

# MSc IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Programme Handbook for Applicants



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## **Introduction**

The MSc in Applied Psychology (healthcare) for Children and Young People is an innovation in the training structure offering career development for psychology graduates within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health area of applied psychology. It is a taught masters programme, which trains psychology graduates to become competent practitioners in psychological assessment and interventions with children, young people and families presenting with mild to moderate emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is designed to train graduates in evidence-based interventions for this population (e.g. CBT, parenting programmes, etc.). This programme offers a combination of academic and clinical skills teaching with a full-year clinical placement in a Scottish NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. Successful applicants will be employed as a Trainee Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology for one year by a Scottish NHS board. Successful completion of the MSc in Applied Psychology for Children and Young People will allow graduates to apply for Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology (Children and Young People) posts, which is an innovative career development for psychology graduates in NHS Scotland.

We continue to enjoy and benefit from the support of NHS Education for Scotland, Health Boards in Scotland, and many Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. As a special health board, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) has a remit for the development and delivery of education and training for all those who work in NHS Scotland. NES will work in partnership with Health Boards, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as a wide range of organisations and agencies.

NES has responsibility for commissioning pre-registration training for clinical psychology for NHS Scotland and continues to support training for psychology graduates in circumscribed areas of practice identified as a priority by NHS Scotland. As such, this training programme offers essential clinical and academic grounding for a new generation of applied psychology practitioners within modern multi-disciplinary Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

## **Application Process**

We typically receive over 300 applications each year for one of up to 36 places available on this MSc programme, therefore, the process of obtaining a place is very competitive. Although we are looking for individuals who can demonstrate high levels of competency (or potential for such) in academic, professional and personal skills, it is not an essential requirement for applicants to have prior clinical experience in an NHS setting. A demonstrable interest in the development of mental health and well-being of children and young people, and families, is a requirement however. Additional specific entry requirements are listed on the website here:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health/subject-areas/clinical-psychology/postgraduate-taught/msc-applied-psychology/entry>

All applications are made on line through the Programme website<sup>1</sup>. In addition to providing information about skills and experience, applicants are invited to reflect on experiences that have prepared them for training as a Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology and to identify all preferences for placement in one of the identified NHS Health Boards in Scotland<sup>2</sup>. Please note that, even if successful in obtaining a place on the programme, the expression of a preference does not guarantee placement in one of the preferred Health Board locations. Trainees may be placed in any one of the partner NHS Health Boards across Scotland and occasionally a change of placement may be necessary.

Following the closing date, all applications will be reviewed by members of the Programme Team and the relevant Health Boards to establish a shortlist of applicants to be invited for interview. Applicants who are shortlisted for interview will be notified approximately 2 to 3 weeks before their interview date which are generally in November.

Following interview, successful candidates will be provided with a provisional offer of a place from Edinburgh University, which will be subject to subsequent employment checks with the employing health board, including references, eligibility to work in the UK, an enhanced Disclosure Scotland/PVG check, health clearance, and the outcome of any disciplinary procedure by a professional body (if applicable). Applicants should be aware that information relating to these latter checks will be shared within the Programme Team and with the Senior Health Board Managers and NES.

## **Programme Information**

### **Programme Overview**

#### **Purpose, Intention and Philosophy**

The core purpose and philosophy for the University of Edinburgh/NHS (Scotland) Masters in Applied Psychology for Children and Young People programme is to train psychology graduates to Masters level and to impart the range of competencies essential for the graduates from this programme to deliver tier two psychological assessments and evidence based interventions in a range of services for children, young people and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> Please check the website for application opening and closing dates

<sup>2</sup> Information on the participating Health Boards can be found on the website in the Applicant Guide.

The core philosophy of the programme is that trainees should be competent practitioners in applied psychology for children, young people and their families. In addition to the essential elements for applied psychologists in health (e.g. assessment, formulation and evaluation) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) professionals (e.g. recognition of child abuse, developmental impairments and delays) there will be a particular focus on the early intervention across a variety of settings.

The strengths of the MSc includes particularly close links between key stakeholders in the National Health Service across Scotland; in particular the Clinical Psychology Network in Children and Young People's Specialist Services NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the University of Edinburgh.

## **General Programme Information**

The programme is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, key NHS stakeholders working within several NHS Health Board areas and CAMH services. The programme provides a formal academic syllabus based on Level 11 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and provides a coherent training in Applied Psychology over one year. During this period of training, formal teaching days account for approximately 30 per cent of total training time. At least 50 per cent of time will be spent in clinical practice on placement, and 20 per cent of time is set aside for independent private study. The programme content and anticipated outcomes are informed by the Scottish Subject Benchmark Statement (2006) Clinical Psychology and Applied Psychology published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

## **Academic Component**

The teaching programme is organised into seven courses over one year of training. There are several major themes over the course of the training programme: Professional Context and Clinical Management, Assessment and Formulation, Child and Adolescent Development, Early Years and Early Intervention, Promotion of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being, and Psychological Intervention and Structured Treatment Approaches. These main developmental themes will be supplemented by an additional specialist teaching course in Evaluation and Research that is divided across each of the teaching weeks. This applied MSc programme provides trainees with substantial grounding in evidence based psychological interventions, and predominantly draws upon a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach. This applies to both the teaching and workshops that the trainees attend, but also the supervision that they receive whilst undertaking their clinical work on placement.

The syllabus covers the required learning objectives that demonstrate academic competence in applied psychology for children and young people. A substantial proportion of teaching is workshop

based and trainees are encouraged to develop clinical decision-making skills as well as skills necessary for carrying out psychological interventions with children, young people and families. The teaching syllabus supports and encourages the application of knowledge and practice that facilitates the transfer of skills across different areas in the speciality and within a developmental learning framework. The syllabus also encourages trainees to become self-reflective practitioners and promotes this activity through peer presentations, reflective small group work,, and by encouraging lecturers to model these skills in their presentations and workshops.

The teaching content is organised into courses that are intended to complement placement experience and placement specific learning objectives. Teaching takes place at the University of Edinburgh and in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Each trainee has a named personal academic tutor throughout the duration of his or her training.

## **Clinical Component**

Clinical experience commences with a one week induction period on placement. The first teaching block follows this induction period before trainees return back to their clinical placement. The clinical experience gained throughout the placement will cover a wide range of clinical issues and presentations, client groups, CAMH settings and modes of working which are relevant to Tier 2 CAMHS activity.

Over the one-year Masters programme, trainees will have one main placement base for the year (occasionally two). The learning objectives for the placement are based upon the areas and competencies specified in the academic course and in line with each individual trainee's development. It is expected that trainees will usually complete the whole placement in one service and ideally under one supervisor. Additional input from other clinical services may be appropriate when the main placement is in a specific specialist setting such as an adolescent mental health service or a paediatric service.

All trainees will be allocated a clinical supervisor within their placement, who, in the majority of cases, will be a Clinical Psychologist with at least two years' experience, but they may also be supervised by an experienced Clinical Associated in Applied Psychology in certain circumstances. Each trainee has a named 'main' clinical supervisor whilst on clinical placement.

## **Research Component**

The main aim of the Evaluation and Research Course is to develop evaluation skills and a generally scientific approach to the formulation and study of problems in applied psychology. The main

outcome of the research course is to produce trainees who have appropriate competencies in audit, service evaluation, systematic reviews and small-scale research. Trainees are helped and encouraged to be analytical and critical in their thinking and in the evaluation of outcomes, whether this is in clinical practice or in planning, implementation, and evaluation of systems of working.

The research curriculum has a programme of teaching including didactic lectures and interactive problem-solving statistical workshops based on applied models of audit and evaluation. Particular emphasis is also placed on the ethical considerations in relation to applied research, and this is supported by an additional focus on ethical issues within the Professional Context and Clinical Management course.

The Research Dissertation provides trainees with the optimal environment to plan and execute clinically relevant applied evaluation and research, from initial ideas through to design and data analysis, and, where appropriate, the completion of application for ethical approval. Each trainee is allocated a research supervisor following successful submission of a research proposal.

## **The Professional Context Component**

The main aim of this programme is to assist trainees in developing their identity as Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology (CAAP's) and CAMH practitioners, pursuant to the skills, knowledge and values expected of their role. To assist trainees with their development in this regard, teaching covers the ethical and practical concerns of working with a vulnerable client group.

Another key issue in the personal and professional development of trainees over the duration of the training programme is the importance of self-awareness in appraising and reflecting upon aspects of their own practice. An important core competency to be developed by trainees is awareness of their own limits and boundaries in clinical practice and awareness of the need to seek appropriate supervision, as and when the situation demands. Trainees are also required to develop awareness of the importance of diversity within the social and cultural context of their relationships and working practices with clients, systems and settings, in relation to different ethnic and religious groupings in particular.

## **Fitness to Practice**

All trainee Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology have the dual status of university students and NHS employees. As NHS employees, trainees are expected to adhere to the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2012) as well as locality-specific NHS policies and procedures. These relate to professional conduct, clinical practice and conducting research. If it becomes apparent that a trainee fails to adhere to the standards set out

in the code of conduct or relevant NHS policy, this would call into question their fitness to practice and would require consideration by the NHS employer and the programme team.

## **Programme Approval**

In 2017 the programme received BPS accreditation as an Applied Programme for Associate and Assistant Psychologists.



## Programme Curriculum and Course Content

The following seven academic courses are covered over the duration of training. **Please note that the underpinning learning objectives of these courses are taught in an integrated manner across a range of lectures and clinical experience, with many lectures meeting learning objectives for more than one course, rather than being taught in a modular fashion.**

- **Course 1:** Professional Context and Clinical Management
- **Course 2:** Assessment and Formulation
- **Course 3:** Child and Adolescent Development
- **Course 4:** Early Years and Early Intervention
- **Course 5:** Promotion of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- **Course 6:** Psychological Intervention and Structured Treatment Approaches
- **Course 7:** Evaluation and Research

## Description of Courses

### Course 1: Professional Context and Clinical Management

In this course students learn about appropriate models of clinical care and clinical management within multi-disciplinary CAMHS settings. This course provides an overview of clinical settings and professional systems of care within children and young peoples' health service settings, roles within them, includes a clarification of professional roles and the ethical context of professional conduct.

Trainees are expected to acquire an in depth working knowledge of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency service structures as these are represented in CAMH settings throughout Scotland and the UK. Models of systemic working in this context are applied to the clinical management and psychological therapies for key client groups. Trainees gain critical insight and appraisal of developmentally based models of care and systemic practice.

The clinical management of clients involves awareness of fitness to practice issues and boundaries of professional practice. Trainee Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology are supported to increase

self-awareness and the need to appraise and reflect on their own practice. As reflective practitioners they become aware of the importance of diversity, the social and cultural context of their work, working within an ethical framework, and the need for continuing professional and personal development.

Trainees are also introduced to a range of complex clinical presentations and disorders to provide them with a critical knowledge base from which to make appropriate clinical assessments, assessment of risk and recognising when referral onward is necessary and when they are working outwith their boundaries of competence.

### **Course 2: Assessment and Formulation**

In this course trainees are introduced to methods of clinical assessments, including clinical interviews and formal assessment tools such as structured interviews, standardised self-report measures and psychometric tests.

To aid the comprehension of assessment information, trainees are also introduced to models of developmental psychopathology. These provide trainees with a theoretical basis from which to understand what, and how, different factors contribute to the development (and maintenance) of psychological disorders in this client group.

The course also introduces students to the concept of formulation through the provision of formulation models applicable to the client group. These illustrate the way in which information gathered through multiple assessment processes can be integrated to provide an explanatory account of a client's presenting difficulties. The use of such models also provides a platform from which to identify appropriate forms of intervention for children, young people and families.

During this course, trainees are also introduced to a range of clinical problems and presentations relevant to the client group. This provides a knowledge base from which trainees can make informed assessments of the needs of children and young people experiencing a wide range of clinical difficulties.

### **Course 3: Child and Adolescent Development**

This course provides an introduction to the psychology of child and adolescent development. Through providing an overview of psychological and sociological models of individual development and the family life cycle, trainees are introduced to a developmental framework. The use of applied clinical examples illustrates the relevance and importance of a developmental frame when working

with this client group. The course includes consideration of “normal” development from which examples of non-normative/maladaptive development can be appraised.

#### **Course 4: Early Years and Early Intervention**

The emphasis of this course is on the early years of life, promoting awareness of factors which can either enhance or negatively impact upon a child’s psychological/emotional development. The course equips trainees with knowledge of these social, psychological & biological risk and protective factors, and understanding of how these inform early intervention frameworks.

The course also aims to develop trainee competence in empowering children, young people and families to recognise their strengths and develop resilience. Through evidence-based models of intervention, trainees learn how vulnerable families can be helped to foster positive relationships (including positive parenting), utilise support in their community and from professional systems.

The early management of developmental psychopathology and difficulties in children and young people are also covered.

#### **Course 5: Promotion of Mental Health and Emotional Well-being**

This course considers models of health promotion and the maintenance of emotional well-being. This encompasses public health models and methods of health promotion on an individual and systemic level. Methods of self-help and self directed interventions are also covered.

This course will equip trainees with knowledge of social, psychological & biological risk and protective factors which inform the promotion of emotional well-being. In addition, there will be an introduction to the wider policy context supporting the promotion of emotional well-being on a national level.

#### **Course 6: Psychological Intervention and Structured Treatment Approaches**

This course is focused on developing trainee skills in promoting resilience and coping in young people by using behavioural and cognitive approaches to promote mental health and well being as well as clinical intervention in a problem cycle. This involves training in clinical formulation, development of strategies of intervention for the delivery of circumscribed psychological care and the utilisation of one or more models or approaches of psychotherapies and psychological therapies.

Students acquire knowledge of available packages of care for groups and individuals (such as techniques developed for: anxiety, low mood, etc) and methods to promote positive parenting. Packages of care consist of evidence-based psychological therapies, techniques and elements that can be applied on an individualised and formulation driven model of psychotherapy and clinical management. Following this course, trainees are expected to be able to demonstrate general knowledge of age appropriate interventions within frameworks for individual therapy, behavioural and cognitive programmes, group therapy programmes, parent and family support.

Trainees are further taught on the theoretical basis for the formation and continuation of clinical groups, and the knowledge of group dynamics and the management of groups.

### **Course 7: Evaluation and Research**

This course provides an introduction to systems and methods of applied research and evaluation. Applied quantitative and qualitative research methods are introduced on the basis of applied examples of audit and evaluation of mental health services as well as individual treatment evaluations.

The course introduces the use and application of statistical software packages and also teaches the appraisal of research evidence and the design and implementation of audit and evaluation projects. Particular emphasis is placed on user participation and research ethics.

### **Clinical Placement Information**

Trainees undertake clinical work on placement in the NHS and gain experience of a range of service contexts in which early intervention takes place. It is hoped that placements provide trainees with a wide range of experiences, outlined below.

The placement aims to provide the trainee with an:

- Opportunity to work with children and families across the age range, including preschool and primary aged children as well as adolescents
- Opportunity to work with families where a child has a learning disability
- Opportunity to access and apply guided self-help programmes or materials.
- Opportunity to carry out circumscribed individual interventions as described by procedure and protocol i.e., delivery of available packages of care (such as Coping Cat, Think Good Feel Good).
- Experience of running at least one group.

- Opportunity to be involved in health promotion. This could be via established links with hospitals, schools, voluntary organisations, or by setting up and initiating a specific programme. (e.g., programme for developing coping strategies in children /young people with asthma, anxiety management group in a youth club or GP practice). To be involved in liaising with other professionals regarding this.
- Opportunity to be involved in research projects within the department.
- Opportunity for the trainee to have some links with other professionals regarding the children seen and in particular Health Visitors and Paediatricians
- Opportunity to engage in service user consultation

### **Placement Visits**

Throughout the year, there is regular contact between Clinical Tutors on the Programme Team, trainees and their supervisors. The assigned Clinical Tutor also carries out a minimum of two placement visits. These placement visits enable a review of the trainee's progress in developing their required clinical competencies, on-going assessment of the suitability of the placement and furthermore facilitate identification of the particular learning/support needs of the trainee. There is a final evaluation of clinical competence and course review at the end of the year's training.

### **Clinical Competency**

Competency in clinical and professional work is assessed on placement by the clinical supervisor through observation of all aspects of professional clinical practice pertaining to the requirements of the MSc. This involves direct observation, listening to recordings and engaging in clinical supervision. Clinical supervisors are encouraged to use structured competency rating scales when providing formative and summative assessments of a trainee's CBT competencies.

### **Programme Assessment**

Assessment of the stated learning outcomes occurs through a range of different means as follows:

- Successful completion, and supervisor assessed competency, of the clinical placement covering the whole year of training. On placement, trainees are responsible for completing an up to date log of relevant clinical experience and practice. The overall placement portfolio consists of a placement contract, placement visit reports, placement learning objective forms, weekly records of clinical activity and other associated placement paperwork such as evaluation of supervision

forms and summary of placement experience forms. The placement is evaluated by a review of the placement portfolio.

- One research proposal for a research project (up to 2,500 words)
- A Child and Adolescent Development portfolio
- A written CBT based case conceptualisation and associated audio submission (3,500 words).
- One group-based health promotion project development task (5000 words) and individual essay
- One research dissertation (10,000 words).

## General References

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# University Information

## Library Resources

The University Library catalogue and services can be accessed online at [www.lib.ed.ac.uk](http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk). The Library provides access to a wide range of books and journals. The Main University Library is in George Square. Other libraries may be located through the Library website or by enquiring in the Main Library. The library catalogue provides access to many electronic resources, including electronic versions of many journals. Information on how to access online resources can be found at: <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/resources/shibboleth.html>

Books and journals which are not available in the Library or via the Library website may be accessed at the National Library of Scotland or through the Inter-Library Loans service. More information about this service is available in the Main Library and on the website.

## Computing Facilities and Services

There are a large number of computing facilities at the University, including several 24-hour suites in the Central Area. Every matriculated student receives a University email account and free unlimited access to computing and library facilities.

For any questions or issues you have about computing facilities, or your email account, please contact the College Computing Services User Support Team.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/is/help>

Tel: 0131 651 5151

[IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk)

## Edinburgh Global (formerly known as the International Office)

Edinburgh Global supports University staff and offers advice to enquirers, applicants, new students and current students who are from outside the UK.

<http://global.ed.ac.uk/>

## Edinburgh University Students' Association

Trainees are matriculated students at the University, and as such are automatically members of the Edinburgh University Students' Association.



[www.eusa.ed.ac.uk](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk)

Tel: 0131 650 2656

Potterrow

5/2 Bristo Square

Edinburgh EH8 9AL

The Students' Association operates a student advice service known as the Advice Place: a drop-in advice centre, offering free, confidential and independent advice on a range of issues including money issues, accommodation problems, academic concerns etc.

[www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/)

Tel: 0131 650 9225

## **Student Disability Service**

The University of Edinburgh welcomes students with disabilities. Their aim is to create an environment that enables students with disabilities to participate fully in the mainstream of university life. They try to achieve this through flexible methods of teaching and assessment, and by progressively improving access to buildings and technology. The University provides a comprehensive range of support services to students with disabilities through the Disability Office.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service>

Tel: 0131 650 6828

Student Disability Service

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George Square

Edinburgh EH8 9LJ