

Programme Specification 2017-18

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Faculty of Biology
3	Accreditation details	British Psychological Society
4	Name of final award	Bachelor of Arts
5	Programme title	Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos
6	UCAS code	C800 BA/PBS
7	JACS code(s)	C800
8	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Psychology
9	Qualifications framework level	6 (Honours)
10	Date specification produced/ last revised	July 2016
11	Date specification last reviewed	July 2017

The Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos (PBS) at Cambridge provides the opportunity to study the core areas of psychology within the broader context of various cognate subjects.

Psychology has important connections to many other disciplines in the Biological Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and has important applications in a number of different areas ranging from Medicine and Psychiatry to Criminology and Economics. The Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos offers a broad and flexible course covering all aspects of psychology, for example: Perception, cognition, the development of social behaviour, psychopathology, language, brain mechanisms, gender, family relationships and influences, personality, and group social behaviour. In the final year, students can pursue the topics that interest them most through engaging with the ongoing research of the Department through project and dissertation work.

Students are taught by lecturers and researchers of international excellence from the Department of Psychology along with colleagues from other parts of the Natural & Social Sciences and the Humanities. Subject societies and seminar programmes also offer regular talks from guest speakers.

In addition to academic expertise, students have access to the Department of Psychology library, and the Social and Political Sciences library (which holds a large Psychology collection). Together these libraries hold around 50,000 books and over 150 periodicals along with other resources and computing facilities.

The course is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS), and students who successfully graduate (with at least second class honours, and a pass mark in their final year empirical research dissertation) achieve the 'graduate basis for chartered membership' which allows them to join the Society and pursue a career in psychology.

Programme structure

Year 1 (Part IA)

In Part IA, students take a total of four papers: the two from Section A which are compulsory and two chosen from the list in Section B.

Section A

- PBS1: Introduction to Psychology
- PBS2: Psychological Enquiry and Methods (this subject includes practical demonstrations and exercises)

Section B

The list of papers available may vary from year to year but examples include:

- Humans in Biological Perspective
- Language, Communication, and Literacy
- Evolution and Behaviour
- Analysis of Politics
- Introduction to Computer Science
- Introduction to Sociology: Modern Societies
- The Development of Human Society
- Human Societies: the Comparative Perspective
- Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind

At the end of the year, students sit a three-hour written examination in each of the four papers.

Year 2 (Part IB)

In Part IB students also take 4 papers. This year allows students to deepen their understanding of the key areas of psychological research and gain first-hand experience working in a psychological laboratory collecting and analysing data. Additionally, students have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of human behaviour by taking papers in related disciplines.

All students take the Social & Developmental Psychology paper, Cognitive Neuroscience and Experimental Psychology paper as well as two optional papers from a range of around 15 available. The list of optional papers may vary from year to year but will typically include papers in:

- Biological Anthropology
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Neurobiology
- Social Anthropology
- Sociology
- Philosophy

Cognitive Neuroscience and Experimental Psychology involves practical work and the submission of reports of the work conducted in practical classes, which are assessed. Students sit a written exam in each paper at the end of the year.

All students transferring into PBS will be required to undertake PBST courses across two years, where the first year is a Prelim to the Part II in the second year. If a student has taken a two-year Part I, they will still be required to take two years in PBS. Transfer students will take the compulsory course components required of students who matriculate in PBST. In the normal course of events, students entering the University to take PBST are required to take PBS 1: Introduction to Psychology and PBS 2: Psychology Enquiry and Methods at Part IA. PBST Part IB students are required to take PBS 3: Social and Developmental Psychology and PBS 4: Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience. Remaining papers are chosen from Optional papers.

Year 3 (Part II)

In the final year, students undertake a research dissertation of 7,000 words on a psychology topic of their choice. They also choose a further three papers from a selection available, each of which is assessed by a written examination.

The list of papers may vary from year to year but will typically include papers in:

- Development and Psychopathology
- Psychology and Social Issues
- Gender development
- The Family
- Legal Psychology
- Cognitive and Experimental Psychology
- Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience
- Developmental Psychology & Individual Differences
- Biological Anthropology
- Sociology
- Criminology
- Philosophy
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Linguistics

A list of Optional papers for each part of the Tripos will be published in the preceding Easter term.

Learning outcomes

The institutions responsible for each paper option within the Tripos will have identified aims, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods.

The course aims to:

- provide an education in psychological and behavioural sciences of the highest calibre in order to produce graduates of the quality sought by industry, the professions, and the public service, and to provide academic teachers and researchers for the future;
- provide students with knowledge and skills in social, developmental, biological and experimental psychology within the broader context of the behavioural sciences appropriate to future professional work;
- encourage students to develop a critical approach to their studies, evaluating theory and evidence accordingly;
- allow students to develop specialised knowledge and research skills in one or more subjects, by studying these in depth if they so choose, equipping them with skills to communicate effectively in written and numerical forms;
- produce graduates who can think independently and are capable of applying their knowledge and skills effectively and with integrity;
- provide an intellectually stimulating environment in which students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential;
- provide a course which is attractive to outstanding students from all backgrounds;
- provide full coverage of all material to meet the standards of the British Psychological Society as providing the Graduate Basis for Chartered membership of the society for a student who completes the Tripos with at least second class honours.

Teaching methods

Each course employs a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, classes, seminars, and supervisions. Some papers include a practical element, which takes place in laboratories.

Assessment methods

The individual courses employ a range of assessment techniques, including unseen written examinations, assessed coursework, literature and experimental reports, marked essays, oral examinations and presentations. Examiners are appointed separately for each course. In each year of the course, examiners award marks and classes based on marking criteria approved by the relevant course organisers and Faculty Board.

The marks for each course are moderated to ensure a fair and comparable distribution of marks is achieved across each subject. Students are awarded a class based on the aggregate mark of the subjects taken, with the proviso that no candidate who fails to achieve a pass mark on their Research Dissertation in Part IIB will be awarded higher than a third class honours in that part of the Tripos.

Entry and/or progression requirements

Typical offers from Colleges would be three GCE A2-levels at grade A*AA/IB 40–41 points, with 776 or 777 at Higher Level. Some Colleges have specific entry requirements and applicants should check the relevant College website for details.

Student support

All students are members of a College as well as the Department and have access to learning support from both College and University. Each part of the course is overseen by a course organiser who takes overall responsibility for the running of the course and, in conjunction with college Directors of Studies, gives advice to students on planning the year's work. Students can typically expect two lectures a week for each paper. Students typically write 6 supervision essays per paper each year, although the supervision schedule may vary across disciplines.

Students can normally expect regular informal contact, and at least 4 formal hours of supervision, for their Research Dissertation.

Graduate employability and career destinations

This course equips students with skills and knowledge of value in numerous professional sectors. Many students pursue further study and research, and graduates are eligible for admission to professional courses in clinical, educational, forensic, or applied psychology. Numerous past students of psychology at Cambridge have gone on to prominent positions in psychology and related fields throughout the world. Other recent graduates have entered careers in the media, management, the Civil Service, finance, law and business.

The Careers Service maintains links with relevant employers and takes into account employer needs and opinions in the services which it provides for students. The Careers Service also allocates a Careers Adviser to each College, faculty and department to act as a point of contact.

Preparation for employment is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant skills.

Management of teaching quality and standards

- 1 The institutions that contribute to this course participate in the University's quality assurance and enhancement system. Approval by the General Board's Education Committee is required before any significant changes to courses are made. All Learning and Teaching activities, included in this course, are subject to review by the University's General Board. A Learning and Teaching Review of Psychology teaching took place in January 2012.

- 2 Students will be invited to comment on the course both formally and informally. Questionnaires are circulated at the end of each term. Anonymous responses are collated and discussed at Departmental meetings and forwarded to the PBS Management Committee for analysis and action as necessary. Student representatives nominated for each course, represent the interests of students on the PBS Management Committee and the Department of Psychology Staff/Student Committee.

Quality indicators

The Department of Psychology is celebrated for its teaching; students are taught by researchers of international excellence and many of its past students have gone on to prominent positions in psychology and related fields throughout the world.

A predecessor to the current Department (the former Department of Experimental Psychology) was given the highest score in the last Research Assessment Exercise conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in 2008.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the Reporter. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academical year.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at:
www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/archive.html