

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 Cognition Research Group
Supervisory team	To be determined on individual basis

Pathway highlights

Psychology at The Open University is based within the School of Psychology and Counselling in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and represents a progressive approach to psychological research, theory and practice that is tightly connected with other social sciences and humanities disciplines. The pathway champions creative, critical and credible psychological research that makes a difference to real social issues, that informs practice, and that inspires a positive vision for living together fairly, equitably and imaginatively. Our engaged research also feeds into scholarship for teaching at the OU. Our [postgraduate research webpages](#) provide more information about doing a PhD within the School.

Successful applicants will be affiliated with [The Open Psychology Research Centre \(OPRC\)](#), the research centre of the School of Psychology & Counselling at The Open University. The OPRC provides a world-class research environment and additional research support to enhance the reach of PhD student research in the school.

Applicants should foresee joining one or more of the school's three thematic research streams that are based in the OPRC, depending on your topic and supervisory team:

[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.

[Psychology of Health and Wellbeing Research \(PHeW\)](#)

PHeW is a theoretically and methodologically diverse group with a focus on practices of health and wellbeing. The Group has a strong professional grounding as well as theoretical interest in practice and practices. This is either by group members being qualified (as) practitioners (i.e., of counselling or clinical psychology, group analysis, psychotherapy etc), or by alternative ways of engagement with individual, community and political practices that create (un)health and (un)wellbeing. PHeW is anchored in three distinct research strands: Counselling and psychotherapy, Critical mental health, Wellbeing in contexts.

[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, Policing and Inquiry, Community and Citizens.**

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 of a bespoke nature

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 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 Centre for Policing Research and Learning, 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 ideally have a strong interest in applied and/or critical psychology. We welcome PhD proposals which span transdisciplinary boundaries and supervisory teams from different academic Schools. We also welcome candidates with relevant degrees in the social sciences and experience through practice.

You should approach potential supervisors about your project proposal as early as possible asking their availability to support you with your submission. Please check out [staff research interests](#) for more information.

If you have any questions about the relevance of your previous academic or work experience, or the suitability of your proposed project, please contact DTP Psychology Pathway lead Simon Clarke (simon.clarke@open.ac.uk).

Applying for a studentship:

In your application, candidates should include the following documents:

- An outline research proposal of no more than 2,000 words, covering research topic and methodology. We have provided [some general advice](#) on completing the proposal.
- An Open University application form, [if you are resident in the UK](#) and [if you are resident elsewhere](#).
- [A Grand Union DTP application form](#).
- An academic CV that includes contact details of three referees, of which at least two should be academic.
- 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.

Applications should be sent to fass-psych-pg-admissions@open.ac.uk by **17:00 on Tuesday 11th January 2023**. Interviews will take place in **early February 2023**.