Programme Specification

Programme award and title: MSc in Health Psychology

SCQF Level: 11  SCQF Credit Value: 180

Educational aims of the programme:
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

- In broad terms, the MSc Health Psychology course aims to provide the first part (Stage 1) of postgraduate training in Health Psychology, in accordance with the BPS requirements, by:
  - Enabling students to understand and critically appraise the theoretical basis of health psychology, including psychological models and methods applicable to the study and understanding of health and health care issues.
  - Helping students to critically evaluate the application of health psychology approaches to practice, policy and research in health service or related settings.
  - Making students aware of the unique contribution psychology can make to the understanding of health, illness and health care issues, within a multidisciplinary framework.
  - Providing students with the skills and knowledge base required to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data, taking account of ethics, reliability and validity, thereby enabling students to formulate, design and carry out their own empirical research project to a publishable standard.
  - Via formal teaching and practical experience of health psychology applications students will acquire relevant skills and core competencies which will provide a basis for professional training in health psychology (Stage 2) or other applications of psychology to health issues.
- The Course is available on a full-time, part-time or discontinuous basis. The Diploma course consists of five compulsory taught core modules. The MSc course consists of the taught modules and a research project presented as a dissertation.

Intended programme learning outcomes:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student's personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

Knowledge and understanding
- The intended learning outcomes of the programmes are:
  - students will have a core knowledge base of health psychology theory, research and methods,
  - students will have critical awareness of the relationship between theory and interventions in health psychology
  - students will understand and appreciate the appropriate use of a wide variety of instruments that measure psychological and health status.
  - students will have developed a broad knowledge base and key skills required to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data
  - students will be able to explore issues concerning the relative efficacies of differing forms of interventions to promote health and well-being in different contextual settings
  - students will acquire practical, evaluative experience of the delivery of health care in an applied setting, by undertaking a short placement
  - students will develop understanding of the professional role of a health psychologist, in multidisciplinary contexts
  - students will be sensitised to the ethical requirements of the research process in health care and community settings
  - students will develop awareness of and sensitivity towards cultural equality and diversity issues in health and health care
  - students will have developed skills in effective oral and written communication of research findings
  - students will be able to work independently to design and complete a research project in health psychology that would be appropriate for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
Subject-specific skills and other attributes

- The programme outcomes include intellectual, practical and key transferable skills at an advanced level. Subject-specific intellectual and practical skills are connected with the knowledge and understanding of the theory, research and practice in health psychology. The core skills which students are expected to develop and demonstrate can be outlined as follows:
  - Academic Skills: advanced literacy and advanced numeracy; critical, review, and analytical skills; library and database skills; problem solving; creativity; advanced research skills; statistical and data analysis skills including specialist software (e.g. SPSS and NVivo).

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem solving abilities) and other attributes

- Communication Skills: oral and written communication; individual and group research presentations; research grant applications; essay writing; communication of research methods and results; research report and dissertation writing
- Self-Management Skills: awareness of professional issues and conduct; self-reflection; planning; applying study skills; organising academic work; working under pressure; time management; meeting deadlines
- Interpersonal Skills: interaction in group work; leadership; listening; sensitivity; awareness of diversity

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features

- To achieve the learning outcomes of the Diploma / MSc programme, a wide variety of methods of assessment, relevant to the knowledge base and the application of health psychology theory to practice are employed to enable students to achieve learning outcomes. Varied teaching methods appropriate to the curriculum, including lectures, seminars and workshops are used to deliver a coherent programme of study. Teaching methods are adapted to suit the aims of each module, and to provide students with the range and depth of learning required by the degree as a whole. They are designed to facilitate students’ progressive development and acquisition of skills through the degree. Assessments include examinations, critiques, reviews, reports and exercises relevant for health psychology knowledge and practice.

Professional/statutory body accreditation or recognition:
British Psychological Society (BPS) approved course (2008-2021)

Further details:
Entry requirements: http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/index.php
Programme structure: http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/
Relevant Subject Benchmark statement (if applicable): http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: http://www.scqf.org.uk/the_framework.asp
Introduction/revision date: February 2017