

## **MSc in Occupational Psychology Guidance for Applicants**

**This document is divided into the following sections:**

- Information on Occupational Psychology and achieving Qualified Status
- Entry requirements, including GBC status
- General course information
- The application process
- Guidance for completing the application form
- About the interview

### **Information on Occupational Psychology**

#### **1. What is Occupational Psychology?**

Occupational Psychology is an area of applied psychology and as such is not one defined area. Rather it is the application of the concepts, theories and techniques of psychology in the workplace.

Occupational Psychology is distinctive in its competence in research and professional practice that is focused on people and organisations in the context of behaviour relating to work. This competence is firmly rooted in the discipline of psychology whilst emphasising the importance of individual effectiveness and wellbeing as well as organisational and commercial effectiveness. It is a long established branch of applied professional psychology with its roots

extending to the early part of the 20th century. The practice of Occupational Psychology requires a high level of self-awareness and competence in problem diagnosis and intervention formulation concerning both individual and collective work-based behaviour both in and outside an organisational context.

Occupational Psychology competencies are grounded in values common to all areas of professional psychology and aim to empower those who use these services (individuals and organisations). It places a high priority on anti-discriminatory practice, social and cultural context and ethical decision-making and integrating the, often conflicting, needs of both individuals and organisations. Qualified Occupational Psychologists are bound by the Code of Conduct of the British Psychological Society.

## **2. How do I become a Qualified Occupational Psychologist?**

There are several steps in training leading to Qualified status (QOccPsych).

The first step involves the attainment of the Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC), which is usually gained by having a BPS accredited first degree in psychology. Next, completion of a BPS/DOP accredited masters degree in Occupational Psychology or completion (by examination only) of the BPS PG Certificate in Occupational Psychology is required. Completion of an accredited master's degree counts as **one of the three** years of training.

The remaining time is spent completing a period of practice as an occupational psychologist. This involves professional work carried out as part of the normal employment of a trainee under the supervision of a chartered occupational psychologist either internal or external to their place of work. The total period of training, must be not less than three years.

### **3. How do I train to become a Qualified Occupational Psychologist at London Metropolitan University?**

There are two parts to the Occupational Psychology programme at London Metropolitan University.

The first is an **MSc in Occupational Psychology**, which is a BPS-accredited course designed to meet all of the requirements of Level 1 for underpinning knowledge, yet also contributes, in part, towards later professional work.

Successful completion of the MSc enables students to concentrate on completing supervised practice within their chosen area of professional employment and employer. This second stage may be undertaken with supervision at London Metropolitan University continuing on the **Post-MSc Supervision Programme**. On successful completion of this second stage, on-the-job professional supervision, the trainee is eligible for Qualified status with the BPS.

## **Entry Requirements**

### **4. What are the entry requirements for the MSc in Occupational Psychology?**

1. You **MUST** have a degree in psychology
  - a. that is 2.1 or equivalent (2.2 degrees will be considered if the applicant has substantive work experience).
  - b. that confers Graduate Basis for Chartership with the British Psychological Society
2. All applicants are expected to have some experience of work, in any capacity.

3. We must have TWO acceptable references. Because the MSc is an academic course, at least one of your references MUST be an academic reference.
  - a. If you are still studying for your undergraduate degree or conversion diploma when you apply for the MSc then both references can be, if you wish, from academic referees (tutors, lecturers, professors etc).
  - b. If you have already finished your undergraduate degree and are currently working then one of your references can be from an employer. However, the other MUST be from an academic referee. (If this is not possible, due to it being several years since you completed any academic studies, please contact the admissions tutor to discuss an alternative.)
4. All applicants will need to attend a face-to-face interview where they will be expected to provide support for their application, unless based overseas and then a similarly structured telephone interview will be offered. Motivation and commitment to the course is assessed.

## **5. What is the Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC) and why is it important?**

GBC is conferred by the British Psychological Society (BPS) to those holding a Society-accredited honours degree in Psychology or a degree that the British Psychological Society regards as equivalent. This can include some joint honours degrees and qualifications from non-UK universities. GBC with the British Psychological Society (BPS) is an absolutely essential requirement for acceptance onto the course, and lack of this is the main reason that applications are rejected. You will need to establish that you are eligible for GBC with the BPS (<http://www.bps.org.uk>) before you apply for the MSc in Occupational Psychology, as we are unable to accept people on to the course who do not have GBC. As the criteria for accreditation are quite complex for some courses (e.g., some joint honours or modular programmes, and some courses of study with the Open University), it is very helpful if your academic referee can state whether you are eligible for GBC or not. Some qualifications are only eligible for GBC if certain modules have been taken and passed. The degree transcript that you provide as part of your application will evidence the modules that you have taken and

passed (you may need your academic referee to comment further if you have not yet completed your qualification).

If you are in doubt about your eligibility for GBC, contact the BPS and ask them for a letter of confirmation. We may also ask you to do this. Please note that the BPS can only confirm your eligibility for GBC *after* you have completed your qualification.

If you do not have GBC either because your course is not accredited, or because your degree is not in Psychology, you may acquire GBC by completing a Conversion Diploma in Psychology. This qualification is often undertaken by people who have degrees in subjects other than psychology, but who have decided that they now wish to pursue a career in psychology. However, there are also a number of students who have non-GBC psychology degrees (e.g., psychology joint degrees) and who are simply 'topping up' their degrees to become eligible for GBC (i.e. they do not do all the modules from the Conversion Diploma programme, just those that were not covered in their undergraduate degree programme and which are required for GBC). **Alternatively, if you do not wish to pursue further studies that confer GBC status, you can apply for our Master's course in Organisational Psychology.** For more information regarding this option, please contact the admissions tutor for Occupational Psychology – Sarah Johnson at [s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk)

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the British Psychological Society to find out how to acquire GBC by sitting the Society's Qualifying Examination. This may be appropriate if you already have all the knowledge you need but have simply not been accredited.

If you took your psychology degree outside of the UK, the BPS will upon request assess your qualifications on an individual basis to determine whether you are eligible for GBC. This must be done at the earliest opportunity as the process can take some time.

For further information regarding GBC, visit the British Psychological Society's website at [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk) or you can contact them directly via email at [enquiries@bps.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bps.org.uk). Please note that it may take the BPS time to decide whether and inform you if your degree does or does not confer GBC status. You should therefore allow sufficient time for this in the application process.

**6. What sort of work experience do I need for entry to the MSc and why is this important?**

You will need to demonstrate on application that you have at least some experience of work and working in an organisation in either a voluntary or paid capacity.

This experience can be vacation work undertaken during your undergraduate studies or work you have done since graduating. The nature of the work is unimportant. What is important is that you have used this experience to establish a feel for some of the issues that arise in work that would attract the attention of a professional occupational psychologist. Examples of these issues are repetitive work, work that might give rise to health-related concerns, the nature and style of management and its effects on motivation, and the culture of the organisation. If this experience also includes work in a Human Resources department or an occupational psychology consultancy then this would be an added bonus.

## **General Course Information**

**7. Distinctive features**

The course has a strong practitioner orientation with a particular emphasis on developing applied professional practice. It provides opportunities to build and extend competence in conducting client-related work within many of the core areas. Subsequent related coursework may be eligible for presentation as part of achieving Qualified status, dependent upon quality of work and completeness. Opportunities to carry out dissertation work in EU member states and elsewhere are possible. A post-MSc supervision programme is also offered subject to particular conditions (refer to Section 13).

**8. What will I learn about on the MSc?**

During the MSc you will be introduced to the theory and practice of occupational psychology within the designated eight areas, together with their philosophical and research bases.

Contextual and ethical issues, experiential case studies, practical work formulation, implementation and discussion are also included.

You will also be introduced to an extensive range of advanced research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, and their application to occupational psychology research and practice and a programme of guest speakers active within the profession.

## **9. How will I be assessed?**

Assessment involves a combination of coursework, such as case studies, process reports, essays and presentations, examinations and professional supervisor reports. Trainees are also required to undertake and pass a substantive research project carried out in a collaborating organisation in the UK or abroad.

## **10. What is the attendance requirement for the MSc?**

The MSc offers two pathways, either full time, or part-time day attendance. Full time trainees complete the MSc in 12 months, whilst part-time trainees in 24 months. Both full and part-time courses run concurrently; full-time trainees attend **Monday and Tuesday**, 9.00 - 4.30 for one year, whilst part-time trainees attend 9.00 – 4.30 on one of these two days that remains fixed over the two years (example; if year one is a Monday, year two will also be a Monday. Teaching programme switched around each year). However, on some days there will be extra sessions that will require you to attend until 6.30pm.

## **11. Research Competence**

The MSc in Occupational Psychology involves completing a substantial piece of independent research. It is therefore important that the course team have some knowledge of your skills and experience in this area. As such it is helpful if you could briefly mention the following within your personal statement. You may be asked to expand upon this at the interview stage.

- What research experience do you have? You should at least have carried out a piece of original research in your undergraduate degree; briefly tell us about that.

- How competent are you in Research Methods and Statistics? What grade did you get in these elements of your degree?
- What thoughts do you have about a possible research project?

## **12. Time Commitment**

In terms of assessing your ability to cope with the course, the team will also want to be clear whether you will be able to manage the course workload with your other commitments (e.g. employment). You may wish to comment on this in your personal statement, or we may discuss this issue with you at interview. Please be aware that, in addition to the scheduled teaching hours (please see course information) substantial time outside of these teaching hours for independent reading, collaborative peer group work and completing assignments is required for successful performance on the course. In addition, students must ensure they are able to allocate sufficient time for carrying out the independent research project. If you would like to speak to someone to discuss workload issues, please contact Sarah Johnson.

## **13. Is there automatic right of entry on to the Post-MSc Supervision Programme after successful completion of the MSc?**

No. Entry to the Post-MSc Supervision Programme is dependent upon trainees demonstrating that their employment will provide adequate opportunity to engage in appropriate professional practice in the five areas chosen. In the first instance, the trainee should ascertain whether professional supervision can be obtained in their place of employment as this would be the preferred option in most cases. In the absence of employer supplied supervision, trainees will be considered for the Post-MSc Supervision Programme.

## Application Process

### 14. What are the application procedures?

For a prospectus and application pack, please contact the admissions office on: [admissions@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@londonmet.ac.uk) or 020 7133 4202. Application forms may also be downloaded from [www.londonmet.ac.uk](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk). Submit your application to the admission office at Admissions, 166-220 Holloway Road, London, N7 8DB,UK.

For specific course content enquiries and questions regarding occupational psychology as a profession, contact the Admissions Tutor, Sarah Johnson at [s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk).

Applications are considered and responded to as they are received. In order to speed up the application process, references and proof of GBC **should** be forwarded at the same time as the application. Once the application and references have been deemed satisfactory, candidates will be invited to interview, so that they may have the opportunity to visit the department, discuss the course and provide further support for their application. Please note that it may take some time between sending in your application and receiving an offer of a place, due to the different selection stages of application form, references and interview. Furthermore, although there is no fixed deadline, places are limited and early applications are to be encouraged.

## **Guidance on completing the application form**

### **1. Personal Details**

Please make sure ALL your contact details are completed and correct. This sounds obvious, and it is, but please double check! Make sure that you put an address and phone number that you can be contacted on. Do not put your home address if you only go home once every few months. We need to be able to get hold of you to arrange interview dates. If you move during the process of application please let the Admissions Office and the Course Admissions Tutor know. **PLEASE NOTE:** On occasion, hotmail accounts can cause non-receipt of emails at the university. Please check your settings and contact our admissions office if you are in any doubt that your emails are being received. Please also ensure that you provide us with at least one alternative point of contact by telephone.

### **2. Fee Status**

Please ensure you complete every question.

### **3. Payment of Fees**

Please tick the appropriate box and clearly indicate whether you have a disability/special needs with further information within Section 11 where applicable.

### **4. Course to which you are applying**

It is important that you indicate EXACTLY the name of the course. It is "MSc in Occupational Psychology". Although there are several other tick boxes, please be aware that the course runs at City Campus (North Campus is not an option). Please also be aware that the options for mode of study are "Full-time" or "Part-time day only" (evenings, weekends and distance learning are not options for this course). Please enter "Year 1" for "Year of entry" and state "October" and the year you wish to begin the course.

### **5. Qualifications**

We are interested in your degree(s) primarily. If you have completed your degree(s) then please make sure you tell us what your degree classification was. Indicating 'PASS' is not

sufficient information. If your degree was obtained outside of the UK please state whatever your grades are but please also include a supporting letter from the BPS that you have GBC and a certificate from your university stating your degree's equivalence to a British Degree. If you have not completed your degree please give an indication of your expected grade.

Other qualifications you can include:

- A-levels (or equivalent post-18 exams)
- NVQs
- Other professional qualifications

Qualifications you don't need to include:

- GCSEs, O-levels, CSEs
- 11+

## **6. English Language Qualification**

If English is not your first language we need to know that you will be able to cope with the course. If you have a formal qualification in English please state that here. If you do not have a formal qualification you may be invited for an interview and/or be required to take the University's English test.

## **7. Employment History**

List all RELEVANT posts as well as key positions of responsibility (even if not directly related to occupational psychology). You can also indicate charity work here if it is relevant.

## **8. Personal Statement**

This is probably the most difficult section but it needn't be. If, by the end of the Personal Statement, the Admissions Tutor knows the answers to the following questions, then you have probably written an acceptable Personal Statement.

1. Why are you interested in Occupational Psychology?
2. Why do you want to study Occupational Psychology at London Metropolitan University?
3. What relevant work experience do you have?
4. What research experience do you have?

- a. You should at least have carried out a piece of original research in your undergraduate degree; tell us about that
  - b. How are you in Research Methods and Statistics? What grade did you get in your degree?
5. What thoughts do you have about a possible research project?
  6. How do you think you will cope with the demands of the course?
  7. What are your career plans following completion of the MSc?

## **9. Criminal convictions**

Self-explanatory.

## **10. References**

If at all possible, please ask your referees to provide you with their reference in a sealed envelope, signed across the seal. Please post these with your application. If this is not possible then please still contact your referees and ask them to forward references as soon as possible to the Admissions Office. Please note that it is **YOUR responsibility** to arrange for references to be sent to us in support of your application. Do not simply write your referees' addresses and expect the Admissions Tutor to contact them. This does not look good in an application.

Who should you ask to be a referee?

1. If you are still studying for your undergraduate degree or conversion diploma when you apply for the MSc then both references can be from academic referees (tutors, lecturers, professors etc). Probably the best person to ask would be the person who supervised your research project.
2. If you have left university and are currently working then one of your references can be from an employer. However, the other **MUST** be from an academic referee.

## **Guidance on the Interview**

The purpose of the interview is for the Course Team to explore the knowledge, goals, motivation, commitment, academic and professional potential of the applicant, for example by clarifying and exploring information presented in the personal statement. You should consider

this when preparing for your interview. The interview is also intended to enable the applicant to gain further insight into the Course, the Course Team and the Department.

- The interview will be one-to-one between you and a member of the Course Team.
- As part of the interview process, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the Course.
- Obtaining an offer of a place on the course is partly dependant upon the quality of your performance at interview. You are therefore advised to consider how you might prepare for the interview, and to undertake this preparation in advance of your interview date.
- You would typically be given 3-4 weeks notice of the interview date to which you had been invited. However, for applications which are received within this period, the amount of notice may be less.
- The interview itself will last approximately 45 minutes.
- If you are unable or no longer wish to attend for an interview to which you have been invited, please let the Admissions Tutor know at your earliest opportunity as places are limited and demand far exceeds this: [s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.johnson@londonmet.ac.uk).
- We cannot offer any reimbursement of expenses incurred in attending an interview.
- Telephone interviews may be offered to some candidates (e.g., those who are based overseas) at the discretion of the Course Team. However, if you are invited to a face-to-face interview, you are strongly encouraged to make every effort to attend in person.

## **MSc Occupational Psychology - Course Details**

As the course is accredited by the British Psychological Society, the content of the course is driven by the major core areas of the field – Counselling and Personal Development, Managing Employees and Relations, Selection and Assessment, Performance Management, Ergonomics (Human Computer Interaction and Work Design: Health and Safety), Organisational Change and Training and Personal Development and the Dissertation. In addition however, we offer a unique module – Professional Practice Portfolio – designed to foster consultancy skills, negotiation and pre-entry client considerations, preparing and writing a client tender, presentation skills and development of reflective practitioner skills. Indeed, it is these key skills developed from this module that are cited as one of the main reasons our past students are successful in securing key posts within the field. Example employers of our past students include London Metropolitan Police, Qinetiq, JobCentre Plus, Hogrefe, OPP, SHL, Pearn Kandola, Stromberg Consulting amongst many others. Uniquely, then, our course offers a good balance of academic study together with key practical skill development.

### **Course Structure**

Our course is taught over three semesters on Mondays and Tuesdays. (Part timers will attend one day per week). The Autumn Semester commences early October – mid December and includes study of four core modules plus the statistics and professional practice portfolio modules running throughout the year, with examinations in January. The Spring Semester starts from early February through to mid May with examinations in May and also includes an industrial visit and our Professional Conference Day. It is on this day that current students have an opportunity to meet past students who discuss their career paths and how they achieved employment. Students frequently state that such an opportunity helps them prepare for employment and gain clearer understanding of what employers require. The Summer Semester focuses on dissertation work. You will be provided with a supervisor according to your chosen subject area and provided with opportunities for one to one meetings as well as seminars to support research skills.

The course team offer the opportunity to engage in overseas study either as part of our ERASMUS programme or independently. For example, a selected number of students can enrol for the ERASMUS programme and study in Scandinavia with a host university, usually

from June onwards. Topics on offer vary from year to year according to clients. On the other hand, the course team have also undertaken supervision of students who elect to return to their home country to complete their studies. Indeed, students from Norway, Ireland, Caribbean, Scandinavia, Poland have all successfully completed their studies.

### **Level A and Level B Testing Programme**

The course includes a BPS accredited practical programme in Level A training leading to Certification. The programme is taught by our course team and focuses on administration, scoring and feedback of test materials in ability. There is a component that requires independent work with submission expected by the end of the Calendar year. The timing of the programme varies from year to year according to the academic calendar but is traditionally in the early Summer period. Level B testing is not provided as part of the course, but, depending on the numbers of students who request this, we can offer the programme at a very low tariff during the Summer period. For this reason, many students express interest in the programme, thus it is usually provided.

### **The Course Team**

#### **MSc in Occupational Psychology**