

ESRC Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership – Psychology Pathway

Pathway Title	Psychology
Host institution	Oxford/OU
Host faculty	Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Key words	Cultural and Social Psychology Psychology of Health and Wellbeing Forensic and Cognition Research
Supervisory team	To be determined on individual basis

Pathway highlights

Psychology at The Open University foregrounds applied, critical and transdisciplinary approaches to psychology. In our pathway we draw attention to, and challenge, social injustices in a variety of settings with wider societal impact. This pathway will also equip students to examine complex psychological phenomenon as they unfold as part of social practices in real settings, using both established, innovative and creative social science research methodologies to address wider societal challenges.

Applicants are invited to apply on one or more of the thematic research streams. Depending on your topic, you may have a supervisory team that spans more than one research stream:

Culture and Social Psychology (CuSP)

CuSP research brings insights from cultural and social psychology to real-world issues. The research is both theoretical and empirical, with a strong focus on methodological innovation. It is critical and often transdisciplinary, variously informed, for example, by research in health sciences, politics, education, sociology, human geography, as well as the arts and humanities.

Potential topics or areas of supervision include (but are not limited to):

Citizenship; immigration/migration; gender and sexualities; sexual violence; prejudice, discrimination; intergroup contact and social division; contemporary subjectivities, including religious, sexual and political subjectivities; children and childhood; psychology and law, digital and social media practices; parenting; the psychology of health and wellbeing; the history and theory of psychology.

Potential theoretical and methodological approaches include (but are not limited to):

CuSP academics engage with a range of approaches and perspectives, including those of critical, dialogical, phenomenological, feminist and postfeminist, psychosocial, discursive and process psychology.

<https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/groups/cusp>

Psychology of Health and Wellbeing Research (PHeW)

PHeW is a theoretically and methodologically diverse group with a focus on practices of health and wellbeing. Group members have a sustained interest in critically examining individuals as well as societies, professions as well as ideologies and engaging in or disengaging from certain ways of life. PHeW is anchored in three distinct research strands and welcomes research proposals in any of these:

Counselling and psychotherapy mainly concerns an encounter between (and within) individuals where transformative practices are seen to be facilitated in an inter- as well as intra-subjective space.

Critical mental health exhibits a more pronounced and sustained focus on social/political/cultural factors in the production of individual psychological suffering.

Wellbeing in contexts consists of efforts to understand psychological concepts in and at the level of various communities.

<https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/groups/phew>

Forensic Cognition Research Group (FCRG)

FCRG is a transdisciplinary group whose main aim is to better understand the perceptions, processes and systems of the criminal justice system, taking an approach that is both critical and solution-oriented to tackle real world issues. Current research broadly falls into three (overlapping) categories:

- **Courtroom Processes** – examples include: eye-witness testimony accuracy; expert evidence; juror and jury decision-making (including the role of stereotyping, and the effect of different legal systems and verdicts); and the impact of psychological bias in the courtroom.
- **Policing and Inquiry** – examples include: investigative interviewing; CCTV identification; using technology to improve eyewitness evidence; police identity and online storytelling; working with police engagement and enforcement teams to inform their approach to road safety interventions.
- **Community and Citizens** - examples include: citizen forensics (including digital policing and digital citizens); public perceptions of forensic evidence (including the 'CS/ Effect'); developing public-facing interactive resources, based on our empirical research, to promote safer behaviours; and using digital technologies to create empowered, informed communities in which marginalised voices can be heard.

Potential topics for research include (but are not limited to):

Face perception and recognition; memory; eyewitness evidence and extra-legal factors; juror decision-making; juror misconduct; cybercrime; the psychology of policing; investigative interviewing; detecting deception; the CS/ Effect; psychology of terrorism; decision science; attention and perception for dynamic scenes (e.g. distracted driving and witnessing crimes).

<https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/groups/fcrq>

Overview

The School of Psychology and Counselling at The Open University has a vibrant and growing research culture. We are noted for being an international leader in research that takes a **transdisciplinary** approach, engages in methodological and theoretical pluralism, seeks to engage with different publics and has a commitment to social justice. We welcome projects that have a contemporary focus, examining the impact of exceptional and everyday situations through a psychological lens and exploring the distinctive and emergent social practices that both constitute and continuously transform **everyday lives**. Open University psychology research provides new empirical insight into real-world issues.

Please see <http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/research-areas/psychology> for a more detailed list of topics within and across each theme.

Training and skills

The training provided for the psychology pathway will provide access to a range of advanced and specialist training delivered with through the Research Hub within OU Psychology or by the OU Graduate School Network. The pathway consists of core skills as well as advanced and subject specific training tailored to the student's specific area of study. Students will be expected to attend both general research training and subject specific training. Core content covers philosophical and paradigm approaches, the principles of research design, the practice of research (e.g. ethics, being a PhD student), evaluating evidence and research analysis and dissemination. In addition students will be encouraged to be actively involved in student-led activities and seminars across the Open University and the University of Oxford.

Structure

The psychology pathway is provided through two routes:

- +3 in which students will have already completed a Masters in a relevant area of psychology or a related social science
- +4 in which students undertake additional research training

Please indicate which if these two routes you are applying for. If you are unsure which is the best option for you please contact us and we can discuss this with you.

Students are able to study this pathway on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Knowledge exchange, internships and careers

Open University students are encouraged to engage in knowledge exchange with a range of non-academic partners. There are also opportunities for other knowledge exchange activities (such as research visits, seminars etc) with organisations within both public sector and third sector organisations. The Open University has links with a wide range of local and national organisations such as the British Psychological Society, British Association of Counselling Psychology, Refugee Council, Barnardo's, Refugee Youth, The Criminal Justice System, the BBC and the NHS. Students with existing professional experience and/or networks relevant to their research will be encouraged to sustain and develop these during their studies.

Further details:

Prospective students should have a strong background in an area of applied and/or critical psychology relevant to their area of study. We welcome students who span transdisciplinary boundaries and who have an interest in theoretical and applied issues. We would also consider candidates with relevant degrees in the social sciences and experience through practice.

We strongly advise you to approach potential supervisors with a project proposal as early as possible so that they can support you with your submission. To find out more about supervisors' specialisms in psychology, you can follow this link

<http://fass.open.ac.uk/psychology/postgraduate>

If you have any questions about the relevance of your previous academic or work experience, or the suitability of your proposed project, please contact Sarah Crafter or Simon Clarke (sarah.crafter@open.ac.uk; simon.clarke@open.ac.uk).

Applying for a studentship:

- Applications should include a cover letter outlining why the project is an important area of study, how your background relates to the proposed research topic and why you wish to study at the Open University;
- An outline research proposal of no more than 2,000 words, covering research topic and methodology. General advice on the proposal can be found here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process>;
- an academic CV that includes contact details of three referees (of which, at least two should be academic);
- an Open University application form, downloadable from <http://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/system/files/documents/Application%20form%20-%20Home.docx>
- a Grand Union DTP application form, downloadable from <http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/prospectus/research/how-to-apply/doctoral-training-partnership-studentships/social-science>

Applications should be sent to fass-psych-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk by **17:00 on XX January 2021**. Interviews will take place on the **XX February 2019**