

**REGENT'S SCHOOL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOLOGY**

**DPsych Counselling Psychology**

**2018/2019**

**PROGRAMME HANDBOOK**

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>WELCOME FROM THE PROGRAMME TEAM</b> .....   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>SECTION 1: Introduction</b> .....   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>1.1 Regent's Mission Statement</b> .....  | <b>5</b>  |
| 1.1.1 Awarding institution: The Open University .....                                  | 5         |
| <b>1.2 How to Use This Handbook</b> .....  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>1.3 Glossary</b> .....  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>1.4 The Faculty of Humanities, Arts &amp; Social Sciences (HASS)</b> .....          | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>1.5 Equal Opportunities Statement</b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>1.6 Support for Students with Disabilities</b> .....                                | <b>8</b>  |
| 1.6.1 General information .....  | 8         |
| 1.6.2 Student support agreements .....   | 8         |
| 1.6.3 Supporting documentation.....  | 8         |
| 1.6.4 Funding .....  | 8         |
| 1.6.5 Free screening .....   | 8         |
| 1.6.6 Emergency evacuation for students with a physical disability .....               | 9         |
| <b>1.7 Members of Staff and Contact Details</b> .....                                  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>1.8 Teaching Philosophy and Personal Tutors</b> .....                               | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>1.9 Support for Learning at Regent's</b> .....                                      | <b>9</b>  |
| 1.9.1 Blackboard, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).....                          | 9         |
| 1.9.2 Academic skills.....   | 9         |
| 1.9.3 The Tate Library .....   | 9         |
| 1.9.4 The RSPP Subject Librarian.....  | 10        |
| 1.9.5 Senate House Library and the British Library .....                               | 10        |
| <b>1.10 Introduction to the Programme Specification</b> .....                          | <b>10</b> |
| 1.10.1 Level descriptors .....   | 11        |
| 1.10.2 Learning outcomes .....   | 11        |
| <b>SECTION 2: Programme Specification</b> .....  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2.1 Qualification</b> .....   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2.2 Programme Title</b> .....   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2.3 Programme Type</b> .....  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2.4 Programme Management</b> .....  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2.5 Admissions Criteria</b> .....   | <b>13</b> |
| 2.5.1 Specific admissions requirements .....   | 13        |
| 2.5.2 Level of English.....  | 14        |
| <b>2.6 Academic Standards and Assessment for the Award of DPsych</b> .....             | <b>14</b> |
| 2.6.1 QAA standards: Doctoral level (level 8) .....                                    | 14        |
| 2.6.2 Master's level (level 7 – Year 1) .....  | 15        |
| 2.6.3 Practitioner doctorates versus PhD degrees.....                                  | 15        |
| <b>2.7 Counselling Psychology Training and the HCPC</b> .....                          | <b>16</b> |
| 2.7.1 Registration: The role of the BPS and the HCPC.....                              | 16        |
| 2.7.2 Protected titles.....  | 17        |
| 2.7.3 Accessing important HCPC documents.....  | 17        |
| 2.7.4 Accessing important BPS documents.....   | 17        |
| <b>2.8 Purpose, Philosophy and Features of the DPsych Programme</b> .....              | <b>17</b> |
| <b>2.9 Details of the Programme</b> .....  | <b>19</b> |
| 2.9.1 Rationale for the degree .....   | 19        |
| 2.9.2 Design of the degree .....   | 19        |
| 2.9.3 DPsych thesis and final year portfolio .....                                     | 22        |
| <b>2.10 Details of Assessments and Assessment Procedures</b> .....                     | <b>24</b> |
| 2.10.1 Competences and standards of proficiency at levels 7 and 8 .....                | 24        |
| 2.10.2 Key aims .....  | 24        |
| 2.10.3 Professional level descriptors for assessment at Master's level (level 7) ..... | 25        |
| 2.10.4 Professional level descriptors for assessment at doctoral level (level 8) ..... | 26        |
| 2.10.5 Definition and types of assessment .....  | 27        |
| 2.10.6 Grades, percentages, and marking schemes .....                                  | 28        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 2.10.7 Submission of work .....  | 31        |
| 2.10.8 Extenuating circumstances.....  | 32        |
| 2.10.9 Resubmissions.....  | 33        |
| 2.10.10 Feedback on work .....   | 34        |
| 2.10.11 Monitoring of assessment standards and moderation.....               | 34        |
| <b>2.11 Credits and Notional Learning Time .....</b>                         | <b>34</b> |
| <b>2.12 Schedule of Modules, Assessments and Credits .....</b>               | <b>35</b> |
| <b>2.13 Progression and Awards Criteria.....</b>                             | <b>36</b> |
| 2.13.1 Progression regulations.....  | 37        |
| 2.13.2 Award criteria for the DPpsych in Counselling Psychology .....        | 38        |
| 2.13.3 Aegrotat awards .....   | 39        |
| 2.13.4 Level 7 exit awards.....  | 39        |
| 2.13.5 Breaks in study.....  | 40        |
| <b>SECTION 3: Relevant Regulations .....</b>                                 | <b>41</b> |
| <b>3.1 Academic Integrity and Misconduct .....</b>                           | <b>41</b> |
| <b>3.2 Code of Conduct for Students and Student Disciplinary Policy.....</b> | <b>42</b> |
| <b>3.3 Fitness to Study .....</b>  | <b>42</b> |
| <b>3.4 Attendances, Absences, and Lateness to Classes.....</b>               | <b>43</b> |
| <b>3.5 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners .....</b>            | <b>43</b> |
| 3.5.1 Programme external examiners.....                                      | 43        |
| 3.5.2 Portfolio external examiners .....                                     | 44        |
| <b>3.6 Trainee Representation and Feedback.....</b>                          | <b>44</b> |
| <b>3.7 Quality Assurance Procedures .....</b>                                | <b>45</b> |
| <b>3.8 Appeals.....</b>  | <b>46</b> |
| <b>SECTION 4: DPpsych Modules .....</b>                                      | <b>47</b> |
| <b>Appendix A: Professional &amp; Ethical Contract .....</b>                 | <b>48</b> |

# WELCOME FROM THE PROGRAMME TEAM

Dear Trainee

We extend you a very warm welcome to the DPsych Counselling Psychology at Regent's University London. This three-year doctoral training on our beautiful campus in the middle of Regent's Park, is run by staff who are passionately committed to providing a high-quality professional doctorate in counselling psychology. Our overarching aim is to help produce skilled, reflexive scientist-practitioners who will be a credit to their field and of great help to many. We see our trainees as our current and future potential colleagues, and we look forward to collaborating with you on your journey of learning and development.

Although our programme takes place at Regent's, we are validated by the Open University. This *Programme Handbook* overlaps with the *Regulations for validated awards of The Open University*, gives you the broad overview of the programme, and signposts you to other important documents.

**Section 1** of this handbook introduces the programme and its staff.

**Section 2** delves into more detail about the programme specification.

**Section 3** offers a brief overview of some of the more important regulations and points you to a variety of other documents that may prove useful to you.

**Section 4** is not much of a section in itself but points you to just how much there is to discover in the *Assessment Handbook!*

Finally, in the last section you will find your *Professional & Ethical Contract*. As a DPsych trainee, you are in the privileged position of interacting with many others on topics of great sensitivity, and it is crucial that you understand and agree to the standards of ethical conduct for trainees on such a training. We will ask you to sign this at induction.

Use this handbook in conjunction with the other handbooks relevant to our programme. These include the *Regent's Student Handbook* and the *Regent's University London Academic Regulations 2018/2019*, as well as the *DPsych Assessment Handbook*, the *DPsych Research Handbook*, the *DPsych Placements Handbook*, and the *Regulations for validated awards of The Open University*. All handbooks are available on the Programme Handbooks tab of Blackboard. They should tell you nearly everything you need to know; if not, however, please do not hesitate to ask. We are here to support you, and we look forward to working with you.

All best wishes

The DPsych Programme Team

# SECTION I: Introduction<sup>1</sup>

## I.1 Regent's Mission Statement

Regent's seeks to foster internationalism and professionalism through the provision of appropriate, applied, academic programmes that embody a spirit of international understanding and mutual co-operation, allied to high level professional capability and responsibility. The primary ambition of the University is to provide a uniquely stimulating and multicultural learning environment in which trainees aspire to become global citizens capable of contributing effectively and responsibly to a 21st century environment.

### I.1.1 Awarding institution: The Open University

Regent's University London is approved by The Open University as an appropriate organisation to offer higher education programmes leading to Open University validated awards.

The DPsych Counselling Psychology has been developed and is delivered by Regent's. It has been validated through a process of external peer review by The Open University as being of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to The Open University validated awards of DPsych in Counselling Psychology.

It is important for you to familiarise yourself with the regulations for validated awards of The Open University. You can find these regulations under the Programme Handbooks tab on Blackboard. These regulations will supersede those of Regent's University London, except where noted that local Regent's processes, procedures, and regulations apply.

For further information about institutional approval and validation by The Open University, visit [www.open.ac.uk/validate](http://www.open.ac.uk/validate).

## I.2 How to Use This Handbook

This handbook begins with an introduction, followed by the Programme Specification for the DPsych Counselling Psychology (DPsych) degree. This public and official document is a formal and detailed guide to your degree and should be read in conjunction with the other DPsych handbooks - i.e., the *Research Handbook*, the *Assessment Handbook*, and the *Placement Handbook*. You should also consult the *Regent's University Academic Regulations 2018/2019*, which is available through the University Intranet (Blackboard), and in hard copy (for consultation only) in the Student Registry, on the ground floor of the Acland Building. In that handbook you will find further information about the policies and regulations of Regent's University.

Individual programmes have programme-specific regulations approved by validating bodies or agencies, which may, in some circumstances, differ from University regulations. These regulations are usually set due to professional or statutory requirements. In these cases, programme-specific regulations may take precedence over regulations in the *Quality Handbook*.

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<sup>1</sup> The information here is correct in so far as possible at the time of distribution. Omissions and errors may occur. Comments, corrections, feedback and suggestions for additions should be sent in writing to the Head of Programmes.

This document is prepared ahead of the academic period to which it relates, in order that potential applicants can have an overview of the programme. As a result, some changes may occur, and these will be communicated by e-mail in advance of the publication of a new handbook.

The University reserves the right to make such alterations or amendments as necessary and as approved by the Open University. Any offer of a place is made based on current terms and conditions, and it is important that you are aware of these terms before accepting your offer. If you are unclear about any of the terms or conditions, you should ask the Admissions Office before you confirm your acceptance. By accepting a place at Regent's University London, you are agreeing to abide by its rules and regulations.

### 1.3 Glossary

- **Lecturer, tutor:** a member of the academic staff who teaches on our programme.
- **Personal tutor:** a member of staff who acts as a personal and professional mentor.
- **Clinical/placement supervisor:** an appropriately qualified psychologist or psychotherapeutic practitioner approved to supervise your placement activity.
- **Faculty:** a large academic unit, led by a Dean who oversees heads of school, heads of programmes, course leaders and tutors. There are two faculties in Regent's University: the Faculty of Business and Management (BaM) and the Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS).
- **Timetable:** a schedule of the days, times and classrooms for each module for which a trainee is registered.
- **Time:** The 24-hour clock, as used by many tutors and Schools: e.g., 1.00pm = 13.00.
- **Degree programme:** A group of modules that enable a trainee to fulfil the requirements for a specific degree (e.g., DPsych).
- **Module:** a credit-bearing programme of academic work focused on a particular area.
- **Module outline:** a specification about a particular module, including the intended learning outcomes, aims, rationale, indicative content, provisional reading lists, and assessment method.
- **Module learning outcomes:** "What a post-graduate trainee will know and be able to do during and on completion of the programme." We define learning outcomes as concepts, skills or applications you would be expected to know, understand, or be able to do now or in the future as a result of a specific learning experience. They are written in general and specific terms and focus on five categories.
- **Assessment:** academic work that counts towards the final mark awarded for a module; these can include assessed presentations or clinical skills demonstrations; essays; exams; placement logs; process reports and case studies; and other assignments set by the lecturer.
- **Credit value:** each module has a credit value, showing the number of credits the module holds; module credit values are expressed in units of 5 (e.g., 10 credits, 15 credits, 20 credits, etc.). The credit values correspond to the number of formal student hours, including both direct contact hours (on campus or for external clinical experiences) and self-directed learning hours (see below). Trainees need a certain number of credits to complete their degree programme.
- **Formal trainee hours:** each module has a specified number of study hours. These reflect the amount of class contact time and out-of-class preparation and self-directed learning. 10 credits equate to 100 formal trainee learning hours.

## **I.4 The Faculty of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences (HASS)**

The Faculty of HASS is part of Regent's University London, which is a private company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, with charitable status. It is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Trustees are the directors of this company and have ultimate responsibility for the University. They delegate its day-to-day management to the Chief Executive and the senior management team, including the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean is not a member of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees work with the Chief Executive and the senior management team at Regent's University to ensure the smooth running of programmes. The University Senate is ultimately responsible for academic matters.

## **I.5 Equal Opportunities Statement**

You should be aware that Regent's University London has the following statement on student equality and diversity and recognises the importance of affording equal opportunity and fair treatment to existing students and prospective students. In addition, Regent's expects students to respect that staff members and visitors to the University should be treated likewise.

One of Regent's institutional strengths is its wide and diverse population of students and staff, which adds to the University's intellectual capital. In promoting diversity, Regent's commits to creating an inclusive environment in which personal uniqueness and differences are respected and valued. The University therefore, in accordance with equalities legislation and codes of practice, is committed to ensure that every student receives just and equitable treatment, regardless of age, cultural background, marital status, disability, ethnicity, gender, caring responsibilities, religion or sexual orientation.

To ensure that equality and diversity are respected, the University will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying of any student or member of staff. The University will endeavour to provide appropriate support to any student who has been the subject of discrimination, harassment or bullying. Existing University procedures, policies and codes may be used to fully investigate the matter. This may include reference to one, or some of the following:

- Code of Conduct for Students
- Student Complaints Policy
- Disability policy

**Discrimination:** The unfavourable treatment of a person or group on the grounds of a personal trait rather than on the basis of individual merit.

**Harassment:** Any form of improper, offensive and unwanted conduct that can violate a person's dignity and can create an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

## **1.6 Support for Students with Disabilities**

The University is committed to developing an environment in which students are given the opportunity to demonstrate and realise their full potential. You are encouraged to disclose any disability on application, so that the Disability Officer can send you relevant information in advance. A condition is considered a disability if it meets the Equality Act's (2010) definition. If you have not disclosed on application, please contact the Disability Officer on arrival at the University: email: [disability@regents.ac.uk](mailto:disability@regents.ac.uk). Please be aware that non-disclosure of a disability may affect the level of support that the University may be able to provide.

### **1.6.1 General information**

The Student Disability Policy is on the University website's *Disability Information* pages. Additional information is on the Intranet's Disability Information pages. The University will ensure:

- That your requirements are assessed on an individual basis.
- That reasonable adjustments are provided to you, within the resources available.
- Unless there is a serious risk or major concern, that information regarding your disability is treated in a confidential manner, according to the University's confidential policy.

### **1.6.2 Student support agreements**

Where possible, support should be agreed within three weeks of classes starting. Details of deadlines for confirmation of special examination requirements are in each module area on Blackboard. If you have specific needs, arrange to meet the Disability Officer to complete a Student Support Agreement (SSA). You will need to bring appropriate supporting documentation to the meeting. Once you have an SSA, it is your responsibility to send it to relevant staff each term, including your lecturers.

### **1.6.3 Supporting documentation**

If you need an SSA you must provide up-to-date written evidence of your disability. This could be, for example, an educational psychologist's report or, in some cases, a doctor's letter.

Documentation must give enough detail to allow the Disability Officer to assess your needs. It should make clear that the condition may be considered a "disability" under UK law.

Documentation should be on letter headed paper, signed by an appropriate professional. It should clearly state diagnosis and any resulting recommendations for academic study at university level.

Documentation should be in English, or an authorised translation provided.

### **1.6.4 Funding**

UK students, and those with "settled status," may be entitled to apply for *Disabled Students' Allowance*. You are advised to check course eligibility before applying: information is available on the website. You are responsible for providing any supporting documentation needed for your application. The Disability Officer can assist you with your application.

### **1.6.5 Free screening**

If you suspect that you may have a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD, the Disability Officer provides a free screening service. Screening should give you an indication of whether it is worthwhile seeking a full diagnostic assessment. Details are on the intranet.



### **1.6.6 Emergency evacuation for students with a physical disability**

If you may need some extra help evacuating a University building in an emergency, let the Disability Officer know. She will put you in touch with the Fire Officer so that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan can be drawn up.

## **1.7 Members of Staff and Contact Details**

To contact members of staff you may use the telephone voicemail system or email. Contact details can be found on the intranet along with room numbers. In either case you should ask staff to arrange a time when they can see you. Please be aware that in the case of fractional (i.e., not full-time) staff, email may be a more effective means of reaching a particular staff member. If telephoning from outside the University call the Regent's Main Switchboard at 0207 487 7700 and ask them to connect you with the extension number you require.

## **1.8 Teaching Philosophy and Personal Tutors**

The DPsych at Regent's primarily involves seminars and tutorials and aims to promote a maximally collegial and collaborative atmosphere among trainees and staff. Cohorts are small – generally no more than 16 individuals in any given year. We aim to offer each trainee a bespoke system of support throughout their training.

Trainees are supported in their personal and professional development through a system of personal tutoring. Trainees are allocated a personal tutor throughout their training and will have contact with their tutor through regular weekly timetabled individual or group tutorials. Personal tutors fulfil the role of "Coordinating Supervisor" required by the British Psychological Society (BPS). For more information about the role of the Personal Tutor, see the *Placement Handbook*.

## **1.9 Support for Learning at Regent's**

### **1.9.1 Blackboard, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

Every module on the DPsych is housed on Blackboard, through which modular materials are delivered, assessments are submitted, and feedback is returned. Module leaders and lecturers place a variety of different kinds of learning materials on Blackboard, including multi-media resources, making it a rich learning resource with which students can engage whether on or off campus.

### **1.9.2 Academic skills**

Regent's has a central Academic Skills department, which offers a variety of workshops and opportunities for one-to-one support. Please see Blackboard for the Academic Skills portal. In recognition of the DPsych requiring specialised academic skills, a separate mailbox exists specifically for the programme ([doctoralskills@regents.ac.uk](mailto:doctoralskills@regents.ac.uk)) for trainees to contact the academic support officers for help with assignments.

### **1.9.3 The Tate Library**

The Tate Library provides support for our trainees in their learning. All trainees have access to the Library's resources, which include public access computers, printing facilities, specialist software for supporting students with learning difficulties, laptop computers which can be borrowed by students, and a bookable group study area.

The Library has an extensive collection (over 6,000 volumes) of books in the fields of Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, as well as hard copy subscriptions to journals in these fields. There are, however, an increasing number of e-resources, to include full-text books. RUL Discovery is a one-stop portal for searching the library's resources (see below).

The Library's online resources are particularly rich: with subscriptions to the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences database, the PsycINFO suite of journal databases published by the American Psychological Association and PEP web, which provides online access to books and journal articles in the field of psychoanalysis.

Our postgraduate students make use of the Citrix portal, an online gateway giving full access to all the Library resources from students' home computers. Inter-library loans are also available; in recognition of the specialised nature of postgraduate study, and the esoteric nature of some of the sources students may need to consult, our postgraduate students are entitled to ten inter-library loans per annum at no charge.

All Regent's students are introduced to these resources during their induction.

#### **1.9.4 The RSPP Subject Librarian**

The Library supports student learning via physical and online resources, and via the RSPP Subject Librarian, who is responsible for liaising with academic staff on book purchases and subscriptions to academic journals. The Subject Librarian is also responsible for liaising with students, both formally through course committees, and on an ad-hoc basis, as their first port of call for queries about books, online resources and journal articles. Database search sessions are offered to all postgraduate students by their Subject Librarian. Students are also encouraged to contact their Librarian with individual queries about accessing online resources.

#### **1.9.5 Senate House Library and the British Library**

In-training members of the Division of Counselling Psychology are also entitled to the ample resources of Senate House Library in London, and trainees can request letters from the Head of Programmes to gain Reading Room privileges at the British Library.

### **1.10 Introduction to the Programme Specification**

The key elements of the doctoral programme that trainees will be pursuing over the next three years are set out in the **Programme Specification** in **Section 2** below. This section gives specific details about the training's (i) qualification and title; (ii) structure, purposes, distinctive features, and subjects; (iii) learning outcomes and level descriptors; and (iv) information about the Regent's learning environment. The programme specification contains considerable detail about the key areas of learning that are expected to take place at each stage.

The DPsych, and the learning outcomes and professional competencies that trainees will achieve over the course of their training, have been designed to meet requirements set by both the BPS and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for counselling psychology training programmes. The programme is accredited by the BPS, the professional body and learned society for psychologists. This means it meets the standards the BPS sets for counselling psychology

training in the UK, and on completion of their training, graduates of the programme are eligible to apply for chartered membership of the Society (enabling them to use the designation *CPsychol*), and for full membership of the Society's Division of Counselling Psychology. See *Standards for the Accreditation of Doctoral Programmes in Counselling Psychology* for further information on these standards.

The programme is also approved by the HCPC, the statutory regulator for practitioner psychologists in the UK. This means that it meets the HCPC's *Standards of Education and Training (SETs)*, and therefore, on completion of their training graduates of the programme will have met the *Standards of Proficiency (SoPs)* that counselling psychologists need to demonstrate. Therefore, on successful completion of the programme, graduates will be eligible to register with the HCPC, and upon registration, will be able to practise using the title "Registered Counselling Psychologist."

### **1.10.1 Level descriptors**

During the first year of training, coursework is set and evaluated at Master's (M) level (or Level 7). During the second two years of training, coursework is set and evaluated at Doctoral (D) level (or Level 8). More information on these level descriptors can be found elsewhere in the *Programme Handbook* and *Assessment Handbook*.

### **1.10.2 Learning outcomes**

These can be defined as "What a trainee should know and be able to do during and on completion of the programme"; in other words, they set the level of complexity, academic standards, and learner's autonomy expected while on the programme. Programme learning outcomes cover five domains of learning:

- A. Knowledge and understanding of the academic content**
- B. Cognitive and intellectual capabilities**
- C. Transferable and practical skills**
- D. Subject domain or subject specific skills**
- E. Personal and interpersonal skills**

Specifically:

**Knowledge and Understanding** reflect the conceptual understanding of the subject matter and are acquired through lectures, seminars, presentations and tutorials, as well as through trainees' own reading and experiential learning. These learning experiences are supplemented by central University training in library, IT and study skills.

**Cognitive and Intellectual** skills, such as critical thinking or evaluation, problem solving, research, analysis, and creativity are acquired through engagement with group discussions, seminars, and lectures, both individually and in small groups. These learning experiences are supplemented by central University training in library, IT and study skills.

**Transferable and Practical Skills** reflect trainees' professional growth and are acquired through therapeutic training modules, clinical supervision, practice at clinical placements, group discussions and therapeutic skills assessment exercises in clinical seminars, group tutorials, and elsewhere.

**Subject Domain or Specific Skills** reflect competency within specific requirements, such as research projects and group facilitation, and are acquired through lectures, workshops, continuous professional development activities, and in hands-on project work both individually and in small groups.

**Personal and Interpersonal Skills** describe trainees' critical and reflective abilities to reflect upon themselves as well as interaction with others, as well as personal evaluation and development. Such skills are acquired across a range of learning experiences, to include all interactions within the cohort; within clinical seminars and group tutorials; and in one-to-one personal tutorials. Personal development also occurs in the 40 hours of personal therapy required per training year. These experiences are designed to equip trainees with relational skills, the ability to engage in self-reflection, autonomy, and awareness of workplace issues.

# SECTION 2: Programme Specification

## 2.1 Qualification

DPsych

## 2.2 Programme Title

Counselling Psychology

## 2.3 Programme Type

Modular

## 2.4 Programme Management

The Head of Programmes, in consultation with the Head of School and Associate Dean, is responsible for overseeing the academic delivery of the programme and ensuring that there is compliance with the OU-validated programme regulations and due consideration of the University *Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy*. In these tasks, they are supported by the Registry Department.

## 2.5 Admissions Criteria

In accordance with the BPS and HCPC standards and criteria for entry, applicants to the programme are required to meet the following entry requirements, which are assessed during the interview and selection procedure.

### 2.5.1 Specific admissions requirements

- A minimum of 2:1 psychology degree or above (in exceptional circumstances, such as for individuals who hold a Master's or PhD degree, we will consider a 2:2 award). **Evaluated via transcripts/certificates.**
- Reasonably substantive experience with face-to-face counselling work or other formal helping roles (e.g., one year's full-time equivalent). **Evaluated through CV and letters of reference, one of which should preferably be from someone familiar with applicant's counselling work.**
- **OR** In cases where the applicant has less clinical experience and/or does not have a letter of reference speaking directly to the applicant's clinical skills, the applicant must have successfully completed a Certificate or Foundation course in counselling skills, or an alternative introduction to psychotherapy and counselling. **Evaluated through transcript/certificates.**
- Capacity to undertake doctoral-level research, as demonstrated through research experience and/or knowledge and/or previously completed work. **Evaluated through submission of research article or dissertation, or academic essay. One letter of reference should be from someone familiar with applicant's academic work.**
- High level of interpersonal skills and self-reflective capacities. **Evaluated through interaction in individual interview and group exercise.**
- References. **References should, between them, speak to academic abilities; clinical experience; and personal/professional skills and qualities.**

- Graduate basis for chartered membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society. [The GBC was previously referred to as GBR (graduate basis for registration). Both will be accepted as proof of appropriate prior training.] **Evaluated through submitted evidence of GBC/GBR, such as an email from BPS, copy of GBC letter, or copy of membership card.**
- Clear understanding/expression of why training in counselling psychology is being sought. **Evaluated through personal statement and interview.**

As noted, where applicants have less than the desired amount of clinical experience, they should have completed a Certificate or Foundation course in counselling skills, or other substantive training in counselling skills; this is a desirable criterion in any case.

### 2.5.2 Level of English

We are keen on welcoming trainees from a variety of backgrounds and cultures; for those applicants for whom English is not a first language, we require a minimum IELTS score of 7.0, with a minimum of 7.0 scored in each sub-category for EU/EEA and overseas trainees. Applicants whose first language is English are required to show evidence of a minimum grade C in GCSE English or equivalent.

### 2.5.3. Declaration of Criminal Convictions

In line with the HCPC requirements with regards to safe practice, all applicants are asked to declare “any criminal convictions, excluding spent sentences (as defined by the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*) or motoring offences for which a fine and/or three penalty points were imposed” on the application form. Such declaration will be discussed in detail at interview, in consideration of the potential ethical and professional issues relating to the nature of the clinical aspect of the training.

In the event of such declaration by the applicant, the team will discuss the potential difficulties in securing a clinical placement and advise the applicant to read the HCPC and BPS guidelines and registration procedures to understand information with regards to eligibility of future registration. In such cases, any decisions about these applicants will be taken following discussion with the HCPC and BPS.

## 2.6 Academic Standards and Assessment for the Award of DPsych

To meet the requirements of a doctoral degree, the programme must meet nationally agreed standards. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) outlines the Framework for *Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ). A summary of those standards has been reproduced here; you are also advised to visit the QAA website on [qaa.ac.uk](http://qaa.ac.uk).

### 2.6.1 QAA standards: Doctoral level (level 8)

Institutions award doctorate degrees to trainees who have demonstrated the following:

- The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at

- the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches.

and will have:

- The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

### **2.6.2 Master's level (level 7 – Year 1)**

Work at this level needs to show originality in the application of existing knowledge around the chosen topic/area, as well as a critical understanding of how this knowledge has been generated. The work should also demonstrate critical and systematic understanding of theoretical and methodological approaches and how these affect the interpretation of knowledge, as well as critical responses to existing theoretical discourses and practices. Trainees need to be able to write in a coherent, structured, and clear manner with well-referenced argumentation, as well as to show awareness of how the boundaries of knowledge can be advanced through future research. Their work needs to show capacity for tackling complex ideas both systematically and creatively and should show the qualities needed for employment in academic and professional disciplines (e.g., demonstration of personal judgement, responsibility and initiative).

### **2.6.3 Practitioner doctorates versus PhD degrees**

Both PhDs and professional or practitioner doctorates such as the DPsych necessitate advanced research training, which culminates in the submission of a major project (research thesis) that generates new knowledge in the field. Such a project should warrant wider dissemination of research of a publishable standard. However, unlike PhD degrees, DPsychs are likely to be modular, taught degrees with credit-rated levels. They are also designed with cohorts rather than individual trainees in mind, and they have a multidimensional spectrum, which includes theory, practice, research, and personal and professional development aspects. Although both degrees require originality and innovation, DPsychs are practice-orientated and require demonstration of a close link between theory and its application to counselling psychology practice. It follows then, that the findings of the research project should not only generate “new” knowledge but also contribute to the field from an applied, clinical perspective. The same integration of theory and practice should be reflected in

trainees' doctoral portfolios and final *viva voce* examination, which are designed to assess doctoral-level standards on all aspects of the training.

### Main Characteristics of Professional or Practitioner Doctorates

- Professional and practice-based doctorates are based on a supervised research project, and they usually contain significant lecture and seminar elements. In some programmes, these elements are assessed and either a pass/fail or a mark or grade is given; such assessments may act as a hurdle for the candidate as part of his/her progress towards the doctorate. UK DPsychs are designed to meet the needs of the various professions in which they are rooted, including: creative arts, education, engineering, law, nursing and psychology.
- Research projects carried out as part of a DPsych are normally applied and have a focus within the candidate's profession. In DPsychs, the candidate's output involves practice-related materials. For example, in the performing arts, the output involves a written commentary (which may be shorter than the traditional PhD thesis, and includes both reflection and context), and one or more other artefacts, such as a novel (for creative writing), a portfolio of work (for art design), or one or more performance pieces (for theatre studies or music). In clinical practice-based doctorates the research may draw on or feed clearly back into applications to clinical work or other work in the professional realm. Clinical and academic elements are combined in the candidate's doctoral portfolio.

## 2.7 Counselling Psychology Training and the HCPC

Regulation of practitioner psychologists by the HCPC was established in July 2009 and sets professional, educational, ethical, and clinical standards that aim to ensure the protection of the public. The doctoral programme abides by the standards set by both the HCPC and the BPS and aims to facilitate dialogue between different disciplines whilst preserving its counselling psychology identity and philosophy.

This section outlines the role of HCPC in regulating and approving courses, and the process of registration. Trainees should familiarise themselves with the various documents produced by the HCPC. These specify the standards which entrants to the register are expected to meet.

### 2.7.1 Registration: The role of the BPS and the HCPC

Accreditation, validation and approval procedures occur on a regular basis. At the time of writing this handbook our programme has received open-ended approval from the HCPC, accreditation from the BPS and has been revalidated by The Open University for a five-year period (from January 2017).

The partnership approach to accreditation promoted by the BPS aims to ensure that a collaborative approach is taken to working with education providers to ensure that the required standards are achieved. This includes BPS and HCPC visiting panels working alongside each other at concurrent accreditation and approval events. The outcome of a concurrent accreditation visit is reflected in two separate reports, which comment on all aspects of the course and make recommendations about areas requiring improvement or amendment.



### **2.7.2 Protected titles**

The HCPC regulates the use of the title “Counselling Psychologist”; this means that the use of this title is legally restricted to individuals who are on the HCPC register of practitioner psychologists. Any practitioner who wishes to use the title “Counselling Psychologist” needs to be registered with the HCPC. Prior to registration, trainees should use the title “Counselling Psychologist in Training” or “Trainee Counselling Psychologist.”

### **2.7.3 Accessing important HCPC documents**

All trainees need to know and understand HCPC procedures with regards to registration, regulation and standards, and are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the HCPC website (<http://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk>) which contains clear and up-to-date information. Please download the following documents and keep them in an easily accessible file. You will be required to incorporate and consult these documents for various assessments across the course of your training.

- *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics*

These are the standards required of applicants in order to be registered.

- *Standards of Proficiency*

These are the professional standards which applicants must meet in order to be registered.

- *Standards of Continuing Professional Development*

These are the standards that applicants must meet in order to stay registered.

- *Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students* (see below)

On qualification trainees are eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC and are required to provide evidence of good character and, if accepted, to abide by the HCPC’s *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics*.

Trainees should become familiar with these guidelines and adhere to them during training. To assist trainees, the HCPC has produced the *Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students*. Trainees will be aware that this code includes personal conduct outside of work as well as conduct at work.

### **2.7.4 Accessing important BPS documents**

Since completion of the programme also grants eligibility for chartered status with the British Psychological Society, trainees should also download and strive to abide by the following:

- *Code of Ethics and Conduct*

- *Practice Guidelines*

## **2.8 Purpose, Philosophy and Features of the DPsych Programme**

This DPsych highlights the nature of counselling psychology as a field that emphasises subjective/lived experience, dialogue, and a holistic/relational view of human nature and psychological difficulties. The programme promotes a relational stance that permeates all aspects of this training (i.e.,

academic, clinical, research, and personal and professional development) and encourages dialogue and pluralism. Counselling psychology is an evolving rather than reified discipline, which is in a constant dialogue with fields such as psychotherapy, clinical psychology, and psychiatry.

The pluralistic stance of this programme aims to incorporate several epistemological and ontological vantage points, so that trainees are exposed to knowledge produced from different fields (e.g., developmental psychology and postmodern approaches to theory and practice). Individualised formulation/conceptualisation is emphasised, and this stance is evident in all modules throughout the training. As with all counselling psychology training programmes in the UK, the DPsych at Regent's provides training in several approaches within counselling psychology: existential-phenomenological, cognitive-behavioural (including third wave approaches), and psychodynamic. Training in a breadth of approaches facilitates a pluralistic approach and tailored, formulation-based interventions with each client.

In line with the philosophy of counselling psychology and its emphasis on subjective experience and well-being, the programme adopts the existential phenomenological approach as one of its key models so as to offer a holistic account of psychological difficulties. It challenges the mainstream conceptualisation of mental disorders and diagnostic classifications and focuses upon the nature, value, and meaning clients attribute to their experiences. Symptoms, regardless of their severity, are therefore seen as meaningful manifestations of difficulties in living, rather than the expression of a distinct disorder that can be assessed, diagnosed, and treated in isolation. It follows that "psychopathology" is not understood in terms of binary oppositions (e.g., normal/abnormal, health/ill health, sanity/madness, inner/outer, self/other) but as an expression of a disturbance on the continuum of lived experience. Psychological difficulties (and mainstream diagnostic labels) are relational concepts that describe an individual's struggles with the givens of existence intensified by biological, intrapsychic, intersubjective, socioeconomic, and political dynamics and limitations.

Our programme aims to develop a way of thinking about clinical practice that is more than simply an adoption of specific techniques. It is also concerned with an examination of the philosophy from which they are derived. The importance of the *therapeutic relationship* is therefore at the heart of our training and is seen as essential to any form of therapy. Psychological analyses of therapeutic models have identified two specific tendencies within therapists' understanding of the relationship. These tendencies stress the "doing" or the "being" qualities that counselling psychologists bring to the relationship. We strongly believe that the enterprise of therapy is fundamentally dependent upon the establishment and maintenance of a relationship, which both expresses and promotes respect for difference and the exploration of the clients' *possibilities* of being.

Becoming a competent counselling psychologist is an on-going process that is inextricably linked to life experience, openness, and continued personal and professional development. Through its academic, clinical, research, and experiential elements, this programme provides trainees with a solid base that enhances the development of a strong identity as a counselling psychologist and enables graduates to practice ethically and reflexively in the "real world."

## **2.9 Details of the Programme**

### **2.9.1 Rationale for the degree**

Counselling psychology is a discipline with “a pluralistic and interdisciplinary attitude [that] overlaps with other applied psychologies, counselling, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and the political and economic systems that sustain them” (BPS, *Standards for the accreditation of doctoral programmes in counselling psychology*, 2015, p. 15). It is unique among the applied psychologies in that counselling psychologists are defined by neither their work setting nor their specific roles; counselling psychologists can be found in the NHS, private practice, schools, prisons, organisations, and multiple other contexts. While all counselling psychologists acquire core competencies, the nature of an individual counselling psychologist’s training programme and their clinical placements means that each practitioner brings different strengths and specialisms.

The DPsych at Regent’s prepares trainees for their working life through a combination of academic, research, clinical, and personal/professional development components. In line with the philosophy of counselling psychology, we believe that these aspects are always interconnected and cannot be taught in isolation. The programme therefore espouses the philosophy of the reflective scientist practitioner model, which is firmly rooted in interdisciplinary dialogue. Moreover, the programme’s emphasis on personal and professional development – promoted through group and individual tutorials and the requirement for personal therapy throughout the programme – is designed to promote a strong professional and clinical identity that reflects the philosophy and ethos of the field. Upon successful graduation, trainees will have acquired in-depth knowledge of counselling psychology and its application to therapeutic practice; clinical skills informed by a number of psychotherapeutic approaches; a thorough understanding of doctoral research processes and a variety of research paradigms; and a firm commitment to ethical practice, which will enable them to work within a wide variety of settings, including the NHS, organisational, research, and counselling centres as well as private practice.

### **2.9.2 Design of the degree**

The DPsych is divided into three terms per year. The direct-teaching components run over two days a week during Year 1. During Year 2, when clinical placement activities increase, and the doctoral research project formally begins, the direct teaching occurs one day per week. During the days trainees are not on campus, they undertake clinical placement(s) and external clinical supervision; attend personal therapy; pursue self-directed learning and engagement with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at Regent’s; undertake research; and involve themselves in the field of counselling psychology through conference attendance and other development activities. Each year aims to achieve balance and integration of all aspects of the programme as well as achievement of key competencies and learning outcomes for each year. The programme team recognises the demands of this training; therefore, a reading week is included during each term to support trainees in their independent learning and give the opportunity to reflect upon learning edges and needs.

## Year 1

The M-level year provides trainees with a solid foundation in theory and practice, as well as clinical, ethical, and research training. The pluralistic ethos of this programme will permeate all modules, whether they relate to theory, clinical practice, or research, and trainees will develop their skills in individualised formulation/conceptualisation. Specifically, trainees will learn the ways in which different perspectives conceptualise human nature, psychological difficulties, and assessment and formulation of clients' issues, as well as ways of working clinically with different populations.

The year is also dedicated to rigorous clinical exercises and development of therapeutic skills, as well as research methods teaching. Each term features a combination of theoretical input; clinical seminars that are closely linked to theory and that incorporate reflection on actual client material; and practically-orientated modules that enable trainees to develop as safe and ethical practitioners. Group and individual tutorials provide close mentorship of personal and professional development and focus on all pillars of counselling psychology training.

*Theory:* The core model for the programme, the existential-phenomenological approach, is introduced during Term 2, and a pervasive existential-phenomenological awareness and sensibility features throughout the rest of training, integrated with other approaches. The existential-phenomenological thread continues through Critical Psychopathology and Working with Difference and Discrimination, both of which modules embody a critical, questioning attitude and a focus on seeing individuals in their contexts. To facilitate early core competencies in cognitive-behavioural therapy and to help trainees in acquiring NHS/CBT placements within Year 2, the first CBT module takes place in Term 3 of this M-level year.

*Research:* Two research modules that focus on development of strong doctoral research skills take place in the first two terms of Year 1; following this, trainees are assigned a research tutor who helps them in the further development of their research proposal. Year 1 culminates in the submission of this research proposal, meaning that most trainees are ready to submit their proposals for ethical approval and begin their research early in Year 2 of the programme.

*Personal and Professional Development:* Each year features Professional Practice modules that consist of (a) group and individual tutorials internally and (b) external training that occurs through approved clinical placements and supervision. 70 client hours are expected in the first year, with a supervision to client ratio of 1:6. Each trainee has a formative mid-year Collaborative Evaluation of Progress (CEP) and a summative end-of-year CEP with their personal tutor, during which tutor and trainee explore and reflect on all aspects of trainees' development. The personal tutor reviews supervisor(s)' reports and the trainee's placement logs and collates information to verify meeting of key competencies. The Collaborative Evaluation of Progress (CEP) at the end of the year aims to ensure that the trainee has met the competencies necessary to pass Professional Practice module and is personally and professionally ready to progress to the doctoral stage of training. The recommendation made at the end-of-year CEP is moderated by the Head of Programmes and Professional Practice Lead. Trainees are also required to complete 40 hours of personal therapy in Year 1 and are encouraged to keep an ongoing reflective journal, which is not assessed.

## **Year 2**

Year 2 begins the doctoral stage of training, and expectations of assessments are heightened accordingly. Consistent with the expectations of a practitioner doctorate, a greater proportion of the learning moves outside of the classroom and into clinical placements, external supervision, research activity, and self-directed learning; hence, trainees attend for one day per week during this training year.

*Theory:* Following on from the emphasis on the existential-phenomenological approach in Year 1, and the first CBT module in Term 3 of that year, Year 2 begins with philosophical and psychological perspectives on human issues from a variety of vantage points, with a significant existential-phenomenological component. Term 2 involves exploration of the third-wave approaches to cognitive-behavioural therapy. These approach focuses on awareness of the present moment, of values and of context in experience, and hence is an approach with which many existentially-minded practitioners resonate. The programme's second working model, psychodynamic approaches, are introduced in the third term.

*Research:* During Term 1 of the second year, trainees are allocated a Director of Studies and supervisor to support them throughout their doctoral research; following the incorporation of feedback from their proposal and supervisory advice, they submit their proposals for ethical clearance and begin collecting their data. Ideally data collection is begun and sometimes largely completed by the end of year 2.

*Personal and Professional Development:* As in year 1, a year-long Professional Practice module continues in Year 2. Trainees are expected to undertake a minimum of 150 client hours, at a supervision ratio of 1:6, and more advanced clinical skills are expected. Clinical practice skills are assessed through placement supervisors' reports; placement logs; personal tutor evaluation; vignette-based formulation and treatment plan; in-class skills exercises; and a combined client study/process report. The mid-year and end-of-year Collaborative Evaluations of Progress (CEPs) again focus on the trainee's appropriate meeting of personal and professional standards for training and eventual qualification in counselling psychology; their meeting of competencies; and their areas for learning and development. Again, a recommendation for progression to the final year of training is made by the personal tutor and moderated by the Professional Practice Lead and Head of Programmes.

## **Year 3**

Trainees in Year 3 have gained significantly in experience and ability and have been exposed to multiple approaches to practice. Year 3 continues the emphasis on learning acquired in the "real world" of clinical placements and supervision; trainees also complete their doctoral research projects. A significant focus throughout the year is dissemination and application of knowledge and experience and on teaching, influencing and leading. Year 3 trainees undertake this through publication and conferencing of research; design and implementation of influencing and leading activities; practicing clinical supervision; and participation in mentoring for Year 1 and 2 trainees.

*Theory:* During this year, trainees have Advanced Counselling Psychology Workshops each term. These workshops emphasise a hands-on approach to learning and include some of the more advanced competencies within counselling psychology. Term 1 focuses on influencing and leadership, preparing trainees to practice these competencies during Terms 2 and 3. Term 2 covers more advanced material on measurement and evaluation than is covered in Year 1, to include more advanced psychometrics; practice-based research; clinical audit; and service evaluation. Term 3 focuses on specialisation and employability. This workshop is designed collaboratively with the cohort to focus on particular work contexts, professional activities, and/or populations of interest to the trainees, and culminates in the production of a professional plan and a full CV.

*Research:* Trainees aim to complete their doctoral research by the end of Year 3. The afternoon of Term 1 consists of the Doctoral Research Clinic, which supports doctoral supervision and supports trainees in preparing their work for conferencing. The Viva Preparation module in term 3 includes elements of in class practice; joint and independent study and research; and preparation for the viva examination.

*Personal and Professional Development:* Having undertaken a minimum of 220 hours over years 1 and 2, trainees must complete the remaining hours to reach at least 450 hours during year 3, at a supervision ratio of 1:6. Again, these are assessed through clinical supervisors' reports; placement logs; personal tutor evaluation; and the Year 3 Clinical Seminar: Pluralistic and Integrative Working, where trainees are asked to bring clinical material to aid formative learning and development. The latter is assessed via a combined case study, process report, and a reflective piece, which is included as part of the doctoral portfolio. The mid-year and end-of-year Collaborative Evaluations of Progress (CEPs) again focus on the trainee's appropriate meeting of personal and professional standards for qualification in counselling psychology; their meeting of competencies; and their areas for learning and development. Personal tutors and programme team feed back to the trainee on their impressions of their readiness for qualification.

### **2.9.3 DPsych thesis and final year portfolio**

The culmination of the programme is the submission of the portfolio and the viva examination. For full details, consult the *Research Handbook*.

#### **2.9.3.1 Final year portfolio and viva voce**

The portfolio demonstrates trainees' abilities and competence on clinical, academic, research and professional development levels. The portfolio consists of three parts: (i) Introduction to the Portfolio, (ii) Clinical Practice Dossier, and (iii) Research Dossier (commonly referred to as the "thesis").

Upon submission the portfolio is formally assessed by an internal and an external examiner (see *Research Handbook* for details) and subsequently examined orally by viva voce in accordance with the regulations. A successful portfolio and viva voce examination demonstrates that the trainee has met all the required competencies specified by the BPS and the HCPC's *Standards of Proficiency*.

Again, see the *Research Handbook* for details of the final-year doctoral portfolio and viva voce.

### **2.9.3.2 Development of research skills**

In line with the field's philosophy and ethos, the DPsych aims to develop effective practitioners, theoreticians, and researchers. To qualify for the award, trainees need to successfully complete all components of their training and complete an original piece of research that is empirical in nature (i.e., involves data collection and analysis) and that contributes to the field of counselling psychology.

The doctoral research thesis component of the portfolio (maximum 40,000 words) presents a clearly contextualised rationale for studying a particular topic; further supports the investigation through critical engagement with the existing literature; shows excellent epistemological and methodological understanding in outlining the research design; demonstrates ethical and reflexive research practices; shows depth and sophistication of analysis; and discusses how the research advances the field and contributes to the professional practice of counselling psychology and allied disciplines.

Identifying a relevant topic for empirical research is not an easy task. As already noted, trainees are trained in doctoral research processes from the first term of the first year, so that they begin to understand the nature of science, research epistemologies, and practical issues relating to research projects.

Trainees are expected to complete their thesis and submit their portfolio by the end of the third year of their training. However, in accordance with the regulations that apply to the award, in some exceptional circumstances (e.g., long-term severe health problems) trainees can apply to the Research Degrees Committee to extend their registration period up to a maximum of a further three years. Extensions are given in termly increments and must be applied for in good time, with sufficiently compelling rationale. See the *Research Handbook* for further details, as well as for a full outline of the submission requirements, the examination process, the role of the examiners, and the viva voce.

### **2.9.3.3 Doctoral research supervision**

Undertaking a research project is an intensive and time-consuming task, which requires commitment and expertise. Research supervision is integral to this process and offers guidance and support. Trainees are formally assigned supervisory teams once the focus of the study is clear, which usually occurs at the beginning of Year 2 when the research proposal is passed. Each trainee is offered 30 teaching hours (i.e., 30 direct-contact hours with additional time allowed for reading of drafts, etc.) towards completion of their thesis, which should be spaced over Years 2 and 3 of the programme.

Annual monitoring of trainees' research programme takes place in Years 2 and 3 of the programme. Annual monitoring is undertaken collaboratively between DoS and trainee.

Doctoral level research must be at a high or publishable standard; and it should be noted that the final piece of work must be the trainees' own achievement and responsibility.

For further details, please refer to the *Research Handbook*.

### 2.9.3.4 Research interests of the DPsych team

Research streams are one means of creating a focus for research activity amongst a community of staff and trainees. Active research streams enhance the publication profile of both faculty and trainees and create greater integration and coherence of research activity on the programme. Research streaming also means that staff and students can contribute to the aims of the Reflections Research Centre and the Faculty research strategy. When deciding on their own doctoral focus, therefore, trainees are encouraged to review the academic profiles of faculty for more information about their research interests and activity. Please see Regent's website to identify staff members connected with our programme and to review their publications and research interests. The Year I research module leader will also disseminate these profiles to guide the matching of trainees to staff acting as Year I research tutors.

## 2.10 Details of Assessments and Assessment Procedures

### 2.10.1 Competences and standards of proficiency at levels 7 and 8

Upon the commencement of statutory regulation of psychologists in July 2009, the original BPS set of competencies for the training of counselling psychologists was supplemented by the HCPC *Standards of Proficiency*; these are updated regularly. The HCPC describes two types of standards: a generic set of standards that are applicable to a range of professions and standards that are specific to the practice of counselling psychology. The key aims of accredited doctorates below are designed with these standards in mind and reflect the standards that trainees need to meet at levels 7 and 8.

### 2.10.2 Key aims

| Aim | Demonstrated competency upon graduation:  |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | Be competent, reflective, ethically sound, resourceful and informed practitioners of counselling psychology able to work in therapeutic and non-therapeutic contexts;                 |
| 2.  | Value the imaginative, interpretative, personal and intimate aspects of the practice of counselling psychology;   |
| 3.  | Commit themselves to on-going personal and professional development and inquiry;  |
| 4.  | Understand, develop and apply models of psychological inquiry for the creation of new knowledge which is appropriate to the multi-dimensional nature of relationships between people; |
| 5.  | Appreciate the significance of wider social, cultural and political domains within which counselling psychology operates;   |
| 6.  | Adopt a questioning and evaluative approach to the philosophy, practice, research and theory, which constitutes counselling psychology; and   |



|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| <b>7.</b> | Be able to develop and demonstrate communication, influencing, teaching and leadership skills by applying psychological knowledge and skills in a range of professional, clinical, organisational, and research contexts. |
|-----------|---|

### **2.10.3 Professional level descriptors for assessment at Master's level (level 7)**

#### **Knowledge and understanding of the academic content**

- Ability to understand the importance of philosophical pluralism to the theory and practice of counselling psychology.
- A systematic understanding of the theory and practice of counselling psychology.
- Understanding of different models of psychopathology and the purpose of psychological assessment and formulation.
- Sound understanding of the ethical and professional codes of practice as set by the BPS and HCPC.

#### **Cognitive and intellectual capabilities**

- Thorough understanding of research epistemologies relevant to counselling psychology and psychotherapy research.
- Ability to understand ethical issues relating to research.
- Ability to understand a variety of research designs.

#### **Transferable and practical skills**

- Ability to understand the relevance of assessment and formulation to the theory and practice of counselling psychology.
- Ability to form, maintain and end a purposeful therapeutic alliance.
- Ability to maintain professional and therapeutic boundaries.
- Ability to practice ethically and safely with regards to self and clients.
- Ability to provide counselling based on psychological concepts

#### **Subject domain or subject specific skills**

- Ability to present and communicate professional knowledge and information
- Understanding and management of professional relationships
- Commitment to best practice in the interests of their clients
- Knowledge and understanding of organisational settings and their contextual and legal frameworks

#### **Personal and interpersonal skills**

- Capacity for self-reflection, understanding, and use of personal therapy in one's own development as a counselling psychologist.
- Ability to reflect upon one's understanding of self and life experiences through therapy
- Ability to understand and evaluate the formation and impact of interpersonal dynamics in the therapeutic relationship and group settings.

## **2.10.4 Professional level descriptors for assessment at doctoral level (level 8)**

### **Knowledge and understanding of the academic content**

- Ability to critically understand and evaluate existential phenomenological and cognitive behavioural theories and their relation to therapeutic practice.
- Critical understanding and evaluation of philosophical pluralism and nature of professional knowledge.
- Ability to critically evaluate different theories of lifespan development (including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural development).
- Ability to critically evaluate the political and socio-economic parameters upon which counselling psychology practice rests.
- Ability to generate new knowledge relevant to the theory and practice of counselling psychology.

### **Cognitive and intellectual capabilities**

- Ability to critically reflect upon and apply ethical principles in reasoning and decision-making.
- Ability to devise and evaluate research questions, select appropriate methodologies, and critically evaluate published research.
- Ability to use creativity and flexibility in argumentation.
- Ability to make informed decisions and independent judgements about pressing issues.

### **Transferable and practical skills**

- Ability to conduct psychological (risk) assessments and formulations within the training's therapeutic modalities and to implement these into psychological practice.
- Ability to work with content and process issues within the therapeutic relationship.
- Ability to critically reflect upon alternative ways of working to respond to the complex demands of clients.
- Ability to draw upon existential phenomenological and cognitive behaviour theoretical knowledge base and to apply this in clinical practice.
- Ability to use supervision as a means of monitoring and evaluating therapeutic practice and use of self in a clinical context.

### **Subject domain or subject specific skills**

- Ability to critically communicate and evaluate professional knowledge in ways that furthers the interest of clients and the profession.
- Capacity to create and maintain professional relationships as part of managing complex situations, systems, and organisations.
- Ability to work confidently with power dynamics and processes at individual, group, and systemic levels.
- Promotion of ethical principle and best practice.

### **Personal and interpersonal skills**

- Critical and deliberate use of self in therapeutic and group settings.
- Ability to constructively work with conflict and power dynamics.

- Demonstration of a counselling psychology identity including responsibility and accountability in relation to others.

### 2.10.5 Definition and types of assessment

Assessment is the means by which trainees' performance and ability to progress are measured against the learning outcomes of each module and the agreed criteria at each level. It gives trainees the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and competencies throughout the training and to receive feedback so that they can identify and work on their learning edges and areas of weakness.

Trainees' performance on modules is formally assessed (i.e., summative assessment) against the competencies and standards of proficiency outlined above. The summative components of the programme (see types of summative assessments below) are designed to provide a measure of the achievement of learning outcomes by the trainee at Level 7 and Level 8. In the next pages you will find a summarised version of the marking scheme that reflects the expected learning for each grade. For a detailed description of assessments and marking sheets, please refer to the *Assessment Handbook*.

Summative assessments on the programme include:

- Examinations
- Essays based on vignettes; essays inclusive of clinical examples; theoretical essays
- Live skills assessments (with or without reflective pieces)
- Methodology information sheets
- Process reports or combined case study/process reports
- Research proposal
- Assessed presentations
- Collaborative Evaluations of Progress
- Viva voce

Formative feedback within modules and in individual and group tutorials is primarily developmental in nature and is designed to give constructive feedback to trainees. All modules encourage reflexivity and self-awareness and include the giving and receiving of feedback. Specific formative learning activities and formative feedback mechanisms will vary from term to term; however, some examples of formative activities on which the trainee may receive feedback include:

- **Individual and group presentations:** Trainee presentations are an integral part of the training's formative learning experiences and assessment; they provide an opportunity for trainees to organise and share their ideas with other group members, and this supports the development of professional and personal confidence.
- **Tutorials:** Personal tutors provide feedback to trainees on their personal and professional development and perceived areas of strength and development; feedback will be collated from a variety of sources.
- **Mid-year supervisors' reports** give important formative indication of how a trainee's clinical skills are developing. This feedback is important in determining what needs the most

attention during the latter half of the academic year, and these reports feed into the mid-year Collaborative Evaluation of Progress.

- **Personal therapy:** In line with the programme's core philosophy and emphasis on personal development, therapy is mandatory throughout the training, with 120 hours of one-to-one therapeutic work required over the three years, 40 per year. It is hoped that in personal therapy, trainees will become increasingly aware of themselves and their ways of being in the world with other people.

#### **2.10.6 Grades, percentages, and marking schemes**

With some exceptions, most of assessments at level 7 are given a percentage mark and a level grade descriptor (i.e., Distinction, Merit, Pass, Borderline Pass, and Fail). All doctoral work is assessed on a pass/fail basis.

### 2.10.6.1 Summarised version of marking scheme for level 7 assessments

| Grade                     | Theoretical Work   | Clinical Work  | Empirical Work   |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| 70% to 100% (Distinction) | Clear and logically developed structure and argumentation; originality on the application of existing knowledge around the chosen topic area; reference to and in depth understanding of ontological and epistemological issues; evidence of independent study on the topic; properly referenced in APA style. | As for theoretical work plus in depth understanding and formulation of client's psychological difficulties with reference to existential/phenomenological theory (and/or other psychological model); evidence of high level of skills and theory/practice links and clinical interventions; awareness of ethical issues and evidence of professional standards; v. good ability to reflect upon process issues, use of self, and therapeutic relationship; and v. good use of supervision. | As for theoretical work plus a thorough understanding of epistemological and methodological issues; originality in the application of research methods and design to your own research or existing literature; in depth understanding of statistical and analytical procedures; and evidence of awareness of ethical issues in relation to research. |
| 60% to 69% (Merit)        | Clear and logically developed structure; good standards of understanding ontological and epistemological issues; sound argumentation; some evidence of independent work; properly referenced in APA style.   | As for theoretical work plus, comprehensive understanding and well-structured formulation of client's psychological difficulties with appropriate use of theoretical and clinical interventions; evidence of reflective practice and attention to the therapeutic relationship; awareness of ethical issues and good use of supervision.   | As for theoretical work plus, standard understanding of statistical and analytical procedures; good epistemological awareness; evidence of good understanding of analysis; good reflection upon ethical issues.  |
| 55% to 59% (Pass)         | Coherent structure and development of arguments; attempt (with errors and omissions) to critically analyse epistemological issues; clear arguments but with little critical analysis; little evidence of independent work; some incomplete referencing or inconsistent adherence to APA style.                 | As for theoretical work plus, sufficient presentation of client's issues and formulation of psychological difficulties; adequate theory/practice links/interventions; awareness of process issues and relationship dynamics; some evidence of self-reflection and use of supervision.  | As for theoretical work plus, sufficient understanding of statistical and analytical procedures; acceptable understanding of epistemological issues and analytical procedures; some reflection upon ethical issues.  |

| <b>Grade</b>                    | <b>Theoretical Work</b>   | <b>Clinical Work</b>  | <b>Empirical Work</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 50% to 54%<br>(Borderline Pass) | Coherent structure and development of arguments; attempt (with some errors and omissions) to critically analyse epistemological issues; arguments but with critical analysis barely evident; little evidence of independent work; incomplete referencing or referencing that does not conform to APA style. | As for theoretical work plus some presentation of client's issues and formulation of psychological difficulties; theory/practice links/interventions but not as clear as they should be; some awareness of process issues and relationship dynamics; some evidence of self-reflection and use of supervision. | As for theoretical work plus understanding of statistical and analytical procedures; some understanding of epistemological issues and analytical procedures; some reflection upon ethical issues.                             |
| 0% to 49%<br>(Fail)             | Lack of or unclear structure and development of arguments; poor understanding of epistemological issues and lack of critical analysis of arguments; no evidence of independent work and very poor referencing/complete lack of attention to APA style.  | As for theoretical work plus, poor presentation of client's issues and no evidence of psychological formulation and/or theory/practice interventions; poor use of theory; little evidence of self-reflection and poor use of supervision.   | As for theoretical work plus very poor understanding of epistemological issues; methodological awareness, and analytic procedures; over-reliance in supervisor's help; poor awareness of research process and ethical issues. |

## 2.10.6.2 Summarised version of marking scheme for level 8 assessments

At level 8, all work is marked on a Pass/Fail basis.

|             | <b>Theoretical Work</b>  | <b>Clinical Work</b>  | <b>Empirical Work</b>   |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| <b>PASS</b> | Coherent structure and development of arguments; understanding and critical analysis of epistemological and ontological issues; evidence of independent work; clear referencing and citation, in accordance with APA style | As for theoretical work, plus: sufficient presentation of client's issues and formulation of psychological difficulties; adequate theory/practice links/interventions; awareness of process issues and relationship dynamics; ethical and professional practice; good reflexivity; evidence of good use of supervision. | As for theoretical work plus: understanding of research design and processes; understanding of epistemology and methodology, and method, and links among these; ethical and professional conduct; good use of reflexivity/ability to critically appraise research.                          |
| <b>FAIL</b> | Lack of, or unclear, structure and development of arguments; poor understanding of epistemological issues; lack of critical analysis of arguments; insufficient evidence of independent work; poor referencing.            | As for theoretical work, plus: poor presentation of client's issues; no evidence of psychological formulation and/or theory/practice interventions; poor use of theory; little evidence of reflexivity; and poor/absent use of supervision.   | As for theoretical work plus: poor understanding of epistemology, methodology, and method and/or links among these; unethical/unprofessional conduct; over-reliance in supervisor's help; poor awareness of research process and ethical issues; inability to critically appraise research. |

## 2.10.7 Submission of work

Submission of the majority of assessments is via Blackboard; broad submission timings and further details are indicated in the *Assessment Handbook*. Exact submission dates will be reflected within each module area on Blackboard and submitting late will result in a mark of NS (non-submission), which constitutes a fail if there has not been a successful application for extenuating circumstances. Marks are also returned via Blackboard, and the post date for feedback is indicated on Blackboard.

Assessments with clinically sensitive information (e.g., case studies and process reports) will be submitted via Blackboard rather than Turnitin. Audio and video recordings will also be submitted through Blackboard, for which every trainee will need to have activated their Medial account at Regent's University.

It is the responsibility of each trainee to retain – until award of the appropriate degree – copies of *all submitted written work, all returned evaluations, and all submitted forms*, as you will need these when compiling your portfolio and for reference when applying for jobs or applying for professional registration in the future. Note also that if you move to a new country, these documents may be exceptionally important towards registration abroad. Academic Registry, the Course Leaders or Heads of Programmes may request at any time that a trainee produce all or any portion of their portfolio of written work and submitted forms, and the trainee’s inability to respond to this request may result in failure.

### **2.10.8 Extenuating circumstances**

We are well aware of the demands of a full-time training; the deadlines have been set after careful consideration of this, together with institutional parameters. Meeting deadlines requires discipline and good time management. Submission dates are final, as they feed into marking schedules, the Examinations Boards and progression schedules. You are strongly advised not to leave your coursework until the last minute.

Please note that Regent’s has no system for authorising “extensions” for assignments. Instead, in exceptional circumstances, a trainee may apply for *extenuating circumstances* in relation to assessment(s). The types of extenuating circumstances that may be accepted are listed in the *Regent’s University London Academic Regulations 2018/2019*, and you should consult this in the first instance. You may also contact the Student Hub for more information and guidance.

To apply for extenuating circumstances, trainees should complete the relevant form from the Student Hub, attach the required supporting documentation, and submit these by the stipulated deadlines. Please note that the Regent’s University London regulations state that in certain situations (i.e., significant illness or incapacity), students have up to 10 working days after the deadline to submit an extenuating circumstances claim. **However**, the validating body, the Open University, specifies that “If a student cannot submit evidence by published deadlines, they must submit details of the extenuating circumstances with an indication that evidence will be submitted within 7 calendar days.” **These regulations supersede RUL regulations and will apply to students on the DPsych programme.**

Note: If you have a long-standing medical condition or learning difficulty such as dyslexia that is likely to impair your performance and submission of coursework, we strongly advise you to inform your personal tutor, Module Leaders and the Head of Programmes, and to contact the Disability Officer ([disability@regents.ac.uk](mailto:disability@regents.ac.uk)) in order to receive additional support (See Section 1.6 of this *Programme Handbook*).

In the absence of any extenuating circumstances process, work that has not been submitted on time will be deemed to have failed, and a re-sit of the work will be required if this is permitted under the maximum allowable number of resits for the module – see regulations 17.3 and 17.5. In the case of re-sits, the maximum mark obtainable is the pass mark for that module, that is, 50% for modules with percentage grades.



The Examination Board of the OU will consider the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances panel at Regent's University and an appropriate deadline will be set after the Examination Board. Students will be informed by Registry of the ratification of their Extenuating Circumstances, and a deadline appropriate to the circumstances and the assessment will be set and the student informed.

### 2.10.9 Resubmissions

The pass mark during the Master's stage of training (Year 1) is 50%, except for select modules (Professional Practice; Counselling Psychology Research I) that are pass/fail due to the nature of the assessment. During the doctoral-level stage of training, all assessments are marked on a pass/fail basis.

If the module has been failed, that is, the total module mark (TMM) or any component of this is below 50%, the trainee will be required to re-sit the failed component(s).

All modules on the DPsych programme are core modules and prerequisites for progression to the next year of study (see the *Assessment Handbook* for module specifications). All modules, therefore, **must** be passed in order to progress with the programme. If a trainee subsequently fails the re-sit, the trainee *may*, in exceptional circumstances, be permitted to resit or retake the assignment or module, at the discretion of the Examination Board. **Please see Regulation 17.5 of the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University, "Options for the retake of study."**

The decision to resit or retake failed modules on the DPsych programme, especially where there have been multiple failures, should be discussed with the Academic Course Leader or the Head of Programmes, and a trainee may be counselled against resit or retake, particularly where there have been multiple failures. Relevant progression regulations may apply, and decisions are at the discretion of the Examination Board, which may take multiple factors into account when reaching a decision.

Assessments given a failing mark are to be resubmitted within a maximum of four weeks of notification from Registry of the ratification of the Examination Board. Module leaders will set the resubmission date as agreed and as appropriate to the nature of the assessment. Please note that re-submitted work will be awarded a maximum pass only (i.e., capped at 50% for the M-level year in those modules where the full range of marks is used).

To aid progression and because Examination Boards occur only three times per year, it may be possible to repair and resubmit work for marking after notification of the provisional mark/prior to the next Examination Board. This should be discussed with the relevant module leader and communicated to the Academic Course Leader or Head of Programmes. In such circumstances, the module leader will let the trainee know about the options for resubmission and whether repair before the Examination Board is possible. If so, the module leader will then set an appropriate deadline for the resubmission so that academic progression is not impeded.

In some cases, immediate revision and resubmission of the work may not be possible (e.g., for research if participant recruitment is an issue; in client work if organisational restructuring delays

access to clients, etc.). In those cases, the Research Degrees Committee and/or Examination Board will consider the issues and suggest a different resubmission date.

#### **2.10.10 Feedback on work**

All staff members are required to use set marking criteria for feedback (see *Assessment Handbook* for details) to trainees on their submitted work. The feedback should refer to key strengths and weaknesses, with reference to learning outcomes.

The DPpsych team will endeavour to mark all submitted work within four weeks of the original submission date. However, please note that the University is closed for two weeks over the late December/early January period, which will likely extend the time for turning around of marking, as will the Easter period. Where exceptions to this four-week marking period occur, due to unexpected staff absence or other circumstances, trainees will be informed by the relevant module leader.

Staff will return feedback via Blackboard. Feedback will include the provisional mark being recommended to the Board of Examiners. For quality assurance reasons, while marks will appear on Blackboard and Evision, no marks can be finalised prior to the relevant Examination Board, as the Board of Examiners must ratify all marks.

#### **2.10.11 Monitoring of assessment standards and moderation**

All failed work will be double marked internally, and borderline pass work will be moderated internally (please see the *Assessment Handbook* for our moderation policy). In both cases, you will be given the feedback from both markers. On rare occasions where the two markers disagree on the quality of your work, a third internal marker will be assigned, and you will be given the feedback from all three markers. In addition, all marking is moderated by the module leader. The programme has Programme External Examiners who overview and monitor its quality. The external examiners review a sample of work prior to the scheduled Board of Examiners to ensure the quality and objectivity of marking as well as fairness and consistency. Work that is marked by Guest or Visiting Lecturers will also be moderated, generally by the module leader.

For further information on external examining please refer to Section 3.5.

### **2.11 Credits and Notional Learning Time**

The following definitions are utilised within the University Academic Framework:

**Credit:** is the means by which learning outcomes achievable in a given number of notional learning hours and at a particular level are quantified. Credits are not graded. Unless programme specific regulations utilise a different credit system, if a full-time postgraduate workload is 110 credits per year, and 1 credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours, that postgraduate workload would be equivalent to 1100 notional learning hours per academic year.

**Notional learning time:** is the estimated time that a trainee will typically spend on acquiring specific learning outcomes.

As you can see in the diagram below, the total number of credits for your training is 540 (thesis included). Specifically:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year: a total of 140 credits (plus 40 credits for an MA dissertation in the case of exit awards)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year: a total of 110 credits
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year: a total of 110 credits
- Total Credits for all years: 360 (plus 180 credits for the DPsych thesis and portfolio) → 540 credits total for degree

Broad details of credits and weighting can be seen in the tables below for all three years. For more details and full module descriptors, to include calculation of credits, and indication of notional learning times for each module, please see the *Assessment Handbook*.

## **2.12 Schedule of Modules, Assessments and Credits**

The following pages summarise the modules across the three years of training, together with credits gained. The precise timings of modules in a given term will be publicised at the start of each term and may vary from the below when timetabling issues dictate. Again, for further details, please see the *Assessment Handbook*, which outlines assessment types and timings. For module outlines, learning outcomes and indicative content, see detailed notes in the *Assessment Handbook*.

| DPSYCH COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY                                    |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| YEAR 1 (LEVEL 7)   |  |  | YEAR 2 (LEVEL 8)   |  |   | YEAR 3 (LEVEL 8)   |  |   |
| 11 Autumn  | 12 Spring  | 13 Summer  | 21 Autumn  | 22 Spring  | 23 Summer   | 31 Autumn  | 32 Spring  | 33 Summer   |
| <b>EPC710</b><br>Counselling Psychology Theory and Practice (20) | <b>EPC712</b><br>Existential Approaches in Counselling Psychology (20) | <b>EPC713</b><br>Counselling Psychology Settings and Context (10)                | <b>EPC839</b><br>Philosophical & Psychological Perspectives on Human Issues (20) | <b>EPC835</b><br>Cognitive Behavioural Approaches 2: Third Wave (20) | <b>EPC837</b><br>Psycho-dynamic approaches in counselling psychology (20) | <b>EPC841</b><br>Advanced Counselling Psychology Workshops I: Influencing and Leading (10) | <b>EPC844</b><br>Advanced Counselling Psychology Workshops II: Measurement and Evaluation (10) | <b>EPC847</b><br>Advanced Counselling Psychology Workshops III: Specialisation and Employability (10) |
| <b>EPC7109</b><br>Ethical and Professional Issues (10)           | <b>EPC716</b><br>Critical Psychopathology (10)                         | <b>EPC717</b><br>Cognitive Behavioural Approaches in Counselling Psychology (10) | <b>EPC851</b><br>Year 2 Professional Practice (50)                               |  |   | <b>EPC852</b><br>Year 3 Professional Practice (50)   |  |   |
| <b>EPC721</b><br>Year 1 Professional Practice (20)               |  |  |  |  |   | <b>EPC843</b><br>Doctoral Research Clinic (10)   | <b>EPC845</b><br>Clinical Seminar: Pluralistic and Integrative Working (20)                    | <b>EPC849</b><br>Viva preparation (0)   |
| <b>EPC7107</b><br>Counselling Psychology Research I (10)         | <b>EPC715</b><br>Counselling Psychology Research II (20)               |  |  |  |   |  |  | <b>EPC850</b><br>Doctoral Portfolio (180)   |
|  |  | <b>EPC718</b><br>Working with Difference and Discrimination (10)                 |  |  |   |  |  |   |
| <b>140 credits</b>   |  |  | <b>110 credits</b>   |  |   | <b>110 credits + 180 credits</b>   |  |   |

## 2.13 Progression and Awards Criteria

All DPpsych modules are compulsory; progression to subsequent years depends on attendance (i.e., minimum of 75% of teaching sessions of each module within each term), passing all module assessments; satisfying requirements specific to clinical placements and personal therapy; and receiving satisfactory judgements on Annual Monitoring for research and the end-of-year Collaborative Evaluation of Progress. Several modules offer flexibility in the precise nature of the assessment (e.g., a choice of foci for an essay; a choice of client for a process report; a choice of influencing/leadership activity; a choice of presentation topic). For a detailed understanding of the assessment procedures and requirements throughout the programme please refer to the *Assessment Handbook*.

The programme and individual learning outcomes of the degree ensure appropriate development towards “learner autonomy” and reliance upon psychological maturity, self-reflection, and clinical judgement. Progression regulations are set to satisfy the Board of Examiners that trainees have achieved the relevant level before progression is possible. As noted above, all modules are core and must be successfully completed in order to progress to subsequent years of training. The personal tutorial system and the annual monitoring system for research serve as mid-year opportunities to identify any potential issues for progression and any appropriate action plan that will enable the trainee to successfully complete the competencies and requirements at the end of the year.

On rare occasions, there may be serious and extraordinary circumstances that occur that may impact a trainee's progression and trainees must speak to their personal tutor and the Head of Programmes as soon as this becomes evident. In such cases, trainees will be asked to supply the following:

a) written evidence of a serious and extraordinary circumstance such as bereavement of a close family member, severe and life changing illness or accident or another serious event:

b) a letter of support from their personal tutor signed by the Head of Programmes. The Head of Programmes and personal tutor will consider performance across the programme and feedback from the staff team when deciding whether to write the letter of support.

These requirements must be met in addition to those set out in 17.5.3. of the **Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University**. Your case will then be reviewed by the **Subject Board**. It is imperative to note that conditions a) and b) are not the same as applying for extenuating circumstances via the usual Regent's procedure. A trainee may be successful in their application for extenuating circumstances in respect of a particular module, but this will not grant progression on its own.

## **2.13.1 Progression regulations**

### **2.13.1.1 Level 7 (Master's level assessment) (Year 1)**

To progress to Year 2 (the doctoral stage) of the training, trainees need to have achieved the following:

- A minimum of 50% (i.e., passing mark) or Pass for **all** modules
- A pass for Year 1 Professional Practice as assessed by the end-of-year Collaborative Evaluation of Progress, the criteria for which include a minimum of 70 hours of supervised clinical practice, a minimum of 30 up to a maximum of 40 personal therapy hours, supervision at a ratio of 1:6, and maintenance of professional conduct – please see *Assessment Handbook* for pass criteria for Year 1 Professional Practice.

### **2.13.1.2 Level 8 (Doctoral level assessment) (Year 2)**

To progress to Year 3 of the training, trainees need to have achieved the following:

- A pass for **all** modules

- Secured ethical approval for their research proposal and satisfactory progress in research as reflected in the Annual Monitoring form
- A pass for Year 2 Professional Practice as assessed by the end-of-year Collaborative Evaluation of Progress, the criteria for which include a minimum of 220 hours aggregate of supervised clinical practice across years 1 and 2, 70 to 80 aggregate hours of personal therapy across years 1 and 2, continued supervision at a ratio of 1:6, and maintenance of professional conduct – please see *Assessment Handbook* for pass criteria for Year 2 Professional Practice.

\* While minimum numbers of hours are required for progression to the next year, please see award criteria below regarding the need for 450 client hours before the end of the programme.

### **2.13.2 Award criteria for the DPsych in Counselling Psychology**

For this award trainees will be required to have passed all programme modules, inclusive of clinical placement hours as part of the Professional Practice modules; to have completed 120 hours of personal therapy over the three years; to have submitted a DPsych portfolio; and to have passed a final oral examination (viva voce).

Successful passing of Year 3 Professional Practice will entail, in part, the completion of a minimum of an aggregate of 450 hours of supervised clinical practice in approved placements with qualified supervisors, having maintained a supervision ratio of 1:6 continuously throughout. See the *Placement Handbook* for criteria for approved supervisors and placements. Over the course of the training, you will need to have received at least 25 hours of your supervision from an HCPC registered Counselling Psychologist.

Trainees generally continue working at clinical placements, using the appropriate title to reflect their “trainee” status, until they have submitted their doctoral portfolio. They may elect to cease formal placements after their portfolio submission, or they may carry on until their formal award. Trainees must carry on using the “trainee” designation in their titles **until they have received the DPsych award. Please see HCPC guidance on protected titles.**

Personal therapy hours must have been completed with suitably qualified practitioners, and trainees are advised to consider the usefulness of utilising counselling psychologists as personal therapists. Personal tutors will work with trainees to assess whether a personal therapist is suitably qualified.

All components of the degree, to include assessments for modules, clinical placement hours, personal therapy hours, and outcomes of Collaborative Evaluations of Progress will be submitted to and confirmed by the Examination Board and submitted to the programme external examiner for review. Annual Monitoring forms for research are reviewed and approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

### **2.13.3 Aegrotat awards**

In **highly exceptional** circumstances, a final board of examiners decides that there is insufficient evidence of a trainee's performance to award a degree but is satisfied that the trainee would have achieved the required standard but for certified and permanent illness/absence/other valid reason, then an aegrotat award may be awarded. Please see regulation 21.0 of *Regulations for validated awards of the Open University*, Appendix B.

### **2.13.4 Level 7 exit awards**

In some circumstances, a trainee may elect to exit the DPsych programme before fulfilling all requirements for the doctoral degree. The precise exit award depends upon the training stage reached. Because "counselling psychology" and "counselling psychologist" are protected titles, we are unable to award sub-doctoral exit awards in "counselling psychology."

#### **2.13.4.1 Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Counselling (PGDip)**

Trainees who successfully complete **all** components of Year I of the training and who prefer to terminate their studies without writing a thesis or dissertation may exit at this juncture with the *PGDip in Psychological Counselling*. For this award, evidence is required of a minimum 40 hours of personal therapy and a minimum of 150 hours of supervised clinical practice. Where sufficient hours have not yet been achieved, trainees are allowed a maximum of one more year of registration. During this time, they must continue to be in contact with their personal tutor and must submit placement logs and supervisors' reports. Trainees will be enrolled on EPC704, Professional Practice Extension, a zero-credit hours module, until completion of the requisite requirements for this exit award. A final Collaborative Evaluation of Progress must occur with the personal tutor, with the aim of verifying that all requirements for the *Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Counselling* have been met.

#### **2.13.4.2 MA in Psychological Counselling**

Trainees who successfully complete **all** components of Year I and who wish to exit at this juncture have the option to complete an M-level dissertation (maximum of 20,000 words) and exit with the *MA in Psychological Counselling*. For details and guidelines on how to write a dissertation suitable for the MA in Psychological Counselling, please refer to the *Research Handbook*. For this award, evidence is required of a minimum of 40 hours of personal therapy and a minimum of 150 hours of supervised clinical practice; trainees will be enrolled on a 40-credit module to complete the Master's, which is inclusive of additional clinical hours to 150 (see above). A maximum of one calendar year of further registration on this module is allowed.

Application to exit with an MA in Psychological Counselling must be made prior to the end of the current year of registration but can only be made once all Level 7 modules have been passed.

Level 7 awards will be recorded as Pass, Merit, or Distinction, dependent on trainees' grades in all relevant assessments. Merit will be awarded for a final average mark of 60% or above, and distinction for a final average mark of 70% or above.

Important Note: The above Level 7 exit awards do not provide eligibility for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society (BPS) or full membership of its Division of Counselling Psychology and will not provide eligibility to register with the HCPC as a Practitioner Psychologist. Graduates will therefore not be able to practice using the title Counselling Psychologist.

### **2.13.5 Breaks in study**

Trainees may apply for a break in studies under certain exceptional circumstances, for example, ongoing ill health or bereavement. Trainees wishing to apply for a break in studies should discuss with the Head of Programmes in the first instance; support may be sought from Student Support or the Student Hub. Please note, trainees will be asked to supply supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates) to substantiate their request. A break in studies will not be granted beyond the normal period of registration for the degree. Please refer to sections 7 and 8 of the *Regulations for validated awards of the Open University*.

Trainees who have requested a break in studies from the programme and whose break is coming to an end are expected to initiate a review procedure with the Head of Programmes before recommencing the course.



## SECTION 3: Relevant Regulations

In addition to being designed in accordance with professional, statutory, and regulating bodies and QAA standards (already reviewed), the DPpsych also conforms to the regulations of our validating body, The Open University.

### 3.1 Academic Integrity and Misconduct

Regent's University promotes an academic environment of integrity in the quest for knowledge. This is achieved through a clear value system of honesty, fairness, mutual trust and respect, and personal responsibility. The participatory nature of learning is a central part of the learning process.

Assessment is the means by which the University tests whether trainees have achieved the objectives of the programme and assures the standard of an award. It is important that trainees understand that any attempt to gain unfair advantage over another trainee in the completion of assessments, or to assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, is considered to be cheating. The *intention* to cheat is to be treated in the same way as cheating's having occurred. Whether or not unfair advantage has *actually* been gained is viewed as irrelevant.

The module tutors make every attempt to take a proactive and developmental view to the discouragement of cheating or plagiarism by teaching trainees the appropriate academic skills of writing and referencing within the modules and clearly explaining the meaning of the term plagiarism as elaborated within this document. Please note that "plagiarism" refers to your *own previous work* as well as the work of others. For the avoidance of doubt, copying the feedback from the markers of your coursework in any resubmission is treated as plagiarism.

The DPpsych takes cheating very seriously and, if proven, the penalties are severe. Therefore, we ensure that the rules are applied fairly and consistently by having a process of impartial investigation. At the same time, we endeavour to have a definition of cheating that is understood by all parties. The burden of proof is based on the maxim "*beyond reasonable doubt*". It is therefore important that you understand the following definition:

"Any act whereby a person may obtain an un-permitted advantage for himself/herself or for another. This shall apply whether the candidate acts alone or in collusion with another/others. Any action or actions shall be deemed to fall within this definition whether occurring during, or in relation to, a formal examination, a piece of coursework, or any form of assessment undertaken in pursuit of a qualification. These include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion, falsification, and cheating" (*Regent's University London Academic Regulations*). Please refer to section E of the *Regulations for validated awards of the Open University* and the *Regent's University London Academic Regulations* for further details.

### **3.2 Code of Conduct for Students and Student Disciplinary Policy**

As postgraduate trainees on a counselling psychology course, trainees are expected to abide by the HCPC and the BPS codes of conduct. In addition, they are expected to behave appropriately, professionally and respectfully in their dealings with all the members of the academic community, to include faculty, administrative staff, and fellow trainees. The *Code of Conduct for Students* outlines expectations of students, which include the following:

1. Students must abide by regulations as set by the University
2. Students must behave in a responsible manner that fosters mutual respect and understanding among all members of the University community
3. Students must register and pay their fees on time
4. Students must check their University email address regularly
5. Students must attend classes on time and be mentally and physically prepared to learn
6. Students must comply with all Home Office requirements with respect to student visas
7. Students must respect others regarding mobile phone and electronic equipment usage during class time
8. Student should complete assignments on time and deliver them where and how instructed

Ultimately, trainees must accept responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences. Please see the *Student Disciplinary Policy* and the *Student Handbook* for further guidance; these are available via the University's Intranet/Blackboard.

When the course team has concerns about a trainee's behaviour and/or sees clear contraventions of the HCPC, BPS and RUL codes of conduct, this will be addressed by the Heads of Programme and/or the personal tutor, either within or outside of regularly scheduled personal tutorial time. The University has a duty of care to all students and to vulnerable clients, and the needs and protection of these various stakeholders must be considered when addressing an individual trainee's issues.

### **3.3 Fitness to Study**

On occasion a trainee may be experiencing physical or psychological issues that interfere with their fitness to study. Please see Regent's *Fitness to Study* documentation for further guidance, which is available via the Student Hub, and seek further support from Student Support, personal tutors, and/or the Head of Programmes where necessary. The Fitness to Study procedures may be initiated by a trainee, or any member of the programme team, in consultation with the Head of Programmes.

### 3.4 Attendances, Absences, and Lateness to Classes

This is a taught doctoral training, and attendance is taken very seriously. The DPsych, like any other doctoral training, requires commitment, responsibility, psychological maturity, and full involvement with all aspects of the programme. However, occasionally we are confronted with events outside our control. Trainees are therefore allowed to miss a maximum of 25% of classes (per module) each term without being penalised. As modules meet for nine weeks per trimester (excluding reading week), **this means that you may miss no more than two days per module**, although any absence is of course to be avoided. Please discuss anticipated absences in excess of this with the relevant module leader(s). For the avoidance of doubt, trainees are expected to attend *all* classes, and a pattern of routinely missing two days per term will be considered a professional issue.

In the event of missing more than 25% of a module, trainees may be expected to repeat the module. The DPsych is a cohort-based programme and has only one intake a year, so for many modules the chance to repeat will only be available during the following academic year: this has significant consequences. Therefore, where attendance in a module is anticipated to fall below the required level and no creative solutions have been identified for the trainee to demonstrate learning outcomes (e.g., viewing a digital lecture capture and writing a reflective piece; participating remotely using Skype or FaceTime; writing an essay), the trainee must meet with the personal tutor or module leader (as applicable) as soon as possible to discuss. Further discussions may involve the Head of Programmes if necessary.

As this is a professional training, trainees are also required to adhere to the attendance policies of their clinical placements (see relevant section in the *Placement Handbook*) and participate fully in research supervision. Your research supervisors will work with you, and your personal tutor will work with you and your placement supervisor(s) and placement manager(s) to identify and address any problems. Further discussions may involve the Head of Programmes if necessary.

### 3.5 Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners

#### 3.5.1 Programme external examiners

Two types of examiners will be involved in the evaluation of your work over the course of your training. The first type of examiner oversees and monitors the quality of the programme; they are referred to as programme external examiners. The programme external examiners are appointed for a four-year period, nominated by Regent's University and approved by The Open University. The programme external examiners are responsible for the external examining of both the taught component of the award and the overall confirmation of the final degree result. They are also involved in the approval of the portfolio external examiner. The programme external examiner is currently Dr Christine Ramsey-Wade, with a second external examiner being recruited.

The programme external examiners are responsible for the following key areas:

- Reviewing a sample of work from the taught component of the degree prior to the scheduled Subject Board to ensure the quality, objective, fairness and consistency of marking;
- Approving the appointment of the portfolio examiners;
- Reviewing the trainee's report from the internal and external portfolio examiners after completion of the viva voce;

- Confirming the decision of the RDC to award the doctoral degree to a trainee.

The programme external examiners are appointed to ensure that the University's standards and quality processes are appropriate and of a standard comparable to those of other higher education institutions in the UK. The programme external examiner will not alter individual trainees' marks.

Trainees are not permitted to independently contact external examiners under any circumstances.

### **3.5.2 Portfolio external examiners**

Each trainee's doctoral portfolio will be evaluated by an external examiner and an internal examiner; they are referred to as portfolio examiners or doctoral examiners. The portfolio examiners are nominated by the trainee's supervisory team and are approved by the Research Degrees Committee (RDC), on which the programme external examiners sit.

All nominations for external examiners, both Programme and Portfolio, must meet the criteria specified by the Open University and be approached **only** by the DPpsych research lead, in conjunction with the Research Degrees Officer.

To make award decisions, the Board of Examiners/Research Degrees Committee receive reports from both the portfolio examiners (in writing) and the programme external examiner (in person). The programme external examiner is responsible for approving the recommendation of awards to the Open University.

Trainees are not permitted to independently contact external examiners under any circumstances.

The duties of the portfolio external examiner include the following:

- Assessing the trainee's portfolio;
- Conducting a viva voce with the internal examiner;
- Together with the internal examiner, deciding upon the outcome of the viva from a set list of options;
- Upon resubmission, confirming that any corrections/amendments/corrections to the portfolio have been made as appropriate;
- Signing the relevant form to confirm that the thesis component of the programme has been met (this form is then submitted to the RDC and the programme external examiner for consideration).

For further information regarding the portfolio external examiner please refer to the *Research Handbook*.

## **3.6 Trainee Representation and Feedback**

Trainees play a key role in the quality monitoring systems of the University and the programme; they nominate representatives, who can canvas opinion among their groups and feedback questions, problems and suggestions to relevant University bodies. They should also liaise with Student Registry for available training.

Trainees also provide feedback on the University's educational provision and the broader trainee experience. This role is based on providing feedback on their experience at the module level, together with the active role of representation at the Programme Committee and at institutional level.

There are several processes designed to provide trainees with an opportunity to contribute to the assessment of the enhancement of quality:

- Trainee feedback on learning at the module level;
- Trainee feedback on facilities/resources supporting a learning environment;
- Trainee representation on the Programme Committee Meetings;
- Trainee representation on other University Committees such as Research Degrees Committees, Student Union/Council Meetings, Senate and Senate sub-committees.

As different committees focus on different aspects of the trainee's experience, the Head of Programmes is available to orientate trainees to the different format and function of each committee.

Informal feedback can be sought and provided at different times within a module, and it is assumed that module leaders will undertake this, although trainees can initiate this too. Towards the end of each module, trainees are invited to provide anonymous feedback via questionnaire. The feedback is distributed and collected by the Student Hub. The final report is reviewed by module leaders and the Head of Programmes where appropriate, the Head of School and the Associate Dean (Academic).

### **3.7 Quality Assurance Procedures**

Academic Governance of the University is entrusted to the Senate and its committees, including the Senate Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, which is the guardian of standards.

The functions of the Senate Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee cover the application of the University academic framework, the monitoring of academic standards for all programmes, the promotion and improvement of the student learning experience, including in the key University areas of internationalism and professionalism, and the provision of an effective and consistent audit trail of all academic activity, as defined by the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

External Referents:

QAA FHEQ Framework

QAA Code of Practice

Specialist external advisers Internal Review Panel

OUCICP Validation Panel

BPS *Standards for the Accreditation of Doctoral Programmes in Counselling Psychology*

HCPC *Standards of Education (SETs) and Standards of Proficiency (SOPs)*

### **3.8 Appeals**

Academic appeals are governed by the conditions and regulations laid down by both Regent's University and the Open University. Please see Section H of the *Regulations for validated awards of the Open University*.

Registered Level 7 trainees on the taught component of the degree may appeal to the Regent's University Appeals Board. The only acceptable grounds for appealing the outcome of a piece(s) of assessment are as follows:

- i) The candidate's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which the candidate was unable, or for valid reason, unwilling to divulge before the Examination Board/Research Degrees Committee reached its decision. The candidate's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Appeals Board;
- ii) Satisfactory evidence has been produced by the candidate or any other person that there has been a material administrative error, or that the assessments were not conducted in accordance with current regulations for the programme or special arrangements formally agreed, or that some material irregularity relevant to the procedures of the assessment has occurred.

Note: Disagreement with the academic judgement of the Subject Board/Research Degrees Committee in assessing the merits of an individual element/component of assessment cannot constitute grounds for an appeal, nor complaints about the delivery of management of a programme expressed only after assessment.

Registered Level 8 trainees on Open University validated programmes may appeal to the Regent's University Appeals Board against the following academic decisions only:

- i) The termination of registration due to failure to make academic progress;
- ii) Refusal of permission to submit a portfolio for examination;
- iii) The result of the oral examination.

No other appeals against academic decisions will be considered by the University. If a trainee exhausts all internal appeals procedures, they may then appeal to The Open University.

## SECTION 4: DPsych Modules

The DPsych is divided into three terms a year and runs over two days a week for Year 1 (M level) and one day a week for Years 2 and 3 (D level). Each year aims to achieve balance and integration of all aspects of the programme as well as professional and clinical competency. The reduction of the input to one day per year in Years 2 and 3 reflects the greater amount of time spent on clinical placement and immersed in research and other professional activities in Years 2 and 3.

As reviewed in previous sections, the first year is assessed at Level 7, and the second at Level 8. (Please see the QAA's *Framework for Higher Education in England and Wales* for further details.) Each academic term is divided into units of study called modules. All modules on the DPsych programme are compulsory, and trainees are required to successfully pass all modules in a given year to progress to subsequent years of training.

Please refer to the *Assessment Handbook* for full DPsych module descriptors, with module codes, credit hours, notional learning hours, rationales, aims, learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies, indicative content, assessment strategies and guidelines, and reading lists. The assessment strategies need to be read thoroughly, as they provide a detailed analysis of what is expected as well as guidance on how to submit work.

Please note that *all* modules consist of formal student hours and self-directed learning. The former refers to the number of hours trainees are required to be present at the University attending the modules; the latter refers to the hours trainees are expected to spend on external learning and professional activities, self-directed reading and engagement with the VLE, and research.

## **Appendix A: Professional & Ethical Contract**

As noted in this *Programme Handbook*, DPsych trainees are expected to abide by the Regent's University London student code of conduct, as well as the codes of conduct set out by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

During induction week, trainees will be asked to review and sign the following Professional & Ethical Contract, returning it to their personal tutor for placement on their trainee file.



**Regent's School of Psychotherapy and Psychology (RSPP)**  
**DPsych Counselling Psychology**

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONTRACT

Counselling psychology training programmes in general, and the Regent's University DPsych, place great emphasis on reflexivity, ethical conduct, and interpersonal and dialogical skills. Counselling psychology trainees are constantly and systematically engaged in personal development work so that greater understanding of personal issues is developed. The HCPC's *Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students* (2016) requires that you:

- act in the best interests of your service users [and colleagues];
- respect the confidentiality of your service users [and colleagues];
- keep high standards of personal conduct;
- provide any important information about your conduct, competence or health to your education provider;
- limit your study or stop studying if your performance or judgment is affected by your health;
- keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date;
- act within the limits of your knowledge and skills;
- communicate effectively with service users, your education provider and placement providers;
- get informed consent to provide care or services;
- keep accurate records on service users;
- behave honestly; and
- make sure that your behaviour does not damage public confidence in your profession.

In line with the above, throughout your training, you will be required to be in personal therapy; to participate in group tutorials and experiential exercises; to attend clinical supervision and clinical placements; and to engage with basic and advanced therapeutic skills training. With informed consent, you will be expected to record clinical sessions. In certain modules, you may disclose to and receive disclosures from fellow trainees. All these activities require high levels of respectful and professional behaviour; general openness; reflexivity; transparency; and capacity to adhere to ethical and professional codes of practice and conduct as outlined by the BPS, HCPC, and Regent's University London.

(see reverse for declaration)

## **DECLARATION**

**I have read and agree with the information provided to me and understand the relevance of such requirements to the field of counselling psychology and the DPsych training. I agree to participate in all activities mentioned, and I understand that my tutors will provide me with feedback on my personal and professional behaviour and development.**

**Trainee's name (*please print*)**

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**Trainee's signature:**

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Please forward this signed declaration to your personal tutor for inclusion in your trainee file.