

COURSE SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Doctorate in Clinical Psychology**. This specification is valid for new entrants and current students from **September 2024**.

The aims of the course are to:

- Provide an up-to-date, balanced coverage of the major orientations, ideas and knowledge that inform an evidence based clinical psychology practice;
- Develop trainees' knowledge and awareness of NHS guidelines, relevant national policies, and professional guidance related to the practice of clinical psychology;
- Develop trainees' clinical skills and provide them with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in assessment, formulation and intervention;
- Develop trainees' capacity to reflect upon and evaluate their work;
- Develop trainees' leadership skills and service development capabilities;
- Promote culturally aware and culturally sensitive practice that takes into account the wide range of diversity of those who use clinical psychology services;
- Develop the critical, analytical, and research powers of trainees in relation to clinical psychology;
- Develop the critical, analytical, and research powers of trainees in relation to clinical psychology;
- Develop trainees' ability to communicate to a variety of audiences, including service users, using different modalities;
- Foster trainees' awareness of operating within the legal and ethical boundaries of clinical psychology practice;
- Foster high standards of professionalism and value-based practice in relation to conduct and practice;
- Provide trainees with opportunities for shared multidisciplinary learning and practice with other practitioners in healthcare;
- Develop the ability of trainees to manage their own learning and welfare.

The course is studied over three years full-time.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the course, and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, courses and the availability of individual modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the course provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- Theoretical and empirical basis of Clinical Psychology practice in the core domains of child, adult, older adult and learning disability health and mental health.
- Social, psychological and physiological principles related to human health, mental health and disease across the age, ability and social spectra.
- Current developments in the practice of Clinical Psychology.
- The context of healthcare provision including the history, structure, dynamics, policies and goals of the NHS and psychology services.
- Clinical knowledge and understanding in key areas of practice as well as in relevant areas of personal interest to the Trainee.

Skills and other attributes

- Critically analyse, evaluate and interpret the evidence underpinning Clinical Psychology practice.
- Apply the skills needed for academic study and enquiry.
- Evaluate research and a variety of types of information and evidence critically.
- Synthesise information from a number of sources in order to gain a coherent understanding of theory and relevant research that can be applied to practice.
- Apply strategies for appropriate selection of relevant information from a wide source and large body of knowledge.
- Utilise problem-solving skills.
- Critically appraise research in its application to clinical psychological theory and practice.
- Undertake skilled, effective, competent, safe, evaluative, reflective, ethically guided practice in relation to their own work and that of their colleagues.
- Communicate effectively with clients, relatives, carers, and healthcare professionals establishing professional and ethical relationships.
- Understand and respond to the needs of clients from varied socio-cultural backgrounds through the use and development of effective and relevant forms of intervention
- Undertake appropriate clinical assessments, developing practice relevant formulations from the verbal and physical presentation of an individual and evaluate and assess the outcomes.
- Reflect upon and make informed decisions about clinical practices consistent with accepted approaches and individual client needs.
- Effectively and safely apply transferable skills to the management of individuals, with continual analysis and evaluation of outcome and appropriate modification of intervention.
- Make evaluative judgements on the technical outcomes of formal psychometric assessment procedures.
- Undertake teaching and research that will contribute to the advancement, in all its forms, of the psychology of health and social care
- Achieve competence in the use of statistical software and statistical methods for research and evaluation of interventions.
- Communicate effectively with specialist and non-specialist audiences using a variety of means. *
- Work both independently and collaboratively, and provide and accept professional support from peers. *
- Achieve skills in presentation of case reports, research, report writing and teaching activities. *
- Evaluate his/her own academic, professional and clinical performance. *
- Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical and practical situations. *
- Manage change effectively and respond to changing demands. *
- Manage their work, learning and continuing professional development needs. *
- Understand career opportunities and challenges ahead and begin to plan a career path. *
- Commitment to good practice and to be proactive in helping to shape healthcare services and the profession*.
- Information management skills, for example, IT skills. *

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Methods used to enable knowledge and understanding outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated:

Teaching and learning - Lead lectures; tutor-led tutorials; Trainee-led case and personal research presentations, seminars, supervised clinical experience, on-site visits to NHS services.

Assessment - essays; written unseen examinations, thesis and small-scale research report writing, journal paper preparation, observation of performance and feedback from tutors and supervisors.

Methods used to enable intellectual skills outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated:

Teaching and learning - Lead lectures; trainee and tutor-led seminars; self-directed learning; the use of research-based teaching materials and methods; work-based learning over three years in NHS Clinical Psychology and other

Assessment - written exam papers; practical exams; essays; case study analysis; dissertation and small-scale report, assessments by NHS supervisors through training contracts, mid- and end of placement reviews.

Methods used to enable professional practical skills outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated:

Teaching and learning - Taught module; clinical placements; seminars; lectures.

Assessment; by observations and interactions with qualified NHS Supervisors using pro-forma for mid and end of placement reviews & discussion.

Methods used to enable transferable/key skills outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated:

Teaching and learning - Transferable/key skills are generally incorporated within academic and placement evaluations, judged on experience-relevant criteria and related to relevant assessments as appropriate.

Assessment - Examples of strategies include: direct observation with clients, in team setting, letter and report writing, preparation of case reports.

Full details of the assessments can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the course structure(s)

The course is studied over three years full-time. 20% is University-based clinical and research teaching and seminars (75 weeks 2 days per week, 6 hours per day teaching), 20% committed to implementing the major research project and 50% (152 weeks, minimum 2 days per week) is based in NHS services on 6 supervised placements in varied settings. There is an Induction month, preparing trainees for their first entry to NHS services and 5 weeks per year annual leave. One day in 10 placement days is set aside for clinically related personal study (about 5% of the total programme time). The remaining 5% is academic study time (examination preparation; clinical, academic, programme related reading etc.).

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Progression and award requirements

Full assessment details are provided in the Trainee Handbooks. Minimum pass mark is 50% for each piece of work.

Award

To qualify for the award of Degree, Trainees must complete and pass all the module requirements detailed below.

- **Clinical Competence** - Pass on six evaluations of clinical competence on placement and complete a clinical interview as a formative exercise
- **Reports of Clinical Activity (RCA)** - Pass three reports of clinical work.
- **Service-Related Research Project (SRRP)** - Pass one report of a piece of service-related research undertaken on a placement in the first two years of the course.
- **Examinations** - Pass a written paper at the end of the first year of training.

- **Research Methods** - Complete a Research Critical Review as a formative exercise and pass a Statistics Assessment completed during the first two years.
- **Research Thesis** – contains 3 sections which constitute the thesis: a literature review, an empirical paper and a section on impact and reflection. Assessed by oral examination – must be passed.

Failure at a first attempt will lead to a re-attempt that must be passed for the trainee to continue on the course.

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Student support and guidance

- Four-week induction programme for orientation and introducing study and basic practice skills.
- Trainee Handbooks and Syllabus with detailed reading materials and teaching session handouts.
- Clinical psychology and other library and literature database access
- Staff-trainee ratios for teaching of 1:10.
- Extensive library and other learning resources and facilities.
- Clinical Psychology test equipment and resources: trainee computer rooms.
- Clinical education supported by clinical supervisors and assessors located in provider units.
- Close collaboration between the University and regional clinical sites via the University Clinical Placements Co-ordinators;
- Academic liaison staff make regular, planned visits to the clinical placements to support and collaborate with Trainees and the clinical supervisors and assessors.
- All Trainees are allocated personal tutors whose role is to assist with personal problems and to advise on pastoral issues.
- Annual Personal Development Reviews.
- Independent Personal Advisor Scheme for independent consultations.
- Trainee representation on Course Management Committee, the Service User and Carer Advisory Group, the Diversity Working Group and other committees.
- Trainee email and open personal access to tutorial staff including the Course Director.
- Access to Trainee counsellors on campus and through employing Health Trust.

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

- Teaching session reviews (feedback questionnaires and staff report).
- Termly student-staff committees for each year group.
- Work samples and marking to External Examiner.
- External Examiner reports.
- Annual programme review and report prepared by Course Director and considered by College, Periodic review and revalidation by College and Purchasers, involving external panel members.
- Course accreditation by British Psychological Society.
- Course approval by the Health Care Professions Council
- Course accreditation by the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy.
- Contract Performance Monitoring by Health Education England (commissioners);
- Annual staff appraisal.
- Annual Curriculum Review Group.
- Peer observation of teaching.

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

- Termly student-staff committees for each year group. Trainee representation at the Course Management Committee.
- Written feedback on each teaching session.

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

- Course Executive (fortnightly).
- Course Management Committee (2 x pa; includes representatives of each training cohort, NHS staff).
- Research Degree Courses Committee.
- Board of Examiners - meets in September and October to consider marks, progression and awards.

Staff development priorities include:

- Staff expected to continue clinically relevant practice or research.
- Staff appraisal scheme and institutional staff development courses.
- Regular programme team meetings and staff attendance at relevant conferences.

Role of External Examiners:

External Examiners from the academic clinical community of Clinical Psychology are appointed by the Executive Committee for Assessment. At least one External Examiner will be registered as a Practitioner Psychologist with the Health Care Professions Council and entitled to practise using the title of "Clinical Psychologist". The role of external examiners is that of moderators of coursework. In order to do this they:

- approve examination programmes;
- review coursework;
- see examination scripts;
- examine theses;
- attend the Departmental Assessment Board.

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Admission requirements

The course is only available to graduates with a recognised degree in Psychology – meeting the requirements of the graduate basis for chartered membership of the British Psychological Society. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the Clearing House for Clinical Psychology web page (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/>).

Additional requirements:

Right to work in the UK (for NHS funded places)

Relevant clinical experience.

All Trainees will be screened by and NHS Occupational Health Department to assess their fitness to undertake the clinical component of the degree.

Declaration of disclosure of any criminal convictions including those outstanding.

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Further learning and career opportunities

Graduates of this course are eligible to apply for registration with the Health Care Professions Council and following successful registration are able to practise using the title "Clinical Psychologist" in the NHS or other sectors, and attain chartered clinical psychologist status under the regulations of the British Psychological Society. For further details on see www.hpc-uk.org and www.bps.org.uk. Note, that HPC does also require character and health references in addition to successful completion of the programme.

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Indicators of quality and standards

In the REF 2021 results overall, 67% of Psychology's research was classified as 4* world leading in terms of originality, significance, and rigour, highlighting the exceptional quality of the department's research outputs, impact and environment.

The department received a top score for its research impact, with 100% judged to be 4* which is the highest standard of excellence. This outstanding result for research impact reinforces the importance and value of the department's research to society and the economy.

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List of courses

The course is taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and leads to an award of the University of London. The course is approved by the Health Professions Council and accredited by the British Psychological Society. The Banner course code is given in parentheses.

Doctorate Course in Clinical Psychology

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (1057)

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