Programme Specification ARO 034a

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.

This document is published on the University website and will be a publicly available record of the named programme.

The information contained in this form should be included in the Programme Handbook, either as presented below or in a format determined by the Faculty.

Section 1 Key Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarding Body</th>
<th>University of Stirling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Name</td>
<td>MSc in Psychological Research Methods with specialist strands:</td>
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<td>- Autism Research</td>
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<td>- Perception and Action</td>
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<td>- Psychology of Faces</td>
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<td>Award e.g. BSc (Hons), MA etc.</td>
<td>MSc, PG Diploma, PG Certificate</td>
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<td>(if more than one entry point please provide a Degree Programme Table for each in the Outline Programme Structure)</td>
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**Length of Programme**
12 months full-time, 24 months part-time

**SCQF Level**
11

**Total Credit Value**
180

**ECTS Credit Value**
90

**Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark**

**Professional Body Accreditation** (all relevant accreditations to be listed)
Name of accrediting body:
Required for programme: Yes/No (delete as appropriate)
Date of Accreditation: XX / XX / 20XX
Date of Renewal: XX / XX / 20XX

**Programme Director**
Professor Phyllis C Lee

**Advisor of Studies**
Dr Steve Langton

**Programme Approved**
XX/XX/20XX

**Last Updated**
March 2017

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**Section 2 Overview**

**PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

*A comprehensive summary of the programme.*

Psychology is a broad discipline addressing a wide range of questions and employing an equally wide range of methods; the Psychological Research Methods course aims to facilitate students' understanding of this diverse subject in both breadth and depth. The teaching of Psychological Research Methods at Stirling emphasises the importance of systematic empirical research, whether quantitative or qualitative, in the laboratory or in the field, as appropriate to the problem at hand. Our students are particularly encouraged to develop a critical approach to the subject, asking what methods are appropriate for investigating any given question.

The course aims to ensure that there is an appropriate degree of flexibility for students, providing insight into (and hands-on experience of) as wide a range of research methods as possible, allowing students to tailor the learning experience to their interests and abilities. The course promotes an ethos of critical questioning and all of our units are taught with an emphasis on the research processes that generates the knowledge upon which psychological theory is based.

**Key Features of the Programme (including what makes it distinctive)**

1. The course aims to facilitate understanding of both theoretical and practical issues and the relationship between these. The course promotes an ethos of critical questioning and all our modules are taught with an emphasis on the research process that generates the knowledge upon which psychological theory is based. Our students are encouraged to develop a critical approach to the subject, asking what methods are appropriate for investigating any given question.

2. In addition to identifying the context of research and current debates within the discipline, the course also focuses upon providing opportunities for students to gain hands on experience with a range of research methods.

3. The course aims to ensure that there is an appropriate degree of flexibility for students, providing insight into (and hands-on experience of) as wide a range of research methods as possible, allowing students to tailor the learning experience to their interests and abilities.
PROGRAMME AIMS

Overarching Programme Aims
On successful completion of this programme, you should be able to:

The overall aim is to provide students with training in the methods and approaches used in psychological research. Specific objectives include:

1. Introduction to the nature of social enquiry and the processes of designing and implementing research in the social sciences;
2. Introduction to the nature of psychological enquiry;
3. Introduction to a wide range of psychological research techniques;
4. Provision of hands-on experience of psychological research techniques through project-based coursework and dissertation;
5. Development of quantitative data analysis skills beyond those expected of psychology graduates;
6. Introduction to qualitative research methodologies;
7. Provision of hands-on experience of major applications of information technology for data analysis, communication, and experimental control;
8. Provision of experience at close quarters via a placement of the everyday workings and organisation of a funded research group, small-medium sized business, third sector (Charity/NGO);
9. Development of powers of critical thinking about empirical investigation;
10. Training students to plan, implement, analyse and report upon an empirical investigation, meeting standards required for psychological publication.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

Detailed Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this programme, you should be able to:

1. Explain and critically evaluate different methodological approaches to the study of psychology.
2. Summarise and critically evaluate published research findings in an area of specialist research, through writing an introduction to a research proposal.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of experimental design and implementation through the production of a sufficiently detailed and appropriately organised method section of a research proposal.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical principles involved in research, and identify relevant ethical considerations involved in designing studies.
5. Understand and reflect on the processes involved in learning at Master’s level.

Knowledge and Understanding:
1. Subject specific knowledge across a broad range of perspectives within Psychology, including interdisciplinary approaches where relevant. Understanding of core research methods and an appreciation of relatedness between theoretical positions and research methodology.
2. Principles in research design: developing research questions, understanding and applying a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, including an appreciation of alternative methods and mixed methods approaches, and both the potential and the challenges of employing these different techniques, appropriate skills in the analysis and interpretation of data (including relevant software packages).
3. Research experience in data collection methods, achieved through a research placement, project based coursework and carrying out an original research project for their dissertation, including ethics applications and risk assessments.

Intellectual, Practical and Transferable Skills and other graduate attributes:
1. Students are expected to engage with critical and intellectually curious assessment of psychology research. They will become engaged in the research process (analysis, application of knowledge, evaluation of findings, building synthetic perspectives).
Values and Attitudes:
1. Knowledge and Skills: Students develop the capacity for critical assessment and appreciation of
   the wider context; they will become skilled at synthesis.
2. Intellectually Curious and Research Minded: Students are expected to engage with critical and
   intellectually curious approaches. They will become engaged in the research process (analysis,
   application of knowledge, evaluation of findings, building synthetic perspectives) and research
   activities.
3. Professionally and Personally Effective: Student oral presentations to peers and in peer groups
   develop personal, professional and creative skills.
4. Engaged Individuals with a Global Perspective; Research in Psychology is global by nature.

HOW WILL I LEARN?
Outline of the teaching methods and approach to be used on the programme.

Students are expected to use a diverse range of learning strategies that best reflect their individual
 capacities and interests, in order to attain the module learning outcomes.

Students will be able to develop and apply research skills in psychology both within a specialist discipline
 and across the breadth of psychological research through independent learning activities and active
 participation in learning opportunities.

Students will build up their reflective capacities, and gain confidence in oral and written communication
 through guided feedback.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?
Outline of the assessment methods and approach to be used on the programme.

Assessment and Assessment Criteria
You will be assessed by formal coursework (including oral presentations, essays, science communication,
 research proposals and critical reviews of research). These include: data analyses (both quantitative and
 qualitative methods); Spoken assessment (e.g. presentation); Reflective writing (e.g. critical evaluation of
 personal development goals and outcomes)

The assessments will allow you to demonstrate your ability to critically evaluate the literature, consider
 ethical issues, demonstrate an understanding of methodology, and study design.

Feedback on Assessment
You will receive feedback on coursework within 3 weeks of completion of the assessment. Feedback is usually
 provided electronically on formal coursework. Feedback and Guidance sessions with teaching staff are
 available on all modules. These provide regular opportunities to discuss feedback further. More information
 about feedback on assessment can be found here;
http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessment/

Assessment Regulations
Highlight any exceptions to the assessment regulations for this programme
No exceptions

If you would like to know more about the way in which assessment works at the University of Stirling,
 please see the full version of the assessment regulations at:
Undergraduate
Postgraduate – Taught
Postgraduate - Research

WHAT WILL I STUDY?

Outline Programme Structure

The list below shows compulsory and option modules for this programme. Option modules are revised over time and, in some cases, will be dependent upon pre-requisite and/or co-requisites being taken. More information about these requirements can be found in the relevant Module Descriptors. The options available each year can be subject to change due to student demand and availability of teaching staff.

- Where an “Option list” is specified, you have a choice of which module to take at this point in the degree programme and these choices are listed below
- For year 1 and 2 where “Any Module” is used it means that you can choose from all modules available to the year group and you can see the full list by following these links:

**Undergraduate**

**Postgraduate**

Year 1

Total year 1 credit value = 180
Compulsory credits = 160
Option credits = 20

Compulsory Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>SCQF Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis Methods in Psychological Research</td>
<td>HPSP113</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Autumn/spring</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods in Psychology 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>PRMP131</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn/spring</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Skills for Psychology Researchers</td>
<td>PRMP134</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Placement (4 weeks)</td>
<td>PRMP138</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>PRMP135</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>11</td>
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Specialist Modules – you may choose one of the following modules to take DELETE IF NOT REQUIRED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>SCQF Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism Research</td>
<td>PRMP141</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilingualism Research</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Development</td>
<td>PRMP133</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognition &amp; Neuropsychology</td>
<td>PRMP136</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evolutionary Psychology</td>
<td>PRMP137</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
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<td>General</td>
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<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception and Action</td>
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<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology of Faces</td>
<td>PRMP140</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

READING LIST

Required and Recommended Reading for the Programme

**CORE MODULES**

**HPSP113 Analysis Methods in Psychological Research**

**Topic 1: Quantitative**

**Topic 2: Qualitative**

PRMP131 Research Methods in Psychology 1 & 2
Readings specific to the course are provided as the start of the semester along with links to the seminars and workshops as scheduled. For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:


PRMP134 Key Skills for Psychology Researchers
Readings specific to the course are provided as the start of the semester along with links to the seminars and workshops as scheduled.

Reading list Key Skills:
BPS ethical guidelines for working with human subjects

ASAB guidelines for animal behaviour research
(https://www.elsevier.com/__data/promis_misc/ASAB2006.pdf)

PRMP138 Research Placement (4 weeks)
No reading required.

PRMP135 Dissertation
Students are expected to research the background to their project prior to commencing it, and the supervisor will advise on additional readings when appropriate.

SPECIALIST MODULES
PRMP141 Autism Research
Readings specific to the course are provided as the start of the semester along with links to the seminars and workshops as scheduled. Students should read:


PRMP142 Bilingualism Research


Krizman J. et al. Subcortical encoding of sound is enhanced in bilinguals and relates to executive function advantages. PNAS, 109 7877-7881 (2012)


PRMP136 Cognition & Neuropsychology

Reading lists are provided for each lecture, including background texts and recent articles. For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:

PRMP137 Evolutionary Psychology
Readings specific to the course are provided as the start of the semester along with links to the seminars and workshops as scheduled.


For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:


PRMP143 General
Reading lists are provided for each lecture, including background texts and recent articles. For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:


PRMP139 Perception and Action
Readings specific to the course are provided as the start of the semester along with links to the seminars and workshops as scheduled. For a general background of areas of inquiry and theoretical issues in the study of perception, students should read the following:


For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:


**PRMP140 Psychology of Faces**
Readings specific to each seminar are provided as scheduled.

There are some good overview texts on human face perception:

- **Bruce, V., & Young, A. W. (2012)** *Face Perception*. Psychology Press.

For a general overview of research methods in Psychology, students should refer to the following:


### Section 3 Student Support [PLEASE UPDATE AS NEEDED FOR THE STUDENT COHORT]

#### SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

**Induction**
You will receive an induction during the first days of your programme. This includes a range of social events, information sessions and activities to help you orientate yourself at Stirling and access the services available to you. These are opportunities to meet staff and other students from across the university, in the Faculty and on the programme.

*Please include any Faculty/programme specific information here.*

Within the Psychology Division there will be a Welcome Session for all new MSc students and also a Welcome Lunch at the start of semester. Students will be advised of the details shortly before the start of the course.

**Study Skills Support**
Student Learning Services (SLS) are committed to providing comprehensive guidance on all aspects of effective and efficient learning. The ultimate aim of the service is to enable you to make the most of your academic studies at the University and for you to become an independent, successful learner during your time at the University of Stirling. This is facilitated through collaborative work with experienced tutors and by offering a variety of courses, workshops and tutorials.
All students, whatever stage of their academic studies, are welcome to use Student Learning Services. However the service may be particularly beneficial:

- In your first two years of study.
- If you are making the transition from college to Higher Education.
- If you have been out of education for some time.

**What SLS are able to do:**

- Advise you on academic skills relevant to your studies at University.
- Help you consolidate your previous learning and develop new learning strategies.
- Advise on action-plans to potentially improve grades.
- Suggest practical solutions if you feel overwhelmed by assignment work.
- Help you gain confidence in the transition to Higher Education.

More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/student-learning-services/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/student-learning-services/)

**STEER**

STEER is a University-wide peer support scheme linking in returning student "Captains" with new undergraduate or taught post-graduate "Crew" during their first year at Stirling.

The scheme aims to help you make the most of your time at the University, help new students - the Crew - settle in and realise the opportunities available to them. You can find out more information here: [https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/steer/](https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/steer/)

**Stirling Graduate School**

For Research Postgraduate Students the Stirling Graduate School as well as your own faculty will provide support. More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/graduateschool/current-pg-students/skills-development/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/graduateschool/current-pg-students/skills-development/)

**Academic and Pastoral Support**

**Adviser of Studies:** Advisers have an important role to play in enhancing your academic and personal development and are essential to ensuring you make the most of your time at university. Advisers provide a personalised point of contact for you to discuss academic concerns or queries within the academic community. The general purpose of the role is to provide more in-depth advice on the academic options available to you and on the academic policies and regulations within the University. More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/advisers/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/advisers/)

**Personal Tutor:** The role of a personal tutor is to help you feel part of the University community. They are a specific and consistent source of guidance, information and support for you throughout your studies. The tutor should be the your first formal point of contact for general academic guidance and pastoral support. More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/tse/personal-tutor/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/tse/personal-tutor/)

**Support and Wellbeing:** At university you may face non-academic issues where you need some expert help or guidance. There are lots of ways we can help you in your day-to-day life at University. Student Support Services provide a range of high-quality services to assist you during the course of your studies, help prepare you for life after graduation. We aim to enhance the student experience and help you to get the most out of your time at University. More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/support-and-wellbeing/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/support-and-wellbeing/)

**Student Union:** you can also access support through the Students’ Union, more information can be found here: [https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/](https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/)

**Accessibility and Inclusion (A&I)**
A&I are committed to offering a service which is welcoming and supportive of the needs of all students. Our service takes into account the full range of needs you may have, in a wide variety of circumstances including - physical and mobility difficulties, sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorder as well as medical conditions and mental health difficulties. A&I can also support you if you have short-term, temporary impairments or other difficulties as a result of an accident, injury, illness or surgery. More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/student-support/accessibility-&-inclusion-service/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/student-support/accessibility-&-inclusion-service/)

**Learning Resources**
You can find out more about the resources available to support your learning here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/)

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## Section 4 Programme Evaluation and Enhancement

### METHODS FOR EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Module Evaluation**
Module evaluations are carried out each year and are an important way of getting student feedback on the modules we teach. We aim to evaluate every module we teach in every semester. You can find out more here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/studentinformation/moduleevaluation/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/studentinformation/moduleevaluation/)

**Programme Review**
Programmes are reviewed annually and on a 5 yearly cycle. You can get involved in a variety of different ways; by completing module evaluations, becoming a course representative and attending Student Staff Consultative Committees, or participating in the review process itself. You can find out more here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/review-and-monitoring/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/review-and-monitoring/)

**External Examiner(s) (To be added following Stage 2 approval)**
Name of External Examiner: Dr Leun Otten
Institution: University College, London

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## Section 5 My Future

### WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON TO?

**What career avenues does this qualification open up to the student?**

**MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Autism Research)**
The Autism Research pathway is designed for those going on to do further research in autism, or as the foundation for a career as an autism professional. The structure of the course includes both a placement and a research project, allowing you to develop relevant skills for both research and applied careers.

**MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Bilingualism Research)**
The Bilingualism Research pathway will provide solid research training for those students interested in pursuing a PhD in cognitive neuroscience at a later stage.

**MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Child Development)**
The Child Development pathway is designed for those going on to do further research in developmental psychology and careers where a knowledge of developmental research is beneficial. The research placement enables students to gain direct experience tailored to your career aspirations and the dissertation allows extensive research into a chosen aspect of child development.
MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Cognition & Neuropsychology)
The Cognition & Neuropsychology pathway provides a springboard for a career in psychological research and is ideal for students wishing to pursue a PhD in psychology. Graduates are well placed for careers in clinical and health psychology, educational psychology and teaching and human resource management.

MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Evolutionary Psychology)
The Evolutionary Psychology pathway will prepare students for a research career in evolutionary approaches to behavior, especially those intending to proceed to a PhD. Students will become an integral member of the Division’s lively and active research group and will be supported in making the complex transition towards being an independent research scientist. The placement opportunity also allows considerable scope for those interested in more applied areas to develop relevant skills for these careers.

MSc in Psychological Research Methods (General)
The General pathway is designed as a springboard for a career in psychological research and is ideal for students wishing to pursue a PhD in psychology. The course incorporates training in a wide range of skills that are required to conduct high-quality research in psychology, and students are encouraged to develop applications for PhD funding through the course.

MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Perception and Action)
The Perception and Action pathway prepares students for a research career involving perception in action and is ideal if you intend to study for a PhD in Psychology.

MSc in Psychological Research Methods (Psychology of Faces)
The Psychology of Faces pathway provides advanced training for a career involving face research. It is intended primarily for students who already have a degree in psychology or an allied discipline who intend to proceed to a PhD in this field.

How does this programme facilitate your development of the Graduate Attributes?

Connected
Understanding and acting on the professional requirements and responsibilities of engaging in Psychological Research with participants from diverse backgrounds, and with a range of knowledge and skills. Engaging in participatory activities throughout the different research domains.

Innovative
Incorporate clear understandings of excellence and independence into actions throughout the course. Providing evidence of ethical and active research engagement, with an appreciation of the wider global consequences of this activity.

Transformative
Being able to extend knowledge and critique beyond a specific psychology research paradigm to multidisciplinary and real world contexts. Confidently taking on leadership roles within and beyond the discipline.

WHAT STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?
None.

WHAT PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?
Students on the specialist pathways are required to undertake a four week placement, such as Research Assistant on a research project (in Psychology or at another institution), work-shadowing in an applied setting (e.g. within a clinical or educational context), working within a relevant voluntary organisation, business or an industrial partner, or learning how to communicate science to the public (e.g. at a science centre or zoo). The student is required to write a 1,500 word report on the placement, providing evidence of critical and reflective evaluation of personal development goals and outcomes. In addition a
placement diary and a daily log of general activities (participation in meetings, main tasks completed etc.,) is required as an appendix (which should be signed off by a member of staff at the host institution).

**WHAT FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?**

*What programmes of study could the student go on to after successfully completing this one?*

The specialist pathways are ideal for students wishing to pursue a PhD in Psychology. Students who complete a specialist MSc may also be eligible to apply for a +3 studentship.

**WHAT OTHER INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?**

*Information that should be displayed at module registration and/or on the Degree Programme Table webpages to help students understand any programme specific requirements or agreed exceptions to regulations. This could also include useful information that will enable a student to decide to take this programme, prepare for the programme, or that will be useful to them on completion of the programme e.g. professional recognition/accreditations etc.*

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**Section 6 Admissions**

**HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?**

*Admissions Criteria*

A minimum of a second class Honours degree (2.1 preferred) or equivalent in a relevant subject. Applicants without these formal qualifications but with significant appropriate/relevant work/life experience are encouraged to apply.