**SECTION ONE: General Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Title</th>
<th>MSc Psychology</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval of Specification</td>
<td>22/02/2017</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Award Title & Interim Awards** | **Awards** Master of Science in Psychology  
**Interim Awards** Postgraduate Certificate in Psychology  
Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology |
| **Mode of Study** | Full-time: □  
Part-time: ☒  
E-learning: ☒  
Distance: ☐  
Sandwich: ☐ |
| Programme Start Date & Period of Validation | Start Date: 2012  
Date of Last Update: 2017  
5 Years: □  
Indefinite: ☒  
Other (Please state): |
| Awarding Institution | University of Derby: ☒  
Other (Please State): |
| College Managing the Programme | University of Derby Online Learning |
| Institutions Delivering the Programme | University of Derby: ☒  
Other (Please State): |
| **Relevant External Reference Points** | The programme is also designed to comply with the QAA Subject Benchmarks for Psychology (2016) and the descriptor for a Higher Education qualification at Level 7 (QAA, 2008). |
| **External Accreditation/Recognition** | The programme is designed to meet the accreditation standards of the British Psychological Society (BPS) as providing the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership. Eligibility for GBC will be contingent on students gaining at least 50% on the (Master’s) Research Project and a minimum of 50% overall. |
| **JACS Code(s)** | C800 |
SECTION TWO: Overview

### Background/Context:

The University of Derby has three ambitions:

1. **To inspire** students through an outstanding teaching and learning environment, ‘work ready’ ethos, and ‘best in class’ student experience.

2. **To innovate** through sector leading flexible and dynamic teaching and learning methods and curricula.

3. **To have a significant economic and social impact** on our region and its place in the global economy.

We strive to meet these goals by offering high quality psychology degrees that inspire students within a sector leading online unit. This provides a dedicated core team of staff including subject specialists, online learning experts, content creators and online learner advisors in order to offer psychology degrees that meet the needs of students who require more flexible study options.

Psychology involves the empirical study of “the mind and behaviour in humans and non-humans” (QAA, 2016). Psychology also offers students the opportunity to develop a range of transferable skills and attributes including, scientific reasoning, communication and numeracy skills. This and the subject's natural emphasis on applying understanding of human thought and behaviour mean that it is a subject area that is well recognised by employers. The Online MSc Psychology programme aim to offer a route for prospective students interested in specialising in the theory and applications of psychology that might not be able to access higher education via more traditional routes.

### Overview of the Programme:

This programme provides a conversion pathway designed to open up careers in psychology to prospective students who cannot access psychology conversion courses via traditional campus-based delivery. The programme has been developed to provide broad and detailed knowledge of theories and applications within contemporary psychology. Consistent with the university's teaching and learning strategy, the programme is also intended to provide students with a coherent range of transferable skills. These will include an appreciation of the application of psychological knowledge and techniques; information technology; critical thinking; the ability to work both independently and co-operatively; and effective communication and presentation skills. The course is also intended to produce graduates who can compete effectively in the graduate careers market, through engagement in personal development planning and supporting activities.

This online programme offers a route to specialise in the theory and applications of psychology to students that might not be able to access higher education via more traditional routes. To this end the programme promotes flexibility, it is delivered fully online and over
three trimesters; during the course of the programme students are in a position to change
their rate of study to meet the demands of their commitments at work and at home; there are
also three entry points to the programme each year.

The structure of the course ensures that students cover core areas of psychology identified in
the national subject benchmarks for psychology. The programme has been designed to
meet the British Psychological Society (BPS) requirements for accreditation for Graduate
Basis for Chartership (GBC) status. This opens up the possibility of obtaining GBC to a wide
range of UK, EU and international students.

For those wishing to pursue a career as a Chartered Psychologist, gaining GBC is the first
step towards gaining Chartered status. The programme presented here allows prospective
students to study 180 credits of Psychology for the MSc award (a minimum of 180 credits in
Psychology is required for a course to be accredited and confer GBC). Obtaining GBC keeps
open the widest range of training, development and employment opportunities in psychology.
Completion of an accredited programme, moreover, offers graduates a clear route to Society
membership, and therefore access to the full range of membership benefits, including
services, publications, conferences, training and networking opportunities.

Key Characteristics:

The University of Derby Online Learning (UDOL) MSc Psychology programmes are:

1. Evidence-based, and research-led teaching and learning materials; staff keep up to
date with current theory and developments, and content is reviewed and refreshed
before the start of each trimester.

2. Designed to give students a solid foundation in empirical research skills carried out
independently and collaboratively, with this research training embedded throughout
the programme.

3. Responsive to British Psychological Society curriculum changes, key student
demands and the requirements of local and international students.

4. Self-paced, flexible, with a number of entry and exit points to best suit the needs of
online learners, encouraging achievement and maximising retention.

5. Underpinned by an in depth understanding of online learning pedagogy and the needs
of online students.

6. Delivered by highly motivated and enthusiastic staff with a depth and breadth of
subject expertise as well as a passion and enthusiasm for online learning.
Programme Aims:

The MSc in Psychology programmes are designed for students who wish to specialise in psychology and are therefore designed to offer distinctive range, depth and integration of skills, knowledge and applications of psychology. The MSc programme aim to provide substantial and comprehensive training in the discipline and to allow students to develop a wide range of psychological and digital skills and knowledge that will prepare them for a range of vocational destinations, including further professional training in psychology at postgraduate level. Specifically the degree focuses particularly on equipping students to:

1. Produce a systematic scientific understanding of the mind, brain, behaviour, and experience, and how they interact with the complex environments in which they exist in terms of fundamental theory, real life applications of theory, research, and recent developments;
2. Acquire the ability to critically evaluate methodologies, ethical, conceptual, cultural, historical and current insights from core and optional subject areas;
3. Comprehend the role of the scientific method and empirical evidence in the proposal and limitation of theory, and in how epistemology guides study design, and the collection and interpretation of primary and secondary empirical data, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods;
4. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of multiple perspectives to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, and to communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

SECTION THREE: Programme Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the MSc in Psychology programme will meet the following learning outcomes, commensurate with level 7 in the framework for higher education qualifications. Outcomes are grouped into the four headings of Knowledge and Understanding, Intellectual Skills, Subject-Specific Skills, and Transferable skills:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline, its historical origins, development, and limitations.
2. Understand the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning and its significance.
3. Demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning and how they are conceptualised across the core areas in psychology.
4. Understand the ethical standards and guidelines of the British Psychological Society.
5. Demonstrate a thorough grasp of the fundamental concepts of psychological analysis and explanation, including multiple psychological perspectives, and an ability to apply those concepts to a broad range of topics.
Intellectual Skills
6. Analyse and interpret psychological evidence.
7. Apply critical, analytical and creative abilities in scholarly thinking, problem solving, and communication to course material, for planning, execution, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of independent research within psychology.

Subject-specific skills
8. Comprehensive understanding of the core areas (biological, cognitive, developmental, individual differences, and social psychology) and the links between them.
9. Select and to apply appropriate research methodologies in the investigation of a wide range of psychological phenomena and to use appropriate analytical techniques to interpret the findings.
10. Synthesise appropriate psychological literature to the investigation of psychological phenomena.
11. Demonstrate professional, ethical and scientific responsibilities associated with psychological enquiry, and apply these principles to their own research including seeking appropriate approval.

Transferable skills
12. Use information technology effectively and be familiar with a range of relevant applications.
13. Communicate complex ideas and findings in a variety of modalities effectively.
14. Demonstrate personal skills relating to interpersonal communication, leadership and teamwork as a consequence of reflexive application of psychological knowledge.
15. Demonstrate independent learning.
16. Demonstrate effective planning and project management skills.

SECTION FOUR: Programme Structure & Curriculum

The programme is delivered purely online. It is a flexible Level 7 modular course that can be studied over a period of one to six years depending on the students’ requirements and employment. In consultation with the programme leader students with varying work commitments can increase or decrease the number of modules studied per term (within the parameters specified by the University regulations). Students completing the full MSc Psychology enrol on an optional module that can be taken from any of the Level 6 BSc Psychology (online) provision. Optional module selection is subject to availability and Programme Leader approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>Introduction to Perspectives in Psychology</td>
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<td>Social &amp; Developmental Psychology*</td>
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<td>Individual Differences</td>
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<td>7PS544</td>
<td>Biological &amp; Cognitive Approaches in Psychology*</td>
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<td>Summer</td>
<td>Prescribed</td>
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<td>Clinical Applications of Psychology</td>
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<td>Applied Psychology and Ergonomics</td>
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<td>The Psychology of Pain</td>
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<td>Autism, Asperger's and ADHD</td>
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<td>Contemporary Issues in Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>7PS999</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Any (Through module)</td>
<td>Prescribed (MSc exit only)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*7PS503 - Investigation and Analysis is a pre-requisite for this module.
Example Study Patterns

Study Pattern
PROGRAMME: MSc Psychology (Online – 3/4 Year Standard Route)

Year 1
- Introduction to Perspectives in Psychology (7PS543) 20 Credits
- Social and Developmental Psychology (7PS606) 20 Credits

Year 2
- Individual Differences (7PS02) 20 Credits
- Biological and Cognitive Approaches to Psychology (7PS44) 20 Credits

Option B
- Positive Psychology (6PS528) 20 Credits
- Neuropsychology (6PS330) 20 Credits

Year 3
- Masters Research Project (7PS999) Studied over 12 months 60 Credits

Example Options

Option A:
- Psychology of Addiction (6PS544) 20 Credits
- Psychology in Education (6PS526) 20 Credits
- Forensic Applications in Psychology (6PS529) 20 Credits
- The Psychology of Health (6PS538) 20 Credits

Option B:
- Clinical Applications of Psychology (6PS525) 20 Credits
- The Psychology of Pain (6PS532) 20 Credits
- Autism, Asperger’s and ADHD (6PS523) 20 Credits

Option C:
- Applied Psychology and Ergonomics (6PS535) 20 Credits
- Contemporary Issues in Psychology (6PS531) 20 Credits
- The Psychology of Pain (6PS532) 20 Credits
**Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development. Through their PDP students should be able to: identify and reflect on existing skills, working, professional and other experiences, reflect on how their study will meet their professional and personal needs and review progress and achievement with the support and guidance from their personal tutor.

Students will also be required to complete a portfolio in which they will keep a record of their PDP activities. This process will be facilitated and supported by their personal tutor. The aim of this is to facilitate the integration of the academic and practical aspects of the Masters programme and to enable students to recognise the efficacy of this combination. Further PDP opportunities are embedded throughout the modules on the programme.

**SECTION FIVE: Learning & Teaching**

**Learning and Teaching Methods**

Our learning and teaching methods strategy has the following aims:

- To recognise the specific challenges of studying online and implement teaching strategies designed to combat these challenges
- To utilise teaching, learning and support methods which effectively develop students’ abilities as independent learners.
- To use a variety of teaching methods, appropriate to the needs of students and to the intended learning outcomes.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are achieved via the modules which are taught and assessed according to the strategy detailed below.

Online learning, a form of distance learning was chosen as the mode of study in order to meet demand of potential students. Module materials are delivered online and involve a range of online delivery modes including audio files, Adobe presenter PowerPoint shows with audio, videos and text based material. The mode of delivery also allows discussion points, e-tivities and interactive quizzes. The modules also provide a framework for students to learn independently and discover the knowledge relevant to their particular needs. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning.

At the University of Derby we recognise that studying online can be an isolating experience, which in itself can be de-motivating. We therefore use teaching methods which help to overcome feelings of isolation and actively work towards building an active learning community. One of the key methods we use is collaborative learning; that is working together with other students to explore psychological concepts. This involves extensive use of electronic discussion boards to share and explore ideas both within groups of students and between students and tutors. We have found that this approach successfully develops communities of learning.
Another strategy we use to help students with their learning are formative activities. A formative activity is work that is not graded but which is designed with the specific aim of helping students to understand the course materials and to gain feedback on their performance. This feedback can either be from other students, or from members of staff.

**Ethics**

All students are required to comply with research governance and ethical principles whilst undertaking their programme of study. This is of particular importance when conducting research involving other people e.g., for module assessments or Independent Studies. Information on these principles can be found on the University web site at [http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/uod/researchethicsandintegrity/researchethics/](http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/uod/researchethicsandintegrity/researchethics/).

Students are also required to adhere to the British Psychological Society's code of ethics and maintain confidentiality at all times in assessed work. Information on the code can be found on the BPS web-pages: [http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/bps/ethics-standards/ethics-standards](http://www.bps.org.uk/what-we-do/bps/ethics-standards/ethics-standards). Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in failing that piece of work.

**SECTION SIX: Assessment**

Our assessment policy has the following aims to:

- provide rigorous assessments at an appropriate level mapped to specific module learning outcomes;
- ensure assessments are fair, by ensuring the nature and goals of assessment are clearly explained and that there are adequate opportunities for formative assessment;
- ensure the outcomes of the assessment process are transparent and that students receive timely and constructive feedback on their assessments.

We offer a varied assessment diet to assess and facilitate learning. Our assessments comply with the University’s overall assessment strategy, which identifies a number of key principles, starting with the principle that assessment should be integral to the learning experience.

Students have the opportunity to undertake a variety of forms of assessment that are appropriate to the level and content of the module, and that allows them to demonstrate that they possess both knowledge of psychology and subject-specific and transferable skills.

A range of assessment techniques are employed during the programme that are appropriate to the level of conceptual and skills development, appropriate to the module content, and explicitly mapped onto learning outcomes which are derived from programme aims and programme learning outcomes. Assessment is coursework based and there are no examinations. The type of assessment for each module is designed to allow students to demonstrate both subject knowledge and transferrable skills which will be useful on graduation. Coursework assessments may include: essays, practical reports, wikis, information leaflets, oral presentations, posters, short answer questions or various combinations of these submitted as a portfolio of work. Coursework assignments may be individual or collaborative (i.e., involve group work). Students are given the assignment specification at the beginning of the module for hand-in at the end of the module.
This programme operates within the University’s Regulatory Framework and conforms to its regulations on assessment. Assignments will be submitted in line with the University’s requirement for the electronic submission of assessment tasks.

SECTION SEVEN: Admission

Admissions criteria for the MSc Psychology programme require applicants to have the following academic qualifications:

- An undergraduate or MSc degree (in any subject) from a UK university with a classification of 2.2 or higher (this may be a Psychology degree where the programme does not confer eligibility for GBC) or an undergraduate degree from an overseas institution perceived as equivalent to UK.

- For students that have not completed their first degree at an English speaking institution, please see English Language Qualification below.

**English language qualification**

Where English is not a first language students will need an English language qualification, as follows:

- IELTS 6.5
- TOEFL 550 (paper based) 213 (computer based) or 80 (internet based)
- Pearson Test of Academic English: 51
- Cambridge Advanced Certificate: Pass
- London Tests of English: we accept level 4 for undergraduate courses
- International GCE O Level English Language: Grade C
- International GCSE English/English as a Second Language: Grade C

**International students**

Normally a qualification will need to be mapped to the UK equivalent registration to ensure that students are entering the programme with at least the equivalent of the above requirements. International qualifications will be checked for equivalency with the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) organisation, who will map the qualifications.

**Graduate Basis for Chartership**

The following information will be made aware to students, as part of the admissions process and stated in the programme handbook:

The programme is designed to provide the necessary undergraduate training to confer eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society (BPS), the first step towards becoming a Chartered Psychologist, as well as the basis for Graduate Membership as detailed in the Society's Royal Charter [Statute 4(2) (a) (i) and (ii)]. All students, irrespective of whether they are a home, EU or international student, are eligible for GBC if they achieve a 2:2 classification or above and a pass grade for the Masters Research Project (7PS999).
Recognition of Prior Learning

We consider all applications for Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) in accordance with Section C of the University of Derby Academic Regulations. Under the Institution’s Academic Regulations students are entitled to RPL up to 50% of credits at this level. You may apply up to 60 credits for RPCL. You will need to demonstrate that all module learning outcomes have been successfully achieved. Where the module you are requesting RPCL for is an integrated module (combines two subject areas, e.g. Social and Developmental Psychology), all learning outcomes will need to be achieved through one or more successfully completed modules. It is not possible to apply for RPCL for the Masters Research Project (7PS999). Recognition of prior experiential learning cannot be considered for this programme.

SECTION EIGHT: Student Support & Guidance

A number of support mechanisms are available through the portal and via direct contact:

- Academic Leads provide programme and academic guidance;
- Online Learner Advisors provides advice and guidance on administrative and pastoral support issues;
- Online Learner Advisors or Academic Leads are able to refer students to central University services designed to support students’ academic and personal development within the programme (i.e. technical support, library services, careers or student wellbeing);
- Module Tutors (sometimes referred to as Associate Academics, who on larger modules are overseen by a Module Leader) provide module support and guidance.
- Personal Tutors act as a point of contact for matters of a personal and/or academic nature from when students enrol to the programme.

More details of Online Student Support are discussed within the University of Derby Online Learning’s Academic Framework.

All the resources required to complete the programme successfully will be incorporated in your online learning resources. There is no requirement to purchase additional resources.

Access to university support services will be provided through the student portal and through a series of online webinars throughout your study. Additionally, students may wish to supplement this package by accessing resources in their local context.

Our approach to student support is proactive: We recognise that students may experience technical or academic difficulties, and that it is sometimes difficult to be sure who students should contact with a particular problem. To try to overcome this we operate a system of contacting students regularly to check for any problems they may be encountering. We check whether students are logging onto the learning materials regularly; often one of the first indications that a student is experiencing difficulties is that their frequency of logging on diminishes. We find that by doing this we are able to prevent potential problems in the bud.
Students on the programme have a named member of the psychology teaching staff who acts as their personal tutor. This person will act as their point of contact for matters of a personal and/or academic nature and will offer opportunities for students to meet with them in groups and one-to-one. Academic matters that are specific to individual modules will be managed by module tutors and module leaders.

There is an Online Orientation provision on the programme pages which serves the purpose of highlighting the particular needs of online study and prepares students for the online learning environment. This orientation materials are available to students throughout their studies.

UDOL’s Learning and Teaching Strategy does not disadvantage students with additional needs. Students experiencing difficulty or who have specific needs will be advised to use the University Central Support systems. Students in employment will already benefit from workplace support systems, but are fully informed of and have access to all services available through the University of Derby, as well as being encouraged to explore use of resources and facilities in their local area.

Accessibility statement

The university operates a disability policy to ensure that equity of opportunity is achieved for all students. If students are studying at the University of Derby and have a disability it is important that students receive the support required to participate fully on their programme. Students who have not already completed a Support Plan should contact Specialist Support to make an appointment with a Student Adviser. The completion of this Support Plan will ensure that they are aware of the services and funding available to them and that the necessary support is in place.

The Student Voice

Obtaining feedback both during and after modules is an important activity which helps us to monitor the programme and implement any changes. This can occur through Programme Committees which provide a forum where staff and students can discuss matters related to the quality of the student learning experience. As an online learning programme we have ‘virtual’ committee meetings via Blackboard Collaborate. We also seek feedback via: Programme Evaluation Questionnaires – each year the University circulates a survey for each module which gives all students the opportunity to feedback via a set of standard questions. Less formally we also welcome comments on the programme via the anonymous programme feedback survey, staff-student liaison meetings, online discussion board on the programme page, and through the programme team – if there is any issue which students feel should be brought to the attention of the programme team or leader then please contact them.

SECTION NINE: Employability

The most likely motivation for undertaking this programme of study is as part of a career change. Many students enter the discipline with an intention to progress their career along
Psychology is a multi-faceted discipline with applications in a range of different career routes that are not limited to these professional pathways. Thus, the programme is well placed to enable our graduates to enter or progress into a variety of careers such as personnel, teaching, research etc.

Students on the MSc Psychology programme develop valuable employability skills through core modules and the supervised empirical research project, such as research methods, project management and organization, presentation, and interpersonal skills. Additionally, students are allocated a personal tutor with whom they are able to review and record developments related to their learning, performance and or achievements in the programme for career planning and or progression.

The University has a clear focus and commitment to employability ensuring graduates from all programmes have opportunities to develop a range of transferable skills that are valued by employers. The MSc Psychology programme are designed to provide these skills and offers graduates a clear progression route to professional training in psychology, via, for example our MSc Health Psychology programme.

Online students have access to the University of Derby Career Services. The employer links for this programme are indirect, as conversion programmes aim to provide students with eligibility for GBC to lead into specialist psychology pathways. These specialist psychology pathways will have direct links with employers, such as the Health Service and Local Education Authorities.

### SECTION TEN: Post Programme Opportunities

The programme is designed to meet the standard required for BPS accreditation as providing eligibility for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (subject to specific requirements). BPS accreditation allows graduates to apply for postgraduate training in any area of professional psychology. This could include MSc in Health Psychology or PhD positions available at Derby, or study in these and other areas of professional Psychology at other institutions.

Further details regarding postgraduate training can be obtained from the British Psychological Society ([www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)). If successful in gaining GBC, students may go on to further postgraduate training which allows them to practice as Chartered psychologists in a range of settings.

### SECTION ELEVEN: External Links

This programme has been designed in consultation with our students and External Examiners. The programme has been put forward for accreditation by the British Psychological Society.
Appendix 1 Programme Learning Outcome matrix

Programme learning outcomes have been presented under section 3 – Programme learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Introduction to Perspectives in Psychology</th>
<th>Investigation &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>Social &amp; Developmental Psychology</th>
<th>Individual Differences</th>
<th>Biological &amp; Cognitive Approaches in Psychology</th>
<th>Masters Project</th>
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