

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

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| Programme Title: | |
| BSc (Hons) Counselling Psychology | |
| Programme (AOS) Code(s): | BH1CPS1 (FT); BH1CPS2 (PT); BH1CPS4 (with Foundation Year) |
| UCAS Code: | C843 |
| Name of Final Award: | Bachelor of Science with Honours, BSc (Hons) |
| Level of Qualification: | Level 6 |
| Regime of Delivery: | Attendance |
| Mode(s) of Delivery: | Full Time, Part Time |
| Typical Length of Study (Years): | 3 Years Full Time, 6 Years Part Time, 4 Years Full Time (with Foundation Year), 8 Years Part Time (with Foundation Year) |
| Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable): | British Psychological Society (BPS) |

Brief Description of the Programme

This is a British Psychological Society (BPS) Accredited degree which provides the student with a firm foundation in core areas of psychology in addition to uniquely developed counselling psychology modules. It would be of interest to students who are thinking of counselling careers but wish to keep their options open – by having a BPS Accredited degree they have the option of going into any area of Psychology after graduating. In addition, it would be a good foundation for going into Clinical Psychology (via the postgraduate route). Fundamentally, though, it is the first step of becoming a Chartered Member of the BPS through the counselling psychology training route. The first step is the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) which is achieved by completing a BPS accredited degree (or conversion course). The next step would be a BPS accredited Doctorate in Counselling Psychology or the BPS's Qualification in Counselling Psychology. There are currently only 14 BPS Accredited Doctorate programmes in the UK. 50% of them are within the London area.

All core areas of Psychology are covered (including Personality, Social, Cognitive, Developmental, Biopsychology) which is a requirement of a BPS Accredited Degree which ensures that quality standards in education and training are met. In addition, Counselling Psychology students will have two semester-long module in the 1st year, *Foundations of Counselling Psychology* which provides the philosophical, historical and international context. *Approaches in Therapeutic Traditions* complements all the introductory core psychology modules as it provides the student with cognitive approaches in therapy, for example. In the 2nd year, the student will gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dyadic nature of counselling and some underlying skills (e.g. active listening, motivational interviewing). In addition they look at professional and advanced ethical issues whilst taking a more applied perspective on the subject with 'client presenting problems' and 'therapeutic specialisms' all with a clear understanding of dealing with diverse client groups and varied settings.

The options available (see Programme Structure) in the final year would ensure students seek skills and knowledge training in a subject that fits the counselling environment they may be focused on (e.g. Prison, Police, Business, Education).

Bucks New University Psychology Department is also home to two highly successful post graduate courses: *MSc/PGDip Cognitive Behavioural Therapy*; *MSc. Applied Positive Psychology*. These two complementary areas of study and practice, and the expertise and resources associated with them, have been drawn upon to produce a truly unique counselling psychology course.

The Psychology Department at Bucks New University also actively promotes the involvement of local agencies, companies and individuals in delivering sessions to all our students. These exciting opportunities to hear from, and liaise with, external experts include HM Prison & Probation Staff, Counselling Psychologists, Senior Police Officers, Neuropsychologists, Occupational Psychologists etc. There are also frequently external visits to relevant museums, prisons, courts and sports venues to see psychology in an applied context. Whilst these opportunities are presented to any and all Bucks Psychology students, Counselling Psychology students will benefit from having access to any similar opportunities in the CBT programmes and the Applied Positive Psychology programmes. In addition, it is envisaged there will be strong links with Mental Health Nursing and also synergies with programmes such as Early Years and Child & Adult Safeguarding.

Programme Aims

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| 1 | Provide a scientific understanding of the brain, the body and the environment in order to understand emotion, affect and behaviour, and the complex interactions between them, in individuals, groups and society and develop the ability to use this knowledge in an applied capacity with particular reference to counselling psychology |
| 2 | Provide an understanding of the nature of counselling psychology from historical, contemporary and philosophical perspectives |
| 3 | Develop the ability to evaluate critically multiple perspectives in counselling psychology |
| 4 | Develop the ability to use appropriate research methods in the acquisition and interpretation of empirical data |
| 5 | Develop the skills and knowledge required for entry to professional and/or academic postgraduate programmes of study in psychology and counselling and to equip the graduate for careers appropriate to human science graduates |
| 6 | Develop the generic key skills, knowledge and values that provide the foundations for life-long personal, and continuing professional, development |

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

| ID | Learning Outcome |
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| Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K) | |
| K1 | Understand the scientific, and philosophical assumptions, underpinning of psychology and counselling psychology as disciplines, their historical origins, development and limitations |
| K2 | Recognise the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning and its significance |
| K3 | Demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning, how they are conceptualised in the sub-disciplines of psychology, and how they interrelate. |
| K4 | Demonstrate detailed knowledge and scientific reasoning of several specialised areas, arguments, evidence and / or applications of psychology and counselling psychology, some of which are at the cutting edge of research in the discipline. |
| K5 | Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and substantial competence, through practical and written activities, of a range of research processes, theoretical approaches to practice, methods and measurement techniques, including statistical analysis, and be aware of their limitations. |
| Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C) | |
| C1 | Adopt multiple perspectives and systematically analyse the relationships between them |
| C2 | Detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and experience and evaluate their significance |
| C3 | Pose, operationalise and critique research questions |
| C4 | Solve problems by clarifying questions, considering and making decisions about alternative solutions and outcomes, and the evaluation of those questions, solution and outcomes |
| C5 | Comprehend and use numerical, statistical and other forms of data (and software and hardware), particularly in the context of presenting and analysing complex data sets |
| Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S) | |
| S1 | Be aware of ethical principles and approval procedures and demonstrate these in relation to personal study, particularly with regard to the research project, and be aware of the ethical context of psychology as a discipline |
| S2 | Be sensitive to, and react appropriately to, contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams |
| S3 | Recognise the social and cultural context of the practice of counselling and the legal and ethical framework in which therapy takes place |
| S4 | Recognise their own strengths and limitations that may affect therapeutic practice and develop self-support and self-care strategies |
| S5 | Recognise that specific knowledge and skills are required to work with particular client groups (and different practice settings), for example children and young people, and to demonstrate an understanding of the impact, and importance, of diversity and difference on the therapeutic relationship |

Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)

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| L1 | Competently initiate, design, conduct and report an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision, and recognise its theoretical, practical and methodological implications and limitations |
| L2 | Undertake self-directed study and project management, in order to meet desired objectives |
| L3 | Take charge of their own learning, and reflect and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning. |
| L4 | Demonstrate ability to work both independently and as part of a team |
| L5 | Communicate ideas and research findings, both effectively and fluently by written, oral and visual means |

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to sector developments.

Foundation Level (Optional for students on degree programmes)

| Code | Module Title | Credit | Core / Option | Compensable (Normally Yes) |
|-------|--|--------|---------------|----------------------------|
| FY026 | Preparing for Success: Knowledge and Creativity | 0 | C | Yes |
| FY027 | Preparing for Success: Self Development and Responsibility | 0 | C | Yes |
| FY028 | Inquiry Based Learning | 0 | C | Yes |
| FY023 | Foundations of Psychology | 0 | C | Yes |

Level Four

| Code | Module Title | Credit | Core / Option | Compensable (Normally Yes) |
|-------|--|--------|---------------|----------------------------|
| PS450 | Intro to Developmental and Social Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS451 | Intro to Biological and Cognitive Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS452 | Intro to Personality and Applying Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |

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|-------|--|----|---|-----|
| PS453 | Psychological Research Methods | 30 | C | Yes |
| PS454 | Intro to Cross Disciplinary Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS455 | Intro to Counselling Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS456 | Approaches in Therapeutic Traditions | 15 | C | Yes |

Level Five

| Code | Module Title | Credit | Core / Option | Compensable (Normally Yes) |
|-------|--|--------|---------------|----------------------------|
| PS552 | Developmental Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS553 | Biopsychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS554 | Quantitative Research Methods in Psychology | 30 | C | No |
| PS555 | Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS556 | Cognitive Processes in Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS561 | Counselling Skills and the Therapeutic Process | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS562 | Counselling Territories: Clients and Environment | 15 | C | Yes |

Level Six

| Code | Module Title | Credit | Core / Option | Compensable (Normally Yes) |
|-------|--|--------|---------------|----------------------------|
| PS603 | Critical Social Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS604 | Principles Of Psychopathology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS651 | Investigative and Forensic Psychology | 15 | O | Yes |
| PS654 | Empirical Dissertation | 30 | C | No |
| PS657 | Business and Organisational Psychology | 15 | O | Yes |
| PS661 | Evolutionary Psychology | 15 | O | Yes |
| PS662 | Historical and Conceptual Issues in Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS663 | Exceptional Human Experience | 15 | O | Yes |
| PS665 | Educational Psychology | 15 | O | Yes |
| PS668 | Issues in Personality and Individual Differences | 15 | C | Yes |
| PS677 | Professional Practice Issues in Counselling Psychology | 15 | C | Yes |

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

At Level 4 teaching and learning methods are aimed at introducing students to the core areas of psychology within the British Psychological Society Curriculum and providing them with a foundation of knowledge and skills to build upon in levels 5 and 6. The same is true of the Counselling Psychology modules.

At foundation year and level 4 a number of different methods will be utilised, including lectures, classroom-based activities, independent learning methods and practical sessions (including role-playing and simulation), where applicable. Lectures enable dissemination of knowledge to large numbers of students. They typically provide structure to the topic area in order to facilitate understanding and inspire students to think critically about the issues. At this level seminars will provide a forum in which students can engage with the subject, clarify issues and begin to discuss the subject matter. At Level 4, whilst *all* Psychology students will be taking the same lecture, the *Counselling Psychology* students will be grouped together for their seminars in order to discuss the relevance to their chosen speciality.

At Level 5 students are expected to acquire more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject. Knowledge will be disseminated through lectures, but at this level seminar sessions will be much more student-led, and students will be expected to prepare in advance for each seminar. Student-led seminars facilitate development of cooperative team-work between students and individual communication skills, both of which are highly sought-after transferable skills.

At Level 6 students will be encouraged to develop independent learning, analytical and critical evaluation skills and critical application of their knowledge, taking into account wider contexts. Student presentations at this level encourage students to critically examine the application of psychological theory to human behaviour. Students are encouraged to work as a group to coordinate presentations to a professional standard.

Students will engage in a variety of other activities, including analysis of key readings, exercises on systematic literature searching and summarising information from journal articles, group discussions, debates, videos and practical activities. There is a definite reflective component to the delivery of *Counselling Psychology* modules to ensure *Reflective Practice* is integral to the degree (this is one of the key skills as dictated by the National Counselling Society). The others include relationship building, communication, assessment, monitoring, evaluation and research, all of which are inherent in the BPS Accredited degree.

Workshops – laboratory and computing – Workshop activities particularly focus on the practical use of the statistics software package SPSS, which is used by social scientists for the analysis and presentation of quantitative data. In addition, students will be given the opportunity to use the observation laboratory and to engage in the measurement of psycho-physiological responses using Biopac[®].

The University has a **Virtual Learning Environment** called ‘*Blackboard*’, which is a digitally based programme that offers an abundance of supportive features used by lecturers teaching on this programme. This is not offered as an alternative to classroom interaction between students and lecturers, rather it is seen as an additional resource in the forms of:

- *Peer support* – facilitated through the use of the discussion board facility
- *Self-assessment* - quizzes
- *Notices* – maintains communication between lecturer and students between teaching sessions.
- *Resources page* – on-line links to good academic articles of relevance to the module

- *E-Journals* – students registered on Blackboard have the ability to access full-text e-journals that the library subscribes to from anywhere that they have Internet access.
- *Course documents* – such as; lecture handouts, seminar activities, module guides, seminar readings, assessment guidelines, reading list etc.

A number of careers talks will be arranged for the students to attend outside of the normal timetabled hours. These will cover a range of opportunities for both voluntary work and/or full-time employment. Additionally, a number of speakers will be invited to discuss their engagement in professional courses such Forensic, Clinical and Counselling Psychology (e.g. MSc students, Forensic Psychologists in Training etc.).

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

Study Trips

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

| Course Stage | Scheduled Activities (Hours) | Guided Independent Study (Hours) | Placement / Study Abroad (Hours) |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Foundation Year | 360 | 840 | |
| Year One | 360 | 840 | |
| Year Two | 360 | 840 | |
| Year Three | 360 | 840 | |

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

Assessment methods

Summative assessments are designed to test the achievement of the learning outcomes. Some modules include formative assessments. Whilst these do not give marks towards the final module grade, they offer students a valuable learning resource by way of feedback from the tutors, which can offer direction for improved performance on the summative assignments.

A range of summative assessment methods will be employed on this course, as follows:

- **Time-constrained assignment** will enable the students to demonstrate the breadth of knowledge gained on a module. It will familiarise the students with examination style questions with which they will be confronted, either in the same module or subsequent modules.
- **Poster presentation** will enable the students to demonstrate the skills to present a complex piece of research in a brief, concise and visual format. Students may be required to work independently or in groups to coordinate a presentation to a professional standard.
- **Oral Presentations** will permit students to demonstrate their knowledge through effective communication skills, and to demonstrate sensitivity to contextual and interpersonal factors.
- **Seminar presentations** will enable students to demonstrate depth of knowledge, to demonstrate communication skills, both written and oral, to demonstrate their ability to work as a team, and to demonstrate sensitivity to contextual and interpersonal factors.
- **Examinations** will allow the students to demonstrate their ability to synthesise a plethora of theoretical, empirical and applied literature in their examination answers. It will examine their capacity for independent thought, and ability to analyse and evaluate the information they are presenting in an original manner. Most examinations are unseen; however, some modules utilise a 'seen' examination, where the questions are released to the students two weeks prior to the examination date. These foster a higher level of analysis and evaluation than is possible in an unseen situation.
- **Essay** will provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate in-depth understanding of a particular aspect of their learning. It will encourage them to engage in conducting a systematic literature review and provide the opportunity for them to demonstrate their capacity to critically analyse, synthesis and evaluate the principles, processes and debates inherent in the material, and to present a rational, coherent, information-based argument.
- **Laboratory / Research Reports** will be required in some modules. It will enable students to demonstrate their ability to: define a research problem, critically review relevant academic literature, formulate relevant hypotheses, operationalise variables and design a study, analyse and interpret the forthcoming data, to discuss the findings in relation to the

literature, evaluate the contribution of the study to the knowledge area, and write the report in a formal scientific style.

- **Reflective Accounts** will be required throughout the counselling modules (in some cases solely in formative assessment form). It is a key subject-specific skill according to the *Subject benchmark statement for Counselling & Psychotherapy* (QAA, 2013). Such assessments will ensure students maintain a high level of self-awareness throughout the degree. In various contexts, students will be required to reflect on aspects of their studies including their own position in any bounded relationship established as part of role-playing, simulation exercises or group presentations.
- **Empirical Dissertation** represents a major piece of independent research activity chosen by the student and undertaken in their third year. Whilst it is anticipated *Counselling Psychology* students will focus on a dissertation topic within their field, this is not a requirement. This will be undertaken with support from an academic supervisor and with regular meetings throughout the academic year. This work will have the structure commonly found in research reports and journal articles, and may potentially be publishable.

Classification

Calculation of final award:

Level 5 – 33%, Level 6 - 67%

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

The programme is for students wishing to study for an award accredited by the British Psychological Society. All students who complete the programme will be eligible for the Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC) with the Society, providing they achieve a minimum of a 2.ii degree classification or 50% or above and pass the Empirical Dissertation module.

Entry criteria:

- School leavers with at least two A-levels and a GCSE Maths and English at grade C. Offers from the University usually require a minimum of 96 UCAS points
- Mature students with a variety of educational backgrounds (e.g. Access) who are motivated to pursue a course in this field of counselling psychology
- Students who have commenced their studies in another institution and wish to transfer into this programme in year 2 or 3 will be considered under the provisions of the University's Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy.

- Mature students who wish to apply for accreditation of prior experiential learning for specific modules will be considered under the provisions of the University's Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy.
- Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for the three-year undergraduate programme, or those who do not feel fully prepared for a degree course, can apply for a four-year programme including a Foundation Year

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?

No

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

The programme offers both a subject-specific and a generic knowledge base, skills and competences that will enable students to pursue a career in any of the applied psychology professions in addition to any career in counselling psychology or related fields (e.g. counselling, psychotherapy).

It is also recognised that many Counselling Psychology students will choose from a wide range of graduate career options, not all of which will entail the title 'psychologist'. Consequently, the programme is designed to inspire and facilitate the development of a variety of desirably transferable skills that will enhance employability in any future career, particularly those dealing with people.

The thorough grounding in research methods and empirical Psychology will also confer suitability for the pursuit of research-based post-graduate study and also many analytically focused professions (e.g. Strategic Researcher, Intelligence Analyst).

Graduates who achieve a minimum standard of a Lower Second Class Honours will be eligible for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). This is the first step towards becoming a Chartered Psychologist in any of the field's recognised sub-disciplines (Counselling; Health; Clinical; Forensic; Educational; Occupational; Neuro; Sport & Exercise).

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities

- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Appendices

Quality Assurance

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| Awarding Body: | Buckinghamshire New University |
| Language of Study: | English |
| QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s): | QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Psychology (2016); QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Counselling & psychotherapy (2013) |
| Assessment Regulations: | <i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice) |
| Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme? | No |
| Date Published / Updated: | May 2018 |

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

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| Name of Exit Qualification: | Ordinary Degree |
| Full name of Qualification and Award Title: | BSc. Counselling Psychology |
| Credits requirements: | 330 Credits |
| Module requirements: | <p>ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 60 Credits at Level 6 from the following PS603 Critical Social Psychology PS604 Principles of Psychopathology PS668 Issues in Personality & Individual Differences PS662 Historical and Conceptual Issues in Psychology PS657 Business & Organisational Psychology PS661 Evolutionary Psychology PS663 Exceptional Human Experiences PS651 Investigative & Forensic Psychology PS665 Educational Psychology</p> |
| Learning Outcome | |
| <p><i>On successful completion of a BSc (Ordinary degree), a graduate will be able to:</i> Apply, under guidance, the psychological methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects</p> | |

Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem

Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

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| Name of Exit Qualification: | Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) |
| Full name of Qualification and Award Title: | DipHE in Counselling Psychology |
| Credits requirements: | 240 Credits |
| Module requirements: | ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 |
| Learning Outcome | |
| <i>On successful completion of a Diploma of Higher Education (DIPHE), a graduate will be able to:</i> Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis | |
| Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key psychological techniques effectively | |

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| Name of Exit Qualification: | Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) |
| Full name of Qualification and Award Title: | CertHE in Counselling Psychology |
| Credits requirements: | 120 Credits |
| Module requirements: | ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 |
| Learning Outcome | |
| <i>On successful completion of a Diploma of Higher Education (DIPHE), a graduate will be able to:</i> Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to Psychology | |
| Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments | |