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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Name</td>
<td>Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology</td>
</tr>
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<td>Award e.g. BSc (Hons), MA etc.</td>
<td>DPsych</td>
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<td>Mode of Study</td>
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<td>Location/Method of Study</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online ☐ Blended ☐</td>
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<td>Admission Points</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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<td>3 years full-time and 6 years part-time</td>
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<td>ECTS Credit Value</td>
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<td>Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Body Accreditation (all relevant accreditations to be listed)</td>
<td>Name of accrediting body 1 Health and Care Professions Council Required for programme: Yes Date of Accreditation: 24 / 05 / 2018</td>
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</table>
Section 2 Overview

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

This doctoral programme is designed to prepare you to become an independent scientist-practitioner in health psychology.

(i) You will acquire specific competencies as defined by the British Psychological Society as essential for meeting the standards for applied psychology practice in a range of healthcare settings, ie: Generic Professional Practice, Psychological Interventions (including Systematic Reviews), Teaching and Training, and Consultancy

(ii) You will gain competence in carrying out a piece of high quality empirical research to a standard publishable in peer review journals.

Key Features of the Programme

Stirling has an excellent international reputation in the field of health psychology. There is a well-established health psychology team at the University of Stirling with a record of high quality research into health and health behaviour.

Living Well (Health and Behaviour) is a University core research theme. The Health Psychology Professional Doctorate will have a strong focus on developing high quality applied research which adds value to health and healthcare in applied contexts.

The Programme will also focus on developing high quality practice and research, developing your capacity to work as an independent scientist-practitioner, with an emphasis on person-centred and collaborative ways of working, which are characteristic of health psychology approaches.

This programme will aim to prepare you for working in multidisciplinary contexts, in the context of the Scottish Government’s targets for improvement of the Nation’s health. This acknowledges the interplay of biological, psychological, socio-economic and cultural factors.

Psychology at the University of Stirling has a long history of collaboration with local and national health care providers, and community groups. Programme team members have been involved in many collaborative research projects, teaching and professional consultancy. Existing links to the local, national and international health and healthcare community will be fostered and developed in the professional doctorate. The University is also committed to increasing patient and public involvement (PPI) from the local community and a Stirling Health and Behaviour PPI group has recently been established. We have PPI representatives on our Course Steering Group and will involve patient and carer groups as far as possible in different aspects of the programme.

PROGRAMME AIMS

Overarching Programme Aims

On successful completion of this programme, you will be able to:
1. become an independent scientist-practitioner in health psychology.
2. meet the standards for applied psychology practice in a range of healthcare settings, ie: Generic Professional Practice, Psychological Interventions (including Systematic Reviews), Teaching and Training, and Consultancy
3. be competent in carrying out a piece of high quality empirical research to a standard publishable in peer review journals.

**WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?**

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

- show an advanced knowledge base of health psychology theory, research and methods.
- develop, deliver and evaluate evidence-based health interventions.
- maintain ethical and professional standards in health psychology practice and research.
- provide consultancy for individuals, teams or organisations.
- be competent in designing and evaluating training programmes in health psychology.
- have professional skills such as teaching patients and health professionals’ skills in stress management, or preparation for surgery.
- carry out advanced research in health psychology

**Intellectual, Practical and Transferable Skills and other graduate attributes:**

The programme is based on development of a specific set of core competencies required to become an independent scientist-practitioner health psychologist. These are specified by the **British Psychological Society** as:

1. **Generic Professional Skills**: Developing knowledge and expertise in maintaining high standards of professional and ethical practice as a health psychologist in research and applied settings, in line with British Psychological Society and Health and Care Professions Council Professional and Ethical Standards.

2. **Psychological Intervention Skills**: Understanding of broad knowledge and applied health psychology skills required to review evidence, design, deliver according to ethical and professional guidelines, and evaluate the impact of evidence-based health psychology interventions at individual, group and population level.

3. **Teaching and training skills**: In depth knowledge of relevant theories and research evidence to enable you to design high quality teaching and training in aspects of health psychology for different groups of learners, including health and social care professionals.

4. **Consultancy Skills**: Knowledge of theories and models of communication, consultancy and change management, and understanding of how to implement a piece of health psychology consultancy work from start to finish, including developing a proposal, delivering and managing the project - including the client relationship and delivering the final product.

5. **Research Knowledge and Skills**: Know how to carry out significant doctoral level health psychology research to a high scientific standard, publishable in peer review journals, including systematic review of the literature. Understand a substantial body of knowledge in the field of health psychology and know how to conceptualise, design, collect and analyse data, and disseminate, including writing for publication in peer review journals.

**Our Values and Attitudes:**

Health psychology has a very positive focus. We believe that using a health psychology approach can help to address some of the many health challenges that affect the quality of people’s day to day lives, to prevent illness and foster health and wellbeing. The programme focuses on applying psychological theory to health issues, to promote health and well-being for people in context. There are three main strands to this approach in the Health Psychology Doctoral programme:
1. What we do is soundly derived from principles and theories of psychology, focusing on individual and social cognitions, emotions and behaviour, whilst recognising the importance of biological, social and historical contextual factors.

2. Health psychology research, theory and evidence should be applied to promote health in practice, in ways that are beneficial, ethical and effective. We believe this approach will ultimately lead to the most positive health outcomes for the people we work with.

3. We adopt a broad biopsychosocial approach; recognising health is determined by biology and the healthcare system, and also by healthy social, cultural, economic and physical environments. You will be expected to study and practice in a collaborative manner that respects individuality and difference, and aims to reduce inequalities related to health or any other aspect of social or economic disadvantage.

4. It is expected that students on the programme will conduct themselves in a professional manner of the highest standard with others at all times. Where students have contact with people external to the University of Stirling, in relation to placements, research project work or for other reasons, it is also expected that they will conduct themselves in a professional manner of the highest standard. An awareness of the importance of professional and ethical issues in relation to the British Psychology Society Codes of Practice (view at http://www.bps.org.uk/the-society/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct_home.cfm) and the practice of health psychology will be fostered.

Our aim is that you will develop your own professional awareness and confidence in your ability to work as a health psychologist in the Programme. Reflecting on your own professional career development achievements and requirements for further development as you progress in your professional health psychology career.

HOW WILL I LEARN?

This programme primarily focuses on placement learning, to enable you to develop as an independent scientist-practitioner in health psychology. You will usually be working (either full-time or part-time) in a health-related setting(s) for the duration of the programme. You will need to complete a minimum of 2 years full-time (or equivalent) professional practice.

Although most learning takes place in the placement, the programme supports this with short blocks of teaching (around 20 days in total over the 2 years of the Programme) as follows:

**Year 1**, induction week (4 days) at the start of the programme and 2 further blocks of teaching (8 days or equivalent).

**Year 2**, 2 teaching blocks, 8 days or equivalent

These sessions, which everyone on the programme will attend, are in the format of interactive or skills-based learning, including sessions from HCPC Registered practitioner health psychologists or other guest lecturers (with professional registration). All of the teaching is supported by Canvas, the University’s virtual learning environment.

**Year 3**, will primarily comprise one-to-one research and supervision

You will have a BPS Registered Co-ordinating Supervisor who will be a member of the Health Psychology team at the University of Stirling. Throughout the programme, you will be supported by individual supervision. Face-to-face meetings will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual, but will tend to be more frequent in the earlier stages of the qualification. You will also have workplace supervisors for the supervised practice element of the training.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessment and Assessment Criteria
Assessment is by coursework and by research thesis which will be externally assessed and examined by Viva Voce. Formative feedback will be provided by the Programme team for all coursework before final submission. All coursework will be moderated by a member of the Programme Team. Research projects will be double-marked. You must pass all modules and the Viva Voce to obtain the Doctoral qualification. You are required to pass all taught credits before progressing to the research element of the award.

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/

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:
Postgraduate – Taught
Postgraduate - Research

## WHAT WILL I STUDY?

### Outline Programme Structure

You will study 4 modules in the programme, described below. All modules are compulsory - there are no optional modules.

### Years 1 – 3 (Full Time) and Year 1 – 6 (Part Time)

Modules PSYPD01-03 (180 credits) will normally be completed over years 1 and 2. Module PSYPD04 (240 credits) spans all 3 years of the full-time programme. Programmes of part-time study should be agreed in advance with the Programme Director.

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<th>Module Code</th>
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<th>Semester</th>
<th>SCQF Level</th>
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<td>Evidence-based Interventions</td>
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<td>Teaching and Training</td>
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<td>PSYPD04</td>
<td>240</td>
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</table>

### READING LIST

There is no specific Required Reading for this Doctoral Programme, however the following documents may provide some helpful background:


Section 3 Student Support

**SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

You will receive induction sessions during the first days of your programme. This includes meeting the programme team and a range of social events, information sessions and activities to help you orientate yourself at Stirling and access the services available to you. There are opportunities to meet staff and other students from across the University, in the Faculty and on the programme. The Programme Director will be your first formal point of contact for general academic guidance and pastoral support and will supplement the guidance offered by your supervisors.

**Supervision and Support**

You will have a Coordinating Supervisor from the Programme Team for the duration of the Doctoral training. The supervisor will be an HCPC Registered Health Psychologist and a BPS Registered Supervisor. The supervisor is also your Personal Tutor. The role of a Personal Tutor is to provide a specific and consistent source of guidance, information and support.

More information can be found here: [http://www.stir.ac.uk/tse/personal-tutor/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/tse/personal-tutor/)

You will be supported throughout the programme by regular contact with the Programme Team, via face-to-face meetings, Skype, email and telephone. The Learning Management System, Canvas, also offers enhanced communication and collaboration through its messaging, chat and discussion functionality.

Since Health Psychology is a small profession, students ‘in the field’ will be encouraged to network and support each other in their learning and professional practice, and where possible we will arrange for you to be ‘buddied’ with more senior trainees on the programme and mentored by qualified health psychologists working in the field.

You will also be encouraged to attend regular monthly research meetings of the Centre for Health and Behaviour change, and Psychology Research Seminars and the opportunity to attend events and training provided by the Stirling Graduate School (SGS).

**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.

**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/

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/

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/

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/

Student Union: you can also access support through the Students’ Union, more information can be found here: 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/

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/

Section 4 Programme Evaluation and Enhancement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>METHODS FOR EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING</th>
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</thead>
</table>

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
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/

External Examiner
Aspects of the programme and your assessed work will be reviewed by the External Examiner for the Programme.
Name of External Examiner: Professor Karen Rodham
Institution: Staffordshire University

External review: Placement and Stakeholder Feedback
We think it is important to involve work placement colleagues, and other stakeholders involved in the programme (for example service users and carers) in providing feedback on the programme quality and standards. We will hold regular External Programme Review Events, where we invite stakeholders to attend and provide feedback and advice on the programme and its future development.

Section 5 My Future

WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON TO?

On successful completion of Stage 2 training, you will be eligible to apply to be included in the Health and Care Professions (HCPC) Register (for allied health professionals). ‘Health Psychologist’ is a protected title for those on the register. For further information see http://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/

You will also be eligible to apply for full membership of the Division of Health Psychology and can become a BPS Chartered Health Psychologist. For further information see www.bps.org.uk/membership

Careers in Health Psychology
Health Psychology is a flexible and broad field of study and this is reflected in the wide variety of work that health psychologists can do. For example, within health services such as the UK NHS, and also in health and social care, in communities, workplaces and in the Third Sector (charitable organisations).

Examples of possible roles for qualified Health Psychologists are:

- health assessments and management strategies for chronically ill patients, for example, those with cancer or chronic pain.
- rehabilitation programmes, e.g. for patients with coronary heart disease.
- working to support patients and carers in patient support organisations
- behaviour change consultancy with primary health care teams in the community.
- health education and health promotion in educational or industrial settings.
- conducting evaluative research in order to provide a research evidence base for health policy decisions.
- influencing health behaviours, for example in smoking cessation programmes, weight reduction groups, or with sexual health care providers.
- carrying out teaching and research for health care students in academic settings.
- teaching and training NHS health and social care professionals – such as pharmacists, dentists, social workers.
How does this programme facilitate your development of the Graduate Attributes?

**Connectedness...**
You will be connected within the discipline of health psychology with colleagues with high level skills, knowledge and enthusiasm for making peoples lives better. We will also help you to foster connections with other professionals via shared teaching and collaborative working.

You will connect with the real world, via your work on placement, with health and social care professionals, and a wide range of people, patients, carers and other stakeholders involved in the programme.

You will help to improve health for people from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and communities.

**Innovation ...**
You will innovate through the development of critical thinking and use of research evidence to develop new knowledge relevant to health improvement.

You will innovate by applying principles of health psychology in interventions in your placement, teaching and training, and in interactions with others in consultancies.

You will develop novel and innovative research to a publishable standard.

**Transformative...**
You will help to change people’s lives by improving their health and well-being.

You will help people delivering care to do this better, via your interventions, and teaching and training skills.

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**WHAT STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

There is no barrier to students from outside the UK enrolling on the programme as long as they meet entry criteria. Placements outside the UK also need to meet our criteria, and be approved by your Coordinating Supervisor and the Programme Director.

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**WHAT PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

Placements are an integral part of this programme. Health psychologists can work in a wide range of settings, including the NHS, Local Government, Health and Social Care, Third Sector (Charities) or other organisations. You will in most cases identify your own main placement, and this will need to be organized and approved as part of the application and admissions process. Placements can be paid or unpaid, in your own workplace or elsewhere, or can be carried out on a voluntary basis.

Placements must cover at least two broad areas of work. This could be one main placement supplemented by shorter pieces of work elsewhere, or by time split more or less equally between two placements, or they can be sequential over time.

A separate Placement Handbook for Trainees and Placement Hosts describes the application process and placement arrangements, and placement assessment in more detail.

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

Not Applicable.
WHAT OTHER INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?

More information about the programme structure and requirements, and about requirements for placements and supervised practice is available in The Programme Student Handbook and the Placement Handbook for Students and Placement Hosts. [LINKS TO BE INSERTED WHEN AVAILABLE]

Section 6 Admissions

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

Admissions Criteria

The Admissions process for the programme is rigorous, as we need to make sure that all of the requirements specified by our accrediting bodies are in place. More detailed information is available from Student Admissions and is described in detail in the Placement Handbook (insert LINK).

You apply on-line using a link on the University website. The application requires personal information, evidence of academic ability e.g. qualifications for entry and gives the opportunity for document upload of any supporting documents. and gives the opportunity for document upload of the following supporting documents:

- University Postgraduate Application form
- CV
- Academic transcripts (Undergraduate degree, BPS Approved MSc Health Psychology),
- Evidence of Graduate membership of British Psychological Society
- Names of 2 referees (1 of whom must be academic)
- RPL Evidence including Written Statement, Certificate/Award and Transcript of Results (if Applicable) detailing prior learning
- Placement Identification Form

Following admissions checks, you are asked to complete a Plan of Training. This is to show us that there are realistic opportunities and plans for undertaking supervised practice as expected of a Trainee Health Psychologist.

After this is approved, you will work with the course team to ensure your placement is acceptable. The Placement is involved in your application at this stage and will be visited by a member of the team who will carry out the required checks.

A series of other checks will be completed before you can be offered a place, including your Fitness to Practise.

Once conditions have been met, the application will be evaluated by at least 2 members of the Programme Team, including the Programme Director, in relation to our criteria for evidence of suitability for undertaking a Professional Doctorate. These are:

- References confirm consistently high standards of ethical and professional conduct towards participants, colleagues etc.
- References confirm an ability to work on own initiative and consistently meet deadlines
- Good written communication skills (in English)
- The proposed programme of study is feasible and there is access to resources required to complete it
- The plan of training and placement arrangements are sufficient to allow the required competencies to be met.