PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

KEY FACTS

Programme name	Counselling Psychology
Award	DPsych
School	School of Arts and Social Sciences
Department or equivalent	Department of Psychology
Programme code	DSDCPS
Type of study	Full Time
Total UK credits	540
Total ECTS	270

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at City, University of London is a three- year, full-time programme of study. The programme is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the statutory regulator for practitioner psychologists in the UK, and is also accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS). The programme contains academic, research and professional components.

The Programme has a commitment to develop ethical, reflective and professional practitioners of counselling psychology who work collaboratively with service users to provide high-quality psychological services, drawing on evidence-based psychological practice in the context of a therapeutic relationship characterised by trust, respect, and appreciation for the subjective experience of the person and individuality of the client and their unique world view.

The Programme seeks to sit at the interface of science and practice, and value reflective professional practice and development of practice through the rigour of top class research. Throughout the programme, trainees are exposed to a range of approaches and their application to practice, so they can conceptualise human psychological processes from different perspectives, sensitising them to clients' needs and the choices they may make, enabling an understanding of how other psychologists work and fostering respect for both clients and professionals who operate from a range of conceptual world views. The programme teaches humanistic, psychodynamic, cognitive behavioural and systemic therapy approaches, as well as contemporary developments. Trainees are required to demonstrate professional competence in a minimum of two models of psychological therapy in order to successfully complete their programme of training. Trainees will be required to present coursework and undertake supervised clinical practice using more than one psychological model.

Trainees are equipped to work with a wide range of complex presenting issues; with individual adults and children, couples, families, groups and organisations; short and long term; in single and multi-professional contexts; and through transferring psychological skills to others in multidisciplinary teams. Trainees build a solid foundation of the clinical and professional knowledge and skills for working in mental health on the programme.

Equality of opportunity is central to the programme and trainees work in the course community to foster their valuing of difference in society and their own personal relationship to diversity, developed in relationship within the course community and then integrated into their practice outside. The diversity of our trainees is a highly valued feature of our course, and is integral to the learning context.

The programme involves the completion of the academic curriculum of core modules which integrate theory with developing practice skills, an independent research thesis, and clinical practice placements. This programme of study enables graduates to meet the training requirements for chartered membership as a Counselling Psychologist with the British Psychological Society and the eligibility to apply for registration as a practitioner psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council.

Students *who are not ready to complete by the end of year three* are automatically progressed into a fourth year in order to complete any outstanding research on the final thesis (this is not applicable to the taught part of the programme). Should students need to be progressed into a fourth year they will be asked to pay research fees as of that year. Research fees are paid in two instalments as with taught fees (September

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this programme, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession including understanding professional relationships with service users
- Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality including its limits, the principles of information governance, and safeguarding
- Understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to the profession including of the human body, service provider structures, theoretical bases of assessment and intervention, leadership and group processes, and application of consultation models to service development and delivery
- Understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment
- Understand and critically evaluate the diverse philosophical bases which underpin relevant psychological theories, and understand relevant spiritual and cultural traditions
- Have knowledge of and be able to critically evaluate a range of theoretical models of mind and personality, lifespan development, social and cultural contexts, diagnostic frameworks and psychopharmacology
- Demonstrate critical understanding of psychometric theory and skills to evaluate, use and interpret psychometric tests
- Demonstrate in depth critical knowledge and supervised clinical practice of the theory and practice of at least one specific model of psychological therapy; and have a working knowledge and supervised clinical practice of at least one further model of psychological therapy
- Understand psychological models related to a range of presentations including:
    - service users with presentations from acute to enduring and mild to severe;
    - problems with biological or neuropsychological aspects; and
    - problems with mainly psychosocial factors including problems of coping, adaptation and resilience to adverse circumstances and life events, including bereavement and other chronic physical and mental health conditions
- Understand the main principles of and approaches to supervision and have knowledge of how to apply these at an appropriate level
- Demonstrate knowledge of and critically evaluate a broad range of research methodologies and their relevant application, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches
- Understand the purpose and principles of service audit and service evaluation
- Contribute to management processes of organisations at a stage-appropriate level and understand ways to contribute to the leadership of the profession.

Skills:

- Practise safely and effectively within your scope of practice
- Communicate effectively including service user engagement, different forms and means of communication, and multi professional communication
- Work appropriately with others including with service users and multidisciplinary teams
- Maintain records appropriately
- Reflect on and review practice
- Assure the quality of your practice including how to engage in evidence based

HOW WILL I LEARN?

The programme involves a variety of learning and teaching strategies for each module. The learning outcomes are achieved through a range of methods, including:

- Lectures, seminars and workshops led by the staff team and outside specialists
- Problem-based learning in small groups
- Technology-supported and enhanced learning
- Supervised practice on placement
- Individual and group tutorials
- Role play
- Self-reflection
- Experiential group work
- Clinical discussion groups
- Personal therapy/development work
- Independent and directed reading
- Completion of assessed assignments including clinical papers and the personal and professional development log; research thesis, supervised practice on placements; clinical and research presentations.

An emphasis will be placed on your active engagement during class contact time and as directed outside class for example in peer group exercises and use of online discussion boards.

There is a significant amount of independent study within each module and this time is for you to read literature related to the modules you are studying, to observe the practice of others, plan and develop your assessments as well as reflect on your practice. At times we will also require you to participate in professional development activities during this time as indicated within individual modules.

In addition to activities within the modules, you are required to be on clinical placement. The programme provides the support of a placement co-ordinator with finding suitable placements although the responsibility to find a suitable placement rests with the trainee. You will have a variety of different placements over your time on the programme. Time on placement varies but is usually a minimum of two days per week. Typically trainees stay in each placement for six months to one year. You may need to travel to a suitable placement. You are required to keep records of and reflections on your clinical development on placement. You will be encouraged to learn through working collaboratively with a supervisor from your placement context during the programme of study.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessment and Assessment Criteria

Assessment will be varied to reflect the range of professional competencies and experiences that you will develop on the programme. This includes:
- Clinical case studies and process reports to assess ability to effectively assess; formulate; plan and implement, psychological interventions; reflect on and evaluate practice, and make recommendations regarding psychological interventions within a recognised model of therapy and service context. Clinical case studies and process reports also assess ability to integrate theory with practice;
- essays and examinations to assess areas of professional knowledge and understanding;
- practice placement competency evaluations to rate the level of proficiency attained in clinical practice;
- practice placement logs of clinical experience and reflections on practice;
- research assignments to assess knowledge and understanding of a range of psychological research methods;
- a critical literature review and research proposal to assess students' ability to appraise the state of knowledge in a professionally relevant topic area and design a coherent research study for the generation of new knowledge;
- a research thesis to assess the student's ability to conduct and write up a piece of doctoral level research that extends the forefront of the discipline and makes an original contribution that is applicable and has an impact on practice; and
- attendance monitoring to ensure adequate engagement with the taught curriculum.

Where the attendance requirement is not met you will be considered to have failed the module at the first attempt. The programme assessment board will consider your progress and set requirements with a timeframe for the module components to be completed.

Assessment Criteria are descriptions, based on the intended learning outcomes, of the skills, knowledge or attitudes that you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured.

Grade-Related Criteria are descriptions of the level of skills, knowledge or attributes that you need to demonstrate in order achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured and placed within the overall set of marks.

Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria will be made available to you to support you in completing assessments. These may be provided in programme handbooks, module specifications, on the virtual learning environment or attached to a specific assessment task.

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in line with our Assessment and Feedback Policy. In particular, you will normally be provided with feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date. This would normally include a provisional mark that requires ratification at the assessment board by the external examiners. For

WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?

Doctorate Degree:

All modules are core and must be passed, together with the thesis in order to be eligible for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology**.

Part	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
Taught 7 & 8	540	100%	

Master's Degree:

Students who successfully complete Part 1 and wish to exit the programme at this point may be awarded the step-off award of the MSc in Psychological Therapy Studies*.

Part	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)		Class % required
Taught 7	180	100%	With Distinction	70	
			With Merit	60	
			Without classification	50	

Postgraduate Diploma:

If you fail to meet the requirements for the Master's and have exhausted all permitted resit opportunities, but have achieved 120 credits from taught modules (excluding PSM419) at Level 7 you may be awarded the step-off award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Therapy Studies*.

Part	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)		Class % required
Taught 7	120	100%	With Distinction	70	
			With Merit	60	
			Without classification	50	

Postgraduate Certificate:

If you fail to meet the requirements for the PG Dip and have exhausted all permitted resit opportunities, but have achieved 60 credits from taught modules (excluding PSM419) at Level 7 you may be awarded the step-off award of the Postgraduate Certificate in Psychological Therapy Studies*.

Part	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)		Class % required
Taught 7	60	100%	With Distinction	70	
			With Merit	60	
			Without classification	50	

*None of these awards confer eligibility to apply for registration for practice as a counselling psychologist in the UK.

**Where we are able to provide an aegrotat award, this does not confer eligibility to apply for registration for practice as a counselling psychologist in the UK.

WHAT WILL I STUDY?

The table below sets out the modules that students will be expected to study over the three years of the programme.

Module Title	Module Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Context, Diversity and Standards in Professional Practice (Year 1)	PSM420	15	Core	No	7
Research Design and Analysis 1 (Year 1)	PSM417	15	Core	No	7
Research Design and Analysis 2 (Year 1)	PSM418	30	Core	No	7
Professional Components of Counselling Psychology (Year 1)	PSM419	45	Core	No	7
Personal and Professional Development: Individual and Group Processes (Year 1)	PSM412	15	Core	No	7
Cognitive and Behavioural Approaches to Counselling Psychology (Year 1)	PSM413	15	Core	No	7
Person-Centred Approaches to Counselling Psychology (Year 1)	PSM414	15	Core	No	7
Psychodynamic Approaches to Counselling Psychology (Year 1)	PSM415	15	Core	No	7
Professional Development and Supervision (Year 1)	PSM416	15	Core	No	7

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Professional Components of Counselling Psychology (Year 2)	PSD500	45	Core	No	8
Systems and Systemic Psychological Therapies in Counselling Psychology (Year 2)	PSD502	15	Core	No	8
Psychopathology: Clinical Skills and Critical Approaches (Year 2)	PSD503	15	Core	No	8
DPsych Counselling Psychology Thesis 1 (Year 2)	PSD506	30	Core	No	8
Developing Research Skills in Counselling Psychology (Year 2)	PSD507	15	Core	No	8
Contemporary Developments in Psychological Approaches (Year 2)	PSD510	15	Core	No	8
Specialist Group Supervision (Year 2)	PSD520	15	Core	No	8
Psychometrics A: Ability and Aptitude Testing (Year 2)	PSD602	15	Core	No	8

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Professional Components of Counselling Psychology (Year 3)	PSD300	60	Core	No	8
Psychometrics B: Personality Measures (Year 3)	PSD603	15	Core	No	8
Negotiating Relationships: Advanced Skills (Year 3)	PSD605	15	Core	No	8
DPsych Counselling Psychology Thesis 2 (Year 3)	PSD606	45	Core	No	8

TO WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON?

The Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at City equips you to build a successful and fulfilling career across the broad range of work undertaken by contemporary counselling psychologists. The practice focussed teaching, clinical placement experience, and choice of research topic for the thesis on the programme act as a building block for this.

Our graduates work in a broad range of settings, including:
- the NHS (e.g. inpatient settings, community mental health teams, specialist services such as early intervention, with different clinical populations e.g. older adults, intellectual disabilities, children and young people; IAPT);
- the independent hospital sector;
- forensic settings including HMPS and probation;
- organisations in areas such as occupational health;
- the Third (voluntary) sector;
- industry;
- government;
- private practice (including Employee Assistance Programmes); and
- consultancy

Some of our graduates in clinical practice have gone on to lead services and many provide placements and supervision to our trainees. Others have gone into teaching and academia, including as contributors to the programme.

While on the programme trainees receive individualised career guidance through team members involved in the process of reviewing, appraising and planning their practice placement work and professional development.
They also have access to careers information and resources through the British Psychological Society and trainee membership of the Society's Division of Counselling Psychology.

If you would like more information on the Careers support available at City, please go to: http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates.

WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION?

The criteria for training are laid down in standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists approved and published by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). It is a legal requirement that anyone who wishes to practise using a title regulated by the Health Professions Order 2001 (e.g. Counselling Psychologist) is on the HCPC Register. For more information about the regulatory body, please see their website at www.hcpc-uk.org. Upon successful completion of our Programme, trainees can apply to register with the HCPC as they have qualified from a UK approved programme. Trainees will need to satisfy a number of criteria to register. These are in addition to the passing the Programme of Study. To see the process and criteria, please go to the HCPC website. The offer of a place on our programme is not therefore a guarantee that you will be able to join the HCPC Register at the end of the programme.

The programme is also accredited according to the criteria laid down by the British Psychological Society (BPS). The Society is the professional body responsible for developing and supporting the discipline of psychology and disseminating psychological knowledge to the public and policy makers. It is the key professional body for psychology and psychologists, with numerous benefits of membership. Please see www.bps.org.uk/membershiop for further information. Successful completion of the programme confers eligibility for Chartered Membership of the Society and full membership of the Division of Counselling Psychology.

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

There are two stages to the selection process for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at City: 1) a written application, which is used by the programme team to short list candidates, and 2) an interview process, which is used to select the strongest candidates from the short list. The programme receives a high volume of applications each year. This inevitably means that selection is competitive and applicants who can demonstrate the strongest applications are most likely to be short listed for interview and offered a place. The team makes its decisions on the basis of evidence gathered through the application process.

All applicants must meet the programme's eligibility criteria before applying, as listed below. Those who meet these criteria should submit a written application using City's standard application for postgraduate courses and a supplementary application form. The written application should clearly demonstrate that applicants meet the criteria.

Eligibility Criteria

Degree and GBC

A 2:1 honours degree or above which confers the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society (BPS) (see below) or other first degree with relevant conversion course. The evidence would normally be in the form of a letter from the BPS confirming that you are a Graduate Member and that you have been granted GBC. If you are unsure whether your undergraduate degree confers GBC then please contact the BPS for clarification. If you are currently completing a relevant BPS accredited course you will need to have applied for and been granted Graduate Membership conferring GBC with the BPS, by the commencement of the programme.

Mental health experience and therapeutic skills training

Successful completion of introductory training in therapeutic/counselling skills. We are looking for training such as certificate-level counselling skills courses (i.e. a course which awards you a certificate on completion); other relevant therapeutic training, e.g. that offered by various levels of the NHS IAPT programme such as for psychological well-being practitioners; or other appropriate counselling training undertaken as a health or social care worker. If you are in doubt as to whether your training would meet our requirements please ask us (see our contact details). We run a five-day workshop at City, University of London which equips you with relevant skills for application to the Professional Doctorate course, although other courses are also available on the market.

Substantial experience with face-to-face mental health / counselling work (usually one year minimum). This could include working (paid or unpaid) as a mental health or social care support worker / healthcare assistant in a ward or community setting; a mental health charity; a victim support unit; bereavement counselling; or relationship counselling. The experience we are looking for is more than 'befriending', and is different from having worked for example in healthcare roles other than mental health. You need to show you can talk about a patient / client case, conceptualise the person's problems, and put this within the context of the person's life history and environmental system.

Research

The capacity to undertake research to doctoral level. This will be evidenced through