow students to gain an advanced understanding of real life applications of theory to the full range of experience and behaviour;
- to develop a strong breadth and depth to the understanding of advanced topics in Psychology;
- to develop in students an understanding of the role of empirical evidence in the creation and constraint of theory and the way in which theory guides the collection and interpretation of empirical data;
- to present multiple perspectives in a way that fosters critical evaluation;
- to provide knowledge of a range of research skills and methods for investigating experience and behaviour, culminating in an ability to apply knowledge and conduct research independently;
- to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills to be able to appreciate and evaluate theory, research findings, and applications.

## Section 6 - Course learning outcomes

In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (*Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (\*)*)

You will develop and demonstrate an advanced knowledge and understanding in the areas you choose to specialise in during your third and final stage, and in the following core areas of Psychology identified by the British Psychological Society:

1. biological psychology, including biological bases of behaviour, hormones and behaviour, neuropsychology, neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology **(K)**;
2. cognitive psychology, including perception, attention, learning, memory, thinking, language, consciousness and cognitive neuropsychology **(K)**;
3. developmental psychology, including infancy, childhood, adolescence, socio-emotional development, cognitive and language development, atypical development and social and cultural contexts of development **(K)**;
4. personality and individual differences, including abnormal and normal personality, psychological testing, intelligence, cognitive style, emotion, motivation and mood **(K)**;
5. social psychology, including social cognition, close relationships, attribution, attitudes, group processes and intergroup relations **(K)**;
6. conceptual issues in psychology, including the role of psychology as a science, introspectionist and behaviourist approaches to human behaviour, cognition and computers, historical concepts and current approaches, feminist psychology, psychology in a socio-political context **(K)**;
7. Research methods in psychology, including research design, appropriate statistical analysis of data, psychometrics and measurement techniques, and quantitative and qualitative methods **(K)**;
8. Ethical, theoretical and practical issues in research **(K)**;

### *Skills and other attributes*

9. integrating and applying ideas and findings across the multiple perspectives in psychology, recognising distinctive psychological approaches to relevant issues **(S)**;
10. identifying and evaluating general patterns in behaviour, psychological functioning and experience **(S)**;
11. carrying out empirical studies involving a variety of methods of data collection, including experiments, observation, psychometric tests, questionnaires, interviews **(S)**;
12. analysing data using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and presenting and evaluating research findings **(S);\***
13. employing evidence-based scientific reasoning and examining practical, theoretical and ethical issues associated with the use of different methodologies, paradigms and methods of analysis in psychology **(S)**;
14. use of a variety of psychological tools, including specialist software, laboratory equipment and psychometric instruments **(S)**;
15. defining research problems, generating and exploring testable hypotheses and research questions, choosing appropriate methodologies, evaluating methodologies and analyses employed, planning and carrying out original empirical research **(S)**;
16. written and oral communication **(S);\***
17. use of information technology (including spreadsheets, databases, word processing, email and WWW) **(S);\***
18. information handling and retrieval (including the use of libraries and computer technology) **(S);\***
19. retrieve and organise information effectively and handle primary source material critically **(S);\***
20. teamwork and, where appropriate, collaboration with colleagues, research participants and outside agencies **(S);\***
21. problem solving **(S);\***
22. sensitivity to contextual and interpersonal factors in behaviour **(S);\***

	<p>23. ability to work autonomously, and to demonstrate time management and organisational skills (S);*</p> <p>24. independence and pragmatism as a learner (S).*</p>
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**Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching is mostly by means of lectures and seminars, the latter generally providing a forum for students, with the support of their instructors, to engage in critical analysis and discussion of topics in a smaller and more interactive setting. Laboratory classes and practical workshops are also key teaching forums. Learning is through participation in teaching sessions, designated reading and completion of coursework. Essays and short written answers ensure that the skills of exposition and critique are developed and evaluated. At the end of the course, most students are required to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the conduct of a piece of original research under the close supervision of a member of staff. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by a combination of formal, unseen written examination and coursework. Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the [Department](#).

**Section 8 – Additional costs**

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this degree course.

**These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.**



Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
<b>QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level</b>	4-7
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
<b>QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)</b>	<a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements</a>
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10 – Further information
<p>This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online <a href="#">Module Catalogue</a>. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).</p> <p>Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during the course of your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.</p>

<b>Section 11 – Intermediate exit awards (where available)</b>		
You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.		
<b>Award</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Awarding body</b>
BSc Psychological Science	Students who fail to progress from stage three to stage four, but meet the requirements for an award will be awarded a single Honours BSc Psychological Science degree.	University of London
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

<b>Section 12 - Associated award(s)</b>	
MSci Psychology (C801)	BSc Psychological Science (exit award only)