

Health Psychology MSc (Online)

Study our British Psychological Society (BPS) accredited distance learning Health Psychology MSc with Aston University, and discover more about how biology, psychology, behaviour, and social factors influence health and illness.

Location: Delivered through online teaching

Course type

Online / distance learning

Course format

No placements

Duration

18 months - 3 years (normally completed in 2 years)

UCAS code(s)

N/A

Start date

Overview

Explore Health Psychology at Aston University

Hear from Health Psychology alumni, Deepa Lad.

- [Accredited by the British Psychological Society conferring Stage 1 Professional Training in Health Psychology and commended for the support provided to students](#)
- [Top 5 in the UK for graduate prospects \(Complete University Guide, 2024\)](#)
- [Study online via distance learning and fit your studies around your work and life commitments](#)
- [Learn from programme staff who are internationally recognised researchers in their fields and work with a number of NHS clinics and other health related organisations](#)

[Application Deadlines](#)

Health Psychology MSc (Online)

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Teaching Excellence Framework Gold award logo

Course outline and modules

About

Health psychology investigates how the way we behave influences health, illness and how we care for people living with long-term conditions.

A health psychologist uses their knowledge of psychology to understand health behaviours and to develop psychological interventions to support behaviour change. They perform a vital role in a variety of areas such as:

- Assisting patients with their emotional and psychological needs
- Working alongside healthcare professionals to help them establish clear communication and productive relationships with patients
- Working with health and social care organisations to develop protocols to engender good health and wellbeing

From health inequalities and public health, to psychobiology of illness and long term conditions, online Health Psychology MSc will provide you with an in-depth understanding of the theory underpinning health psychology. This course has been designed to give you an ideal base for a rewarding career in health psychology and related fields.

Distance learning

This course is delivered fully online via distance learning, and has been designed to allow you to fit your work and life commitments around your studies, wherever in the world you may be. You'll have between 18 months and three years to complete the programme, depending on your chosen speed of study.

All teaching and learning materials are available online via Blackboard, our virtual learning environment. You'll have access to teaching staff and tutors throughout and in addition, the [Aston library](#) provides a wide range of online services.

Professional accreditation

This course is fully accredited by the [British Psychological Society \(BPS\)](#) and confers Stage 1 Training to become a Health Psychologist.

In our most recent accreditation by the BPS, both our on campus and online courses received five commendations; including the reflective practice incorporated into the course, the online induction programme and the positive feedback from students.

There are staff on the BPS Register of Approved Practitioner Psychologist Supervisors available at Aston to supervise via the BPS Independent Route for the Stage 2 Qualification in Health Psychology. For further details, please see the [BPS website](#).

Psychology research at Aston

Psychology at Aston has been ranked Top 10 in the UK for research quality (Psychology, *Complete University Guide*, 2020). We are home to an expansive and highly regarded research community, and you'll be taught by passionate academics who are members of multiple cross-disciplinary research groups, centres and institutions including:

- Aston Centre for Health Ageing
- [Aston Neuroscience Institute – which includes Aston Brain Centre and the Nutrition Behaviour Lab](#)
- [Psychology of Eating in Adults and Children \(PEACH\)](#)
- [Phenomenology of Health and Relationships \(PHaR\)](#)

Our research feeds into the teaching on our courses, ensuring that you not only have access to the very latest thinking in this specialist area, but that you also develop a critical appreciation of recent scientific developments and their applications.

International students and post-study work visa

Aston University is a diverse, close community and welcomes international students. Students from over 120 different countries choose to study with us every year. Aston is not only a great place to study, based in the centre of Birmingham it's also a great place to live.

As a University, we welcomed the creation of a new immigration route which will enable international students to remain in the UK for two years after they have completed their studies to find work. The new post-study work visa applies to international students starting undergraduate and postgraduate courses from 2020. [Click here for more information on post-work visas](#).

Course outline

By studying Health Psychology MSc at Aston, you will gain an in-depth understanding of the theory underpinning health psychology. You'll build your knowledge of advanced research methodology, and the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to carry out independent work and conduct your final research project in a relevant specialist topic of your choosing.

Throughout your time on the course, you'll develop a wide range of skills and a broad knowledge of the subject area, so that on successful graduation you will be able to:

- Critically evaluate health psychology theory and its application it to multiple settings and different population groups
- Use health psychology evidence to develop and critically evaluate health psychology interventions
- Identify and manage ethical issues in all areas of health psychology practice
- Recognise health inequalities in multicultural contexts and settings and to make recommendations for health psychology research and practice accordingly.

Core modules:

Advanced Research Methods in Health Psychology

Develop your knowledge and skills in designing, conducting, and appraising research in health psychology, including the use of advanced statistical methods, a range of qualitative approaches, and open science practices.

Health Behaviours and Behaviour Change Interventions

Learn about what drives various health behaviours (e.g., smoking, eating, vaccination uptake, treatment adherence) and approaches to developing effective interventions to support behaviour change.

Health Inequalities and Public Health

Learn about the ways in which individual psychological variables interact with social, cultural, environmental and policy variables to affect health and health inequalities.

Psychobiology of Illness and Long-term Conditions

Learn about the interrelationships between psychological, behavioural and biological processes and their effects on ill health and the diagnosis and management of long-term conditions

Research Project

Undertake a supervised, independent, empirical research project in an area of specific interest to you.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Learning

This is an online distance learning course which is delivered through Blackboard, our virtual learning environment, meaning you can study from anywhere in the world at a pace that suits you (up to a maximum of 3 years).

Your lecture material will be provided using a variety of methods such as audio PowerPoint presentations. Seminar activities will be facilitated by online discussion boards where you can interact with staff and other students on the course. You will also get support from staff and have tutorials using online methods, ensuring you feel like part of an active student community. While you are not required to come onto

campus in order to study this course, students are always more than welcome to attend campus to make use of facilities such as the library or attend events.

This course is worth 180 credits, with 10 credits equating to 20 hours of contact time, and each credit equivalent to 10 learning hours. The learning hours may include but are not limited to lectures, seminars, tutorials, online activity, reading or other independent study and reflecting on assignment feedback. If studying part-time, this is equivalent to approximately two days per week, which you can spread out over the whole week at a pace to suit you.

Assessment

Assessment on this course is 100% coursework.

Staff

All of our teaching team is research active. We have an internationally renowned profile of health psychology research at Aston. Working with practitioners in the NHS and other health and social care organisations means our research has real-world impact. Our research expertise includes health promotion and health behaviour change, management of long-term conditions, parental health behaviour, healthy ageing, and healthcare professional practice. Our methodological expertise distinguishes Aston as a centre of excellence in interpretative phenomenological analysis and other qualitative methods, quality of life scale development, mediation analysis in intervention development, open science, and evidence synthesis, both meta-synthesis and meta-analysis.

Course Director: [Dr Gemma Heath](#)

- [Dr Rachel Shaw](#)
- [Dr Michael Larkin](#)
- [Dr Lou Atkinson](#)
- [Dr Gemma Mansell](#)
- [Dr Katie Chisholm](#)
- [Dr Charlotte Pennington](#)
- [Dr Megan Jarman](#)

Skills

In addition to the specialist knowledge that you will acquire, this course has been designed to ensure you develop a wide range of highly desirable transferable skills, such as:

- Critical enquiry
- Report writing
- Active listening
- Research methods
- Statistical and qualitative analyses
- Group work
- Time management
- Reflective practice

Entry Requirements

We welcome applications from candidates interested in our course who have the skills and capability to excel. All candidates are considered on an individual basis based on their qualifications, experience, references and motivation.

All applicants require:

- Upper second class honours (2:1) or above Psychology degree that is accredited by the BPS. This ensures that students are eligible for Graduate Basis for Chartered (GBC) membership of the British Psychological Society (BPS). Students who are applying from outside the UK, or who do not have a BPS accredited Bachelor's degree in Psychology must check directly with the BPS to see if they qualify for GBC. More information on international degree requirements can be found on our [Aston in your country webpage](#).
- Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to provide evidence of an English language qualification. English language test requirements may be waived when students' undergraduate degrees are studied in an English-speaking country. Find out more about our [English language requirements](#).
- For International Students intending to do a foundation year. [Click here to find out more](#).

The information contained on this website details the typical entry requirements for this course for the most commonly offered qualifications. Applicants with alternative qualifications may wish to enquire with the relevant admissions teams prior to application whether or not their qualifications are deemed acceptable. For less commonly encountered qualifications this will be judged on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the academic admissions tutor. More advice on applying to Aston can be found [here](#).

Speak to our Admissions Team

If you have any questions about the application process please get in touch with our postgraduate admissions team:

Email: pgadmissions@aston.ac.uk

Call: 0121 204 3200 (Please note this line is open Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm)

[Please click here](#) for guidance on completing the postgraduate application.

Fees and scholarships

UK students (2024/25)

Annual tuition fees: £10,650

International/EU students (2024/25)

Annual tuition fees: 20,700

Tuition fees are reviewed annually and may increase in subsequent years in line with inflation linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) to take account of the University's increased costs of delivering the Programme. When undertaking a placement year a placement year fee applies.

[More information on fees](#)

Scholarships

At Aston University we are committed to supporting the most talented and hardworking students to achieve their potential by providing a range of scholarships to help lower tuition and living costs. [Find out more about our scholarships here.](#)

Career Prospects

Many of our graduates go on to complete further training (Stage 2) to become a Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society and a Health Psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Stage 2 of the training involves developing and demonstrating competencies in research, teaching and training, practice and consultancy.

Recent graduates have entered a variety of roles such as:

- Wellbeing Trainer
- Public Health Advisor
- Stop Smoking Advisor
- Research Assistant
- Assistant Psychologist.

Other graduates have gone on to the Stage 2 Health Psychology Qualification or to PhDs. Following doctoral training, some of our graduates have become HCPC registered Health Psychologists working in consultancy, clinical practice in the NHS, and as academics in universities.

Many have also taken up roles within the NHS to run interventions to improve the health of patients and management of their illness or to evaluate and re-design existing health services.

Organisations who have previously employed our students include:

- NHS trusts
- Private health clinics
- Health charities
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Universities across the UK and internationally

Chat with current students

Frequently asked questions

Why study Health Psychology MSc at Aston University?

This course has been designed for students with an undergraduate degree in psychology who are interested in pursuing a career in health psychology or a related field, or exploring the subject further with a PhD.

Throughout your time at Aston, you'll develop the knowledge and skills needed to understand health behaviours, promote general wellness, assist patients with their emotional and psychological needs as well as caring for those who are chronically ill.

With teaching delivered by passionate research active academics, access to a range of specialist facilities and equipment, and professional accreditation by the British Psychological Society, our Health Psychology MSc is the ideal choice for you.

How is the course delivered?

Our course is delivered 100% online, meaning you can study from anywhere in the world at a pace that suits you (up to a maximum of 3 years), making this course a great option for those who have a desire to study but need to fit it in around their other work and life commitments.

Your lecture material will be provided using a variety of methods such as audio PowerPoint presentations. Seminar activities will be facilitated by online discussion boards and 'live' sessions where you can interact with staff and other students on the course. You will also get support from staff and have tutorials using online methods such as Skype, ensuring you feel like part of an active student community.

While you don't need to come on campus, as a valued member of our student community, you are always welcome to attend events or to make use of our facilities.

For those who are interested in studying on campus, we also offer this course as a full-time campus based route. [Find out more here.](#)

Is this course accredited?

Yes. This course is fully accredited by the [British Psychological Society \(BPS\)](#) and confers Stage 1 Training to become a Health Psychologist.

There are staff on the BPS Register of Approved Practitioner Psychologist Supervisors available at Aston to supervise via the BPS Independent Route for the Stage 2 Qualification in Health Psychology. For further details, please see the [BPS website](#).

What could I explore in my research project?

Past student projects have covered a wide area of research questions and populations including:

- Understanding couples' experiences of infertility.
- Exploring healthcare professionals' experiences of care and their meanings of humanised practice.
- Using quality of life scales to understand people's experience of living with allergy.
- Behaviour change interventions to increase older people's physical activity through community walking groups.
- Experiments testing whether social norms predict people's food consumption and BMI.

Register your interest

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[The National Institute for Health and Care Research \(NIHR\) has awarded Aston Medical School 12 prestigious NIHR-funded academic clinical fellow \(ACF\) posts in its latest competitive national funding round.](#)

[NEWS - 14/07/2023](#)

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[We provide award-winning accommodation on our small, friendly campus in partnership with Unite Students](#)

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[Aston SU represents and supports around 14,000 students, providing a number of commercial and non-commercial services.](#)

Birmingham life

Aston University is in a great, central location. Ideally positioned in the centre of Birmingham - one of the youngest cities in Europe - our campus is only a 10 minute walk to the city centre.

Clubs and societies

Joining a club or society is one of the best ways to get the most out of your time here at Aston. With over 130 student-led groups we have something for everyone.

Sports

Here's Sports at Aston. Discover what's happening on the Aston University campus at the Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre.

Student support at the Hub

The Hub is a central location on the Ground Floor of the Main Building where most of the student support services are located.

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