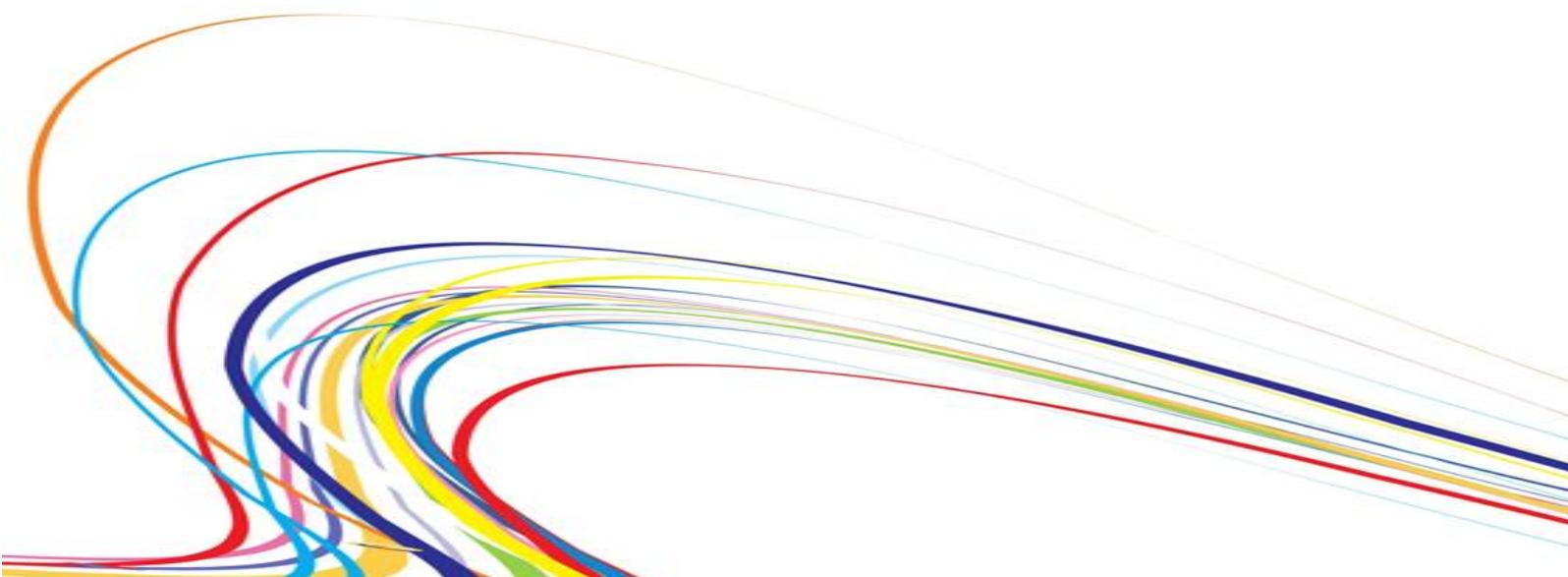




**The British
Psychological Society**
Partnership & Accreditation

University of Buckingham
Psychology Department, School of Science
BSc Psychology
BSc Psychology with X

Date of Visit: 7 April 2017



The British Psychological Society (“the Society”) is the learned and professional body, incorporated by Royal Charter, for psychologists in the United Kingdom. The Society has a total membership and subscribership of approximately 60,000, and is a registered charity’. Under its Royal Charter, the key objective of the Society is “to promote the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of members by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge”.

The Society has been involved in the accreditation of programmes of education and training in psychology since the early 1970s. The Society currently accredits programmes at both undergraduate (and equivalent) and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate and conversion programmes are accredited against the requirements for the Society’s Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership, the curriculum requirements for which are derived from the Quality Assurance Agency’s subject benchmark statement for psychology. Postgraduate programmes are accredited against the knowledge, practice and research requirements for Chartered Psychologist status (CPsychol) in a range of domains of practice, which are defined in accordance with the Occupational Standards for psychologists. A number of the postgraduate programmes that are accredited by the Society are also approved by the Health and Care Professions Council, the statutory regulator of practitioner psychologists in the UK.

The standards that the Society uses to reach decisions on the accreditation of individual programmes can be downloaded from www.bps.org.uk/accreditationdownloads.

The Society is licensed by the Science Council to award the title Chartered Scientist (CSci) to Members who are eligible. Completion of a Society-accredited postgraduate programme that confers Chartered Psychologist status will count towards the Science Council’s requirements for the award of Chartered Scientist.

For further information about Membership of the Society, please visit, <http://www.bps.org.uk/membership>. Information about becoming a Chartered Scientist is available at <http://www.bps.org.uk/csci>.

Any queries relating to this report should be directed to pact@bps.org.uk.

Key Outcomes

Following a successful visit to the University of Buckingham, the Society is pleased to confirm the ongoing accreditation of the programmes under review. Therefore, graduates from the programme are deemed to have met the requirements for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the Society (GBC), provided they pass the empirical psychology project and achieve a minimum of a 2:2 overall.

Commendations

1. The tutorial system is highly beneficial to students in supporting their learning; particularly in explicitly developing students' critical thinking skills and communicating psychological concepts effectively.
2. The frequency and quality of contact time between students and staff is commendable. This is achieved through the tutorial teaching model, as well as the personal tutor system, which ensures that students are supported in their personal and academic development.
3. The cohesiveness of the programme team; their approach to managing expansion, and their commitment to enhancement was clearly evident.
4. The student recruitment strategy is very good and mutually beneficial to both the university and potential students.
5. Practical work is embedded across the curriculum and prepares students well for undertaking their own research.
6. The engagement and assessment of ethics beyond research ethics is exemplary.
7. Students are supported in developing both transferable skills and valuable personal characteristics, which they are also able to articulate well.

Conditions of Ongoing Accreditation

There are none.

Recommendations for Further Enhancement

The visiting team wishes to highlight the following areas to which the programmes are encouraged to attend as part of their ongoing development and enhancement.

1. The university should work closely with the Department to develop an action plan that takes account of the specific needs of the psychology provision as it continues to grow, particularly in relation to appropriate physical space, IT and other resources.
2. Opportunities for closer working between the Department and the University's central careers service, for the benefit of both staff and students, should be explored.
3. The range of facilities that are in place to support a variety of staff research and student research projects, as well as the technical resource that is available to support that, should be kept under review, particularly as the cohort size grows.

Important Dates

The education provider is asked to submit the following by **29 September 2017**:

- An action plan outlining its strategies for responding to the recommendations for further enhancement.

The next partnership visit will take place in **2022/23**.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report outlines the key outcomes of the Society's visit to the University of Buckingham. Broadly, these relate to: aspects of good practice for which the programme is commended; aspects of the provision that will need to be reviewed and revised in order to ensure ongoing fulfilment of the Society's standards, and therefore the ongoing accreditation of the programme; and aspects of the provision that will benefit from further consideration as part of the programme's ongoing development and enhancement.
- 1.2. The Society's approach to accreditation is collaborative: we work in partnership with the universities whose programmes we accredit. To that end, this report also includes an overview of any discussions during the course of the visit that may contribute to the improvement of the accreditation process itself, or the services and support that the Society is able to offer its members. We would like to thank all participants in the visit for their important contribution to our work.

2. Commendations for good practice

- 2.1. The university adopts a tutorial teaching model which is highly beneficial to the students. Weekly tutorials for theoretical discussion (in addition to the lectures and seminars) are scheduled for every module. The students felt that the tutorials have been of a consistently high standard. They support students' learning, particularly engaging them with the subject matter in breadth and depth to consolidate their learning. Furthermore, students develop key transferable skills including critical thinking skills, reflection, and building skills in communicating psychological concepts effectively.
- 2.2. The tutorial teaching model also provides quality contact time on every module with a maximum of seven students in each group. In addition, a robust personal tutoring system is in place, ensuring that students are supported in their personal and academic development. Students are assigned a personal tutor and meetings are scheduled at least once a term, covering aspects such as identifying their strengths and weaknesses; a discussion of their career plans; and progress/support against achieving their goals. Members of the programme team get to know their tutees well, particularly because of the weekly tutorials, facilitating them to offer more tailored feedback and support. The students added that the staff have an open door policy and they are always very approachable and helpful – this for some has instilled a great deal of confidence in their own abilities.
- 2.3. Through the course of discussions at the visit, the cohesiveness and collaborative ethos of the programme team was clearly evident. The team has worked well together to think carefully about how to manage expansion in terms of student numbers. The aim is to maintain the quality of contact time between staff and students for tutorials and modules. Modules will be double taught and there will be more optional modules available in line with the research interests and expertise of the Department and new members of staff. The programme team is also clearly committed to enhancement, particularly in relation to employability, student resilience, and overall quality of the student experience.
- 2.4. The student recruitment strategy is very good. It provides the university the opportunity to determine whether candidates would be suitable for the programme, as well as ensuring that students understand its distinct features and gain a flavour of those. The recruitment process involves a selection day/interview, which includes a mock tutorial for applicants to gauge their fit with this teaching model. All members of the programme team and some existing students are also involved in the selection days. The students commented that they were attracted to study at this university due to the small, friendly atmosphere, and the tutorial system, which they experienced throughout the recruitment process; their experience on the programme has indeed lived up to their expectations.
- 2.5. Students engage in practical work, which is formally embedded across the curriculum in both the teaching and assessment. The practical work provides students the opportunity to develop subject-specific skills and prepares them well for undertaking their own research.

- 2.6. The engagement and assessment of ethical principles beyond research ethics is exemplary. The applied modules include an assessment designed to evaluate the students' understanding of ethical dilemmas in practice and consider these against the core ethical principles. With regards to research ethics, this is an integral feature of the programme. Students submit an ethics application with their research reports in the *Research Methods and Statistics* module, ensuring good preparation for their empirical project submission. The students have enjoyed the tasks in the *Multivariate and Statistics* tutorials, whereby they act as a review panel for ethics applications; this has reinforced their understanding of ethical considerations.
- 2.7. Students are supported in developing a range of both transferable skills and valuable personal characteristics. This is achieved through, for example: the tutorials; the variety of assessment methods; and the group work and practical work embedded across the curriculum. Additionally, the personal tutor system and assessment feedback encourages students to think about goal directedness and transferable skills they leave with as graduates. The visiting team was impressed with the way in which the students were able to articulate the skills they had developed.

3. Developmental work

- 3.1. Psychology is an important aspect of the university and the management team plans to grow and establish the Psychology Department further. Growth in student numbers would be accompanied with the need to ensure that there is adequate physical space available for the tutorials to run and for sufficient resources to be available. The university should therefore work closely with the Department to develop an action plan that takes account of the specific needs of the psychology provision as it continues to grow, particularly in relation to appropriate physical space, IT and other resources.
- 3.2. The management team discussed a potential area of development for the programmes in the Department to strengthen links with the University's central careers service. This is in terms of greater subject-specific support for students and to keep staff up to date in relevant careers issues, as well as liaising with external bodies. The visiting team encourages opportunities to be explored for closer working between the Department and the University's central careers service, for the benefit of both staff and students.
- 3.3. Staff research very much links to teaching and the Department is in the process of solidifying staff members' research interests around 3-4 main hubs. Students are able to select a topic for their empirical research project that is of interest to them, provided it is ethical and feasible, although they are also informed of staff members' research interests. Attainment of resources is therefore driven by the research focus of the staff and students, and the teaching. The visiting team was pleased to note that the Psychology Department has been supportive in funding the attainment of teaching and research materials, enabling the team to purchase specialist equipment recently, such as BIOPAC and additional psychological test materials. Whilst the visiting team deemed the current resources underpinning the programmes to be sufficient at present, the management team is recommended to keep under review the range of facilities that are in place to support a variety of staff research and student research projects, as well as the technical resource that is available to support that, as student numbers grow.

4. Feedback to the Society

- 4.1. The management team is considering engaging in the Society's multi-membership scheme. The Partnership and Accreditation Officer will notify the Society's membership team to get in touch.
- 4.2. The Department is planning to seek accreditation for a new MSc Health Psychology programme (to commence in 2018/19). The Partnership and Accreditation Officer will forward the relevant information.

5. Participants

Truly Camies	Year 1, BSc Psychology with Computing
Dr Emily Doe	Lecturer
Myles Farha	Year 1, BSc Psychology
Dr Philip Fine	Senior Lecturer
Dr Kathryn Friedlander	Lecturer
Aneel Singh Gill	Year 2, BSc Psychology
Gillian Hill	Lecturer
Dr Shelly Kemp	Senior Lecturer; Programme Director
Pinny Lamoure	Year 3, BSc Psychology (extended programme)
Kirsty Lowe-Brown	Technician/Demonstrator
Linda Luckhurst	Lecturer
Dr Alan Martin	Head of Department; Sub Dean of School
Anna Martin	Year 1, BSc Psychology
Izel Mehmet	Year 2, BSc Psychology with English Literature
Kieza Pacheco	Year 1, BSc Psychology
Dr Maša Popovac	Lecturer
Priyanjali Ratwatte	Year 2, BSc Psychology
Sharon Salerno	School Administrator
Arun Sivapunniam	Year 2, BSc Psychology
Veronica Stunt	Year 2, BSc Psychology with French

6. Membership of the Visiting Team

Dr Julia Townshend CPsychol	Convenor; Member, Undergraduate Education Committee; University of West London
Dr Lizann Bonnar CPsychol AFBPsS	Member, Undergraduate Education Committee; University of Strathclyde
Lucy Horder	Partnership and Accreditation Manager, The British Psychological Society