

Programme Specification 2023-24

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	Faculty of Biology
Accreditation details	British Psychological Society
Name of final award	Bachelor of Arts
Programme title	Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos
UCAS code	C800 BA/PBS
HECoS code(s)	100497 (psychology)
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Psychology
Qualifications framework level	6 (Honours)
Date specification produced	December 2022

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 such as medicine, psychiatry, criminology and social policy. 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, mental health, language, brain mechanisms, 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 will typically include papers in:

- Archaeology
- Biological Anthropology
- Evolution and Behaviour
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Mathematical Biology
- Philosophy
- Sociology

At the end of the year, students typically sit a written examination in each of the four papers, although optional papers might be assessed differently. PBS2 also contains written coursework submitted in Easter Term.

Year 2 (Part IB)

In Part IB students also take four 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 PBS3: Social & Developmental Psychology paper and PBS4: Cognitive Neuroscience and Experimental Psychology paper, as well as two optional papers from a range of around 10 available. The list of optional papers may vary from year to year but will typically include papers in:

- Biological Anthropology
- Criminology
- Education
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Neurobiology
- Philosophy
- Sociology

PBS4 involves practical work and the submission of reports of the work conducted in practical classes. Students typically sit written exams in each paper at the end of the year, although optional papers might be assessed differently.

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, one of which must be from one of the starred papers in the list below, each of which is typically assessed by a written or oral examination at the end of the year, although optional papers might be assessed differently.

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

- From Before Birth to Adolescence - Typical and Atypical Development*
- Advanced Topics in Social Psychology*
- The Family*
- Cognitive and Experimental Psychology*
- Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience*
- Biological Anthropology
- History and Philosophy of Science
- Philosophy
- Sociology

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 practical classes.

Assessment methods

The individual courses employ a range of assessment techniques, including unseen written examinations, oral examinations, assessed coursework and experimental reports. 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 II 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 40–42 points, with 776 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 February 2019.
- 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.

- 3 The PBS degree is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS), such that our graduates are eligible to become BPS chartered psychologists. This accreditation was successfully renewed in 2019.

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.

In the 2014 Research Excellent Framework, Cambridge was ranked third in the country for Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience.

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: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>