

**Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology**

Course information booklet for applicants

Accredited by:

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Dear applicant,

We would like to welcome you to the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology at London Metropolitan University. The information given in the subsequent pages should give you a good idea about what the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology at London Metropolitan University is all about. In addition we have provided information to help you complete the application procedure.

Our course offers a Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology on completion of two years full-time (or equivalent) supervised practice, attendance at workshops and completion of a thesis portfolio. The Doctorate equips trainees with the appropriate experience and qualifications to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council as a Registered Psychologist with the right to use the title “Health Psychologist”. There is a synthesis between taught workshops and practical placements in achieving this qualification. Trainees are required to demonstrate five core health psychology competencies that includes completing D-level research training. The course is delivered by a combination of professional workshops, supervised practice, research and peer supervision.

Thank you for showing your interest in our course. If you require any further information about the course you can contact me at l.rixon@londonmet.ac.uk.

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| portrait of Dr Lorna Rixon | **Dr Lorna Rixon**  BSc, MSc, PhD, CPsychol. FHEA  Programme director for Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology  HCPC Registered Health Psychologist |

**Why study with us?**

We are conveniently located on the Holloway Road, a diverse borough of London, allowing trainees the opportunity to engage with the impact of social and cultural influences on health and wellbeing. Trainees are able to access a variety of opportunities in which to develop the Stage 2 Competencies through our strong links with external agencies. Trainees feel that a real strength of our course is the flexibility that we offer, having two entry points per year and the option of both full time and part time study. Our course is run by dedicated Chartered Psychologists who are also HCPC Registered. At our last re-accreditation visit, the BPS commended us for “exuding passion and enthusiasm for our subject and showing evident concern for delivering the best possible Trainee experience” and our key role is to support your professional development as a Health Psychologist in Training.

# Introduction to the course

All our staff are based in the Tower Building on the Holloway Road site, which is where the teaching takes place. The Tower Building is equipped with a wide range of specialist computing and technology laboratories. The Science Centre nearby houses the science labs, sports centre, gym and research facilities. The Learning Centre, in the glass building opposite Holloway Road tube station next to the Science Centre, houses the Library and some IT facilities. IT Studios, on the ground floor of the Main Block, are utilised for small group class teaching. More extensive IT facilities are located in the Technology Tower, adjacent to the Tower Block, which provides over 400 open access computer terminals.

Our School offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Psychology which are accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). The School offers Professional Doctorates in Counselling and Health Psychology that are also recognised by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The School also offers research degrees (MPhil/PhD) and is active in a number of areas of psychological research including: addiction; cognition; developmental psychology; social psychology; personality; psychopathology; health psychology and clinical psychology.

# Student testimonials

“I am about to submit my thesis portfolio for the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology at London Metropolitan University that I have completed within two years. Although the course has been challenging a times, I have really enjoyed it. The peer and individual supervision that is provided at London Metropolitan has been a great method of support throughout the course and doing the course in London has meant that I’ve had access to a whole host of opportunities that have contributed to my development as a Health Psychologist. I can honestly say I'd recommend London 

Metropolitan University as a place of study for the Professional

Doctorate in Health Psychology.”

Tilean Clarke

“I decided to do the Prof Doc at London Met because it is recognised by the BPS as providing the Stage 2 requirements for Chartered Psychologist status and it is approved by the HCPC as a requirement for registration as a Registered Health 

Psychologist. This ensured me of the quality of the course and the widest range of training, development and employment opportunities for my future. The course provides me with quality supervision and equips me with skills in all of the stage 2 competencies. The course also provides CBT skills training and offers excellent consultancy links and teaching opportunities.” Mina Abedian

# Philosophy of the course

Health Psychology plays an important emerging role in the treatment and prevention of disease as well as the promotion of health and wellbeing. It incorporates a range of theoretical as well as practical stances in how it is applied.

The core philosophy of the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology is to enable trainees to develop as independent, reflective practitioners in health psychology. The course has well established links within the local community where it is based. This means that the health needs of our local community are embedded within socioeconomic and cultural constraints. Therefore there is a strong emphasis on these elements in the taught material we offer. This means that trainees not only develop as critical thinkers but are also able to adapt their practice to specific client needs. We have also in recent years developed strong links with local PCTs, government agencies and charities who help inform us of what is required of developing health psychologists.

We hold a position between both the scientist practitioner and reflective-practitioner paradigms. Throughout the programme, we encourage trainees to critically reflect on these and other current discourses within contemporary health issues; we expect trainees to adopt a questioning stance to clinical practice that constantly looks to service user’s needs and expectations.

The University has a strong practitioner focus and thus you will be supported by a team who have extensive experience of the issues in training to become a Chartered Psychologist. There will be key opportunities for you to fulfil competencies across your studies.

This course is aimed at developing your skills as a trainee health psychologist in line with recommendations from the BPS Division of Health Psychology (DHP) and the HCPC. It also introduces you to the competencies that you will need to demonstrate in order to be eligible to become a Registered and Chartered Psychologist. Key areas of the course include; professional skills, research methods, consultancy, teaching and training and psychological interventions.

# Attendance and commitment of your time

All teaching takes place in small groups, including presentations, visiting experts, seminars and workshops. Trainees are encouraged to participate actively in their learning, and are asked to read or prepare material in advance. The workshops provide knowledge and training to support trainees on their work placement and in completion of the core competencies. Trainees are expected to attend all workshops and to attend regular supervision. Workshops take place every three to four weeks on a Friday. Individual supervision sessions are arranged at the convenience of trainees and supervisors. When you begin the course it is expected that you will arrange with your employer suitable time off for attendance at workshops and supervision. It is a requirement of entry to the course that you inform your employer of your intention to begin training so that they can support you in your efforts.

The taught element of the course covers the five core competencies. A comprehensive list can be found of the [BPS core competencies](http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-education-training/society-qualifications/health-psychology/health-psychology) (bps.org.uk/careers-educationtraining/society-qualifications/health-psychology/health-psychology) and the [HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists](http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/standards/download/index.asp?id=198) (hpc-uk.org/registrants/standards).

# Status of the course

The Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology has been recognised by the BPS as providing the Stage 2 requirements for Chartered Psychologist status, and has been approved by the HCPC as a requirement for registration as a Registered Health Psychologist. Completion of the course enables you to apply for registration with these bodies.

The course is run by a team of dedicated Chartered Psychologists who are also registered with the HCPC. Their role is to support your own professional development as a health psychologist. The Course Director is Dr Lorna Rixon who completed her PhD in 2011 looking at quality of life in cancer survivors. Lorna has also worked in the field of self-management, returning to work after illness, and assistive technology in health and social care.

# Supervision

Trainees are each allocated to a supervisory team consisting of a main supervisor and two co-supervisors. At least one supervisor (main) will be a Chartered Psychologist and Registered Health Psychologist. The supervisory team is there to provide support and guidance throughout the course of the programme. Your main supervisor is expected to provide summative and formative feedback on all pieces of coursework. Prior to submission of the portfolio of evidence, trainees will be expected to have submitted all relevant assessment parts to their supervisor for review. Trainees can expect supervision every month. You will meet with your supervisory team at least four times a year. Trainees are expected to manage their time to use supervision sessions well. Therefore we recommend that trainees submit an agenda prior to meeting and that minutes of meetings are circulated to your supervisory team afterwards with clear action points shown. It is important for you to use your supervisory team in the best way you can. Supervisors will also provide telephone and e-mail supervision throughout the year. We also expect trainees to take part in peer supervision through group meetings and through the use of WebLearn discussion forums.

# Assessment

The assessment for the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology will involve the completion of a substantial portfolio of evidence. This evidence must fulfil all the requirements for completion of the core competencies as required by the BPS and the HCPC. The portfolio will be made up of assessment in all core competencies.

Submission of the final portfolio cannot be carried out unless all assessments have been completed.

This course is designed to closely meet the regulations for the standards of Postdoctoral Qualifications in Health Psychology (Stage 2) of the Health Psychology Qualifications Board (HPQB) at the BPS. Therefore trainees should all familiarise themselves with those regulations. In addition, the course is designed to fulfil the Standards of Proficiency set by the HCPC.

It is a requirement of the course that a timetable of activities is identified within the first semester. This should detail a plan of gaining experience in each of the competencies and submission of assessments to your supervisor for review.

# Placements

In order to complete your training as a Health Psychologist, to be eligible to apply for Registration and achieve Chartered status, you are required to undertake a period of supervised practice. The purpose of this is to gain the skills to allow you to practice as an independent professional. During your period of supervised practice you will be able to build on the academic skills by developing your practical skills in applied settings and using the supervision relationship to help you reflect on your progress. There is no definitive model of what a placement should look like or where it should be. Typical settings for placements include the academic, health and charity sector. Whilst on your placement you will be working in a predefined job role. You will need to demonstrate experiential working through a placement for equivalent of 2 years full-time (3-4 years part-time).

The type of placement that you choose will depend upon your own circumstances and particular interests. Any field or issue that allows you to develop the core competencies in health psychology will be suitable. Trainees on our course have varied job roles from

‘Public Health Coordinator’ to ‘Community Engagement Worker’ and ‘Primary Care Stop Smoking Advisor’. We have Trainees working on a full time and part time basis, in paid and voluntary positions, for private organisations, charities, NHS services and beyond.

If you are struggling to find suitable employment then research your local authorities (public health and social care) and NHS (mental/psychological/physical health) community services. Here are some suggestions of websites that you could browse for more ideas:

* [jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/)
* [jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk/)
* [indeed.co.uk](http://www.indeed.co.uk/)
* [prospects.ac.uk/types\_of\_jobs.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs.htm)
* [bps.org.uk/careers-in-psychology](http://www.bps.org.uk/careers-in-psychology)
* [charityjob.co.uk](http://www.charityjob.co.uk/)
* [do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk/)
* [mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk/)
* [guardianjobs.co.uk](http://www.guardianjobs.co.uk/)
* [bupa.co.uk/careers](http://www.bupa.co.uk/careers)
* [ash.org.uk/about-ash/vacancies](http://www.ash.org.uk/about-ash/vacancies)
* [kca.org.uk](http://www.kca.org.uk/)
* [changingminds.org](http://www.changingminds.org/)
* [iapt.nhs.uk/services/services/london-nhs-iapt-services/](http://www.iapt.nhs.uk/services/services/london-nhs-iapt-services/)
* [nuffieldhealth.com](http://www.nuffieldhealth.com/)
* [atlantishealthcare.com](http://www.atlantishealthcare.com/)
* [benendenhospital.org.uk](http://www.benendenhospital.org.uk/)
* [lafitness.co.uk/](http://www.lafitness.co.uk/)

# Guidance on the application form

**Eligibility**

1. Before you apply, please be certain of the minimum entry requirements: You **must** have an accredited MSc in Health Psychology or equivalent (completion of the Stage 1 qualification with the British Psychological Society)
   1. for which you expect to be awarded a merit or above
   2. that confers Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership with the British Psychological Society
   3. you must have a suitable work placement arranged due to start on or before the commencement of the course. The
   4. suitability of the work placement you have arranged will be discussed at interview
   5. please note that a degree in medicine or biology is not acceptable for postgraduate study in Health Psychology

1. We must receive acceptable references. Because the Professional Doctorate is a professional qualification, at least one of your references **must** be an academic reference and the other reference can be from an employer.

**Completing the form**

1. Personal details
2. Fee Status
3. Payment of fees
4. Course to which you are applying

It is important that you indicate **exactly** the name of the course. It is not “Health Psychology” it is the “Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology”. 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).

1. 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. 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 equivalence to a British Degree. Qualifications. You don’t need to include:

* + A levels
  + GCSEs, O-levels, CSEs
  + 11+

1. 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 required to take the University’s English test. A good standard of spoken and written English is expected. A minimum level of one of the following is required:

* + IELTS 6.5 minimum with a minimum of 6 in all components
  + TOEFL (Old exam) 630 minimum
  + TOEFL (New exam) 267 minimum

1. Employment history

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

1. Supporting statement

This is probably the most difficult section but it needn’t be. If, by the end of the supporting statement, the admissions tutor knows the answers to the following questions, then your supporting statement is probably fine.

* 1. Why are you interested in health psychology?
  2. Why do you want to study health psychology at London Metropolitan University?
  3. What relevant experience do you have?
  4. What research experience do you have? You should at least have carried out a piece of original research in your MSc, so tell us about that.
  5. What thoughts you have about a possible research project and a possible placement during the Professional Doctorate?
  6. How do you think you will cope with the demands of the course?
  7. What are your future/career plans following completion of the Doctorate?

1. Criminal convictions

If you have a criminal conviction you may not be able to fulfil the standards of proficiency as set by the Health and Care Professions Council or fulfil the competencies required by the British Psychological Society due to an inability to access appropriate placements. Please seek guidance at [http://www.hpc-](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004B33%5bConsolidated%5dPoliciesandPracticeNotes%5binteractive%5d.pdf)

[uk.org/assets/documents/10004B33[Consolidated]PoliciesandPracticeNotes[interacti ve].pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004B33%5bConsolidated%5dPoliciesandPracticeNotes%5binteractive%5d.pdf)

1. References

Please note that it is your responsibility to arrange for references to be sent to us in support of your application. Who should you ask to be a referee?

* 1. If you are currently doing an MSc in Health Psychology then 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

Submit your completed application to **research@londonmet.ac.uk**

# Interview

Prior to being invited for interview, applicants are required to submit a one-two page summary of a research project they intend to do as fulfilment for the research competency.

This should include the following:

* a short description of the relevant literature
* a description of the aims of the study
* a description of the sample or samples for investigations
* a proposal for analysis and methodology
* a summary of the importance of the research project

At the interview you will be asked to discuss your plans for placement as well as your project. You must have a placement set up prior to being accepted on the course. All students who are provisionally accepted on to the course will be sent the full Placement Handbook with more details on what we expect from placements. Students must also discuss their plans for research during the interview although these may not necessarily be binding.

# FAQs

**Do I need to have experience in a health setting before I can apply for this course?**

Experience and/or previous employment are not essential requirements for a successful application for this course but you must have a suitable work placement/job arranged to begin on or before commencement of the course. However, if you do have some experience then that is always useful so be sure and describe what this experience is in your Personal Statement (do not simply tell us what your job title is but be sure to describe your roles, duties and responsibilities as well as the relevant skills you have acquired as a result).

**Can I visit the Department to have a look around before making my decision?**

Yes, it is important that you make an informed choice about what may be the start of your professional career as a Health Psychologist. By all means get in touch and we can arrange for you to see around the department and to answer any questions you may have.

**What are you looking for in an applicant?**

There is no single blueprint for the kind of applicant we are looking for. However, we are looking for bright and motivated people who have a plan. We are looking for people who are interested in learning but who are also willing to question what they taught and to apply their learning in the real world. We appreciate that some people may not shine across all areas that are relevant to health psychologists but we are more interested in whether you are prepared to make the effort. We want people who want to go on to work as health psychologists and who will be regarded as excellent representatives of our course.

**How much does it cost to do the Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology?**

Please refer to the course page on our website for information on fees.

**How much of my practice can take place outside of the UK to satisfy the BPS requirements?**

Up to 1/3 of your training can take place outside of the UK. The rest needs to be UK based.

**I have a question that is not answered here. Can I ask a real person?**

Dr Lorna Rixon can be contacted by telephone 020 7133 2032 or via email to l.rixon@londonmet.ac.uk.

We look forward to receiving your completed application!