

PSYCHOLOGY CONVERSION COURSE

The information provided below is intended to act as a prospective student guide to the Psychology Conversion Course should your application be successful and you decide to register on the course. If you have any queries not answered here please direct them to the course executive officer, psychonv@tcd.ie. We also welcome any suggestions for information you think would be useful to prospective students.

What the Psychology Conversion Course will offer you

As graduates, you have most of the academic skills you need to succeed on the conversion course. Our main objective is to facilitate your entry into the profession of psychology and to train you in the discourse of a new academic discipline. We feel this transfer is best effected via active learning and discussion and to facilitate this much of your teaching will take place in small groups where you are encouraged to be active and collaborative learners.

While some of your classes will be taken with other psychology students, we are the only psychology course still providing very small group academic tutorials to our students. Throughout your two years you will meet with an academic staff member every fortnight in groups of just 3 of your course peers. This module is intended to complement the core programme and to assist you in your introduction to the academic discipline of psychology as a whole.

Our aim is to train our students to be critical consumers and active producers of psychological knowledge. To that end all teaching in the School of Psychology TCD is research-led and delivered by active researchers in the field. You will be encouraged from the outset to get involved with the many research groupings in the School, whether you want to just sit in on research meetings and talks to experience the diversity of psychological research being conducted or to participate more actively as a research assistant.

In short, we aim to provide a rigorous and comprehensive primary training which will inspire you to take the next step towards a career in or using psychology.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I submit my application?

The closing date for applications for entry in September will normally be 31st March each year.

Applicants must apply online at: <https://www.tcd.ie/courses/postgraduate/az/course.php?id=DPGPS-PSYC-2F09>

Please note, applicants will be permitted 5 working days after the deadline of 31st March to upload all prescribed supporting documentation your application. As it can take some time to obtain academic references it would be advisable to contact referees well in advance of the deadline. Your listed referees will be contacted by email and sent a Trinity reference form and a link to upload it directly to your application. Applications that are incomplete or missing any supporting documents after 5 working days will not be rejected but it should be noted that precedence when allocating places on the course will be afforded to those applicants who submitted in entirety on time.

How will my application be assessed?

A strictly limited number of students will be accepted, based on the application form with two academic references and a curriculum vitae. In addition to your primary qualification and references, the following will be taken into account in the selection process: any relevant or cognate postgraduate qualifications; any courses or modules taken in psychology; any work experience, paid or voluntary, in a relevant setting.

Will I be required to attend an interview?

No – entry to the course is based on the completed application form only.

What time commitment does the course demand?

This is a two year full-time course, the equivalent of an undergraduate bachelors programme in psychology. There are up to 16 hours of contact time weekly, i.e., lectures, seminars, labs or tutorials that students must attend each week. These hours are scheduled anytime between 9am – 6pm, Monday – Fridays. While the number of contact hours may seem small, each 5 credit module requires approximately 100 hours of student input time to include class time and assessments.

Can I stay in employment whilst registered on the course?

This is a very demanding course. While someone with very flexible working hours may find it possible to work while attending this course, due to the intense level of academic commitment involved it is not advisable as it will likely impact on your performance as you will have less time to dedicate to your studies.

Can I see a copy of the timetable for the upcoming academic year?

Timetables are produced by central administration for the whole college and are not finalized until shortly before the start of term. It will be sent to all incoming students at that stage.

My primary degree is completely unrelated to psychology; am I eligible to apply?

The Psychology Conversion Course is geared towards graduates who hold degrees in an entirely unrelated area. Applications are welcome from those who hold an honours degree in any discipline.

Can I get credit or exemptions for any psychology modules completed as part of my primary degree?

There is no mechanism for taking account of any psychology modules you may have taken before entry.

Is there a mature student entry route to the course?

No, all applicants apply directly to the course and are assessed equally.

I hold a level 7 ordinary bachelor degree; am I eligible to apply?

Unfortunately not; the minimum entry level requirement is a level 8 honours bachelor degree. For more information with regard to degree levels please visit the National Framework of Qualifications website at www.nfq.ie

I am an international, non-EU student; am I eligible to apply?

Yes, the Graduate Admissions Section of College will view your application and assess whether your degree matches the minimum entry requirement of the course.

Please contact our Global Officer, Erin Paullin, Erin.Paullin@tcd.ie for information.

You will also need to provide proof of English language competency. Please visit the International Office website for more details at <https://www.tcd.ie/study/international/>

I am currently in the final year of my undergraduate degree; am I eligible to apply?

Yes, however if you are offered a place it will be conditional on provision of final year degree results showing achievement of a second class honors.

Can I apply to Trinity for course funding?

There is no funding for postgraduate students on **taught** courses within Trinity College Dublin, but information with regard to external funding sources can be researched at www.studentfinance.ie

Are there any reading lists I could see to get an idea of what is involved?

Each lecturer will provide a full reading list at the outset of their module but we would encourage you to have a look at a general academic psychology textbook before you start. It is very helpful if you have an initial understanding of what is involved in the academic study of psychology. A text we would recommend to you is Passer, M.W., et al. (2009) Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour. McGraw Hill

How many students will attend my lectures?

Classes for the Higher Diploma students range from 3 to as many as 180. As the course is the functional equivalent of the BA you will be covering the same material as the undergraduate students and will attend some lectures with the undergraduate class. Foundation modules can have up to 180 attendees, including students from other disciplines, whereas module options specific to psychology students are attended by far fewer, on average 35. The Higher Diploma class takes seminars and labs for the Research Skills & Methodology and Statistics & Methodology modules on their own, as a class of approximately 15. Your academic tutorial with a staff member will contain no more than 3/4 per group.

How long is the academic year?

Generally teaching term starts early in September and finishes mid-April. Exams taking place mid-December and the end of April and throughout May.

Supplemental exams take place at the end of August.

When will I have to register?

Registration generally takes place in mid-September; you will be required to register online. The Academic Registry issues an **'Invite to Register'** intray message to all new entrants and continuing students eligible to register for the forthcoming academic year through their my.tcd.ie portal.

What is the FYP and when will I need to start working on it?

Each student must undertake an independent research project in their second year under the direct supervision of an academic member of staff. By the end of April of your first year you must have secured agreement from a member of academic staff to supervise your project.

By the very start of your 2nd year you must submit your research proposal and start to prepare an application for ethical approval to the School's Ethics Committee. The project itself is due in early March.

Where can I view module descriptions?

You can access current module descriptions on the course webpage. The handbook for the current year is also available on the course webpage. The handbook for the upcoming year will not be made available until term starts. Please be aware that modules change from year to year and that the module descriptions available are an example of those offered in previous years and are not guaranteed to be available to you. The only modules that will stay the same over the following 2 academic years are the foundation modules; Introduction to Psychology, Cognition, Fundamentals of Neuroscience and Behaviour, Developmental Psychology, Perception, Social Psychology and Psychological Disorder. Also, in each year you must take Research Skills & Methodology and Statistics & Methodology and tutorials.

What have successful graduates of the course progressed onto?

With your now multidisciplinary training and background there is a multitude of options and career paths open to you. Some people choose to use their psychology training to inform and enhance their work as a teacher, member of the Garda Síochána, health care professional, artist, in the business world, and so on. Many people who take this course do so as a first step *en route* to a career in the profession of psychology. Psychology encompasses many different subdisciplines and our conversion course graduates are well placed to progress to further training in any of these: Clinical or Counselling psychology, Educational psychology, Occupational psychology, Forensic psychology, Applied Behaviour Analysis training, Child and Adolescent psychology, Neuroscience, a Masters or PhD by research in the topic of your choice, and so on.

We are delighted each year to welcome many of our graduates back to the School to proceed with their training but with their fully recognised qualification students also go to other universities in Ireland and also to the UK, America and Australia to complete their training.

Introduction to the Course

An Overview of the Course:

Students must complete all of the following foundation modules during the two years of the course:

Introduction to Psychology
Psychological Disorder
Developmental Psychology
Cognition
Fundamentals of Neuroscience and Behaviour
Perception
Social Psychology

Foundation modules not taken in Year 1 will be taken in Year 2. Details of the foundation modules which students are required to take in each year of the course are provided below. In addition, in both Years 1 and 2 students are required to take both the Statistics & Methodology (SaM) module and the Research Skills & Methodology (RSaM) module. Students in Year 2 are required to carry out an empirical investigation of a psychological topic or question, under the supervision of a member of the academic staff in the School.

What are the Course Requirements?

The Psychology Conversion Course is a two-year full-time course based on lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes and research project. Students will cover the following areas of psychology, up to and including advanced level, as required by the professional accreditation body: Biological basis of behaviour; Cognitive psychology; Research design, quantitative & qualitative methods; Developmental and lifespan psychology; Social psychology; Personality and individual differences. Students will also attend the Statistics & Methodology and Research Skills & Methodology modules. In addition, students can attend all School Research Seminars, Research Communication Classes, and Research Stream Talks & Meetings. Students will also attend tutorials throughout the year.

Research Project: Each student is required to carry out an empirical investigation of a psychological topic or question, under the supervision of a member of the academic staff, in the second year of the course. The results of this independent investigation must be written up in the prescribed format and submitted on or before the Monday of week 8 of Hilary Term in the second year. The maximum length for the project is set at 6,000 words, 2,000 of which must be allocated to the introduction. This deadline is treated the same as deadlines for a written examination and projects submitted after the due date will not be examined.

What do I need to achieve to successfully pass years 1 and 2?

Statistics & Methodology (SaM) 1 and Research Skills and Methodology (RSaM) 1

For the Statistics & Methodology 1 and Research Skills and Methodology 1 modules, attendance at all labs and seminars (generically referred to as practicals) is compulsory and rolls are taken. Failure to attend class without medical certification or equivalent explanation will result in the student being recorded as absent. If a student is absent for more than 3 of the practical classes in either module they will be returned as nonsatisfactory. Please note that it is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his or her presence has been recorded on the roll.

The assessment for Statistics & Methodology (SaM) 1 and Research Skills and Methodology (RSaM) 1 is made up of continuous assessment examinations and coursework. If on a continuous assessment exam a student does not achieve at least the pass mark of 40% a re-sit must be taken. The re-sit will only be eligible for a maximum mark of 40%. A student will automatically fail the Statistics & Methodology 1 and Research Skills and Methodology 1 modules if the maximum mark achieved in an exam or its re-sit is less than 35%. An average of 40% on the examination component alone of the assessment schedule is required to obtain an overall pass mark for the practical elements.

Statistics and Methodology (SaM) 2 & Research Skills and Methodology (RSaM) 2

For both of the above named modules attendance at all labs and seminars (generically referred to as practicals) is compulsory and rolls are taken. Failure to attend class without medical certification or equivalent explanation will result in the student being recorded as absent. If a student is absent for more than 2 of the 11 practical classes which run in both Michaelmas and Hilary term s/he will be returned as non-satisfactory. Please note that it is the responsibility of each student to ensure that his or her presence has been recorded on the roll at the start of each class.

The assessment for SaM2 is comprised solely of continuous assessment examinations. If

on any one of these exams a student does not achieve at least the pass mark of 40% a re-sit must be taken. The re-sit will be the same paper taken approximately 1 week after the initial sitting and will only be eligible for a maximum mark of 40%. A student will automatically fail the SaM2 course if the maximum mark achieved in an exam or its resit is less than 35%. The assessment for (RSaM) 2 is comprised of coursework and the Journal Club exam.

Annual assessment

Year 1

Year 1 is comprised of 10 modules, 8 of which are weighted at 5 ECTS each while SaMI and RSaMI are allocated 10 ECTS. Therefore, SaMI and RSaMI contribute 16.67% to the overall assessment total and the other 8 modules contribute 8.33% each. There will be seven examination papers in Semester 1 and Semester 2, one for each core foundation module and one for each of the advanced modules. Some papers, for example, Introduction to Psychology and Psychological Disorder, will be in a multiple-choice format. RSaMI and SaMI will be assessed by continuous assessment. Tutorial work will also be assessed by continuous assessment.

The General Academic Regulations, as set out in the University Calendar, apply to all assessments. A student must take modules totalling 60 ECTS credits in each year, and must complete all assessments in all modules. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that he/she is taking exactly 60 credits per year. The Pass mark is 40%.

Further information can be found in the handbook.

Assessment during the Year

A student must complete **all** assessment elements (if any) in each module – e.g., essays, laboratory work, reports, etc.

At Annual Examinations

A student must sit examinations in all modules that have an examination as an assessment element.

Progression Regulations at Annual Assessment Stage

(i) In order to progress to the next year of the course, a student must: (a) Pass all modules and earn 60 credits OR (b) Pass by compensation as explained below. If a student passes by compensation, he/she earns 60 credits for the year.

(ii) A student passing by either of the above methods is given an overall mark and grade in accordance with the institutional marking scale.

(iii) A student who does not pass by either of the two methods (i) above is required to complete supplemental assessment(s) (e.g. examinations/coursework) in **all failed modules**, that is, in all modules for which a module mark of at least 40% has not been achieved. This includes failed modules that could have been passed by compensation if the overall number of failures had been less.

Supplemental Assessment

Supplemental assessment includes sitting supplemental examinations and/or completing other supplemental assessments, such as essays, reports, etc.

The assessment element(s) for a module at the supplemental assessment will be the same as the annual session. That is, only the failed component of a module: the continuous

assessment, examination or both, needs to be completed as a supplemental requirement.

Marks for Supplemental Assessment of Modules

The supplemental mark for a module depends on the supplemental assessment used.

The mark may be:

- a - The mark for re-assessed element(s) added to the annual mark(s) for other element(s) (if any).
- b - The mark for the supplemental examination.
- c - The combined marks for the new assessment elements.

Overall Mark at Supplemental Assessment Stage

The marks for modules passed at the Annual Assessment Stage are considered together with the marks for modules re-assessed at the Supplemental Assessment Stage. The overall mark for a student is the weighted average of these module marks, using the ECTS credit rating for the weighting of each module.

Progression Regulations at Supplemental Assessment Stage

In order to progress to the next year of the course, a student must: Pass all modules and earn 60 credits or pass by compensation as explained below. If a student passes by compensation, he/she earns 60 credits for the year. A student who has not passed after either the annual or supplemental session is required to repeat the year in full.

Compensation Regulations at Annual and Supplemental Assessment Stages

Students must pass modules totalling at least 50 ECTS credits and have an overall average mark of 40%. If a student fails modules totalling a maximum of 10 ECTS credits with a mark at a “compensatable” level (35% as detailed below), the student will be permitted to pass those modules by compensation and earn the ECTS credits. Any module(s) may be identified as “non-compensatable” – i.e., a student must pass the module, and may not fail it and pass by compensation.

In order to pass by compensation a student must:

- a) Have an overall result of at least 40%
- b) AND either i) Pass modules totalling 50 credits, and get a minimum mark of 35% in the failed module OR ii) Pass modules totalling 50 credits, and get a minimum mark of 35% in the failed module(s) – either one 10-credit module or two 5-credit modules.

Foundation Modules: Sophister Modules:

Exam = 100% Essay = 32%

Exam = 68%

Annual assessment

Year 2

Year 2 is comprised of seven modules (each of which contribute 10% to the overall result for the year) and the final year project (which contributes 30%). There will be examination papers in Semester 1 and Semester 2, one for each core foundation module and one for each of the advanced option modules. SaMII and RSaMII and the academic skills tutorials will be assessed by continuous assessment. The pass mark for each

assessment/examination component and each module is 40%.

Modules are weighted according to their credit values. The marks from each module will be added together, and an overall pass grade (40%) must be achieved for a student to be awarded the Psychology Conversion Course.

The General Academic Regulations, as set out in the University Calendar, apply to all assessments. A student must take modules totalling 60 ECTS credits in the second year, and must complete all assessments in all modules. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that he/she is taking exactly 60 credits per year. The Pass mark is 40%.

Assessment during the Year

A student must complete assessment elements (if any) in each module – e.g., essays, laboratory work, reports, etc.

Final Examinations (Annual session)

A student must sit examinations in all modules that have an examination as an assessment element.

Regulations at Final Assessment Stage

- In order to pass at the Final Assessment Stage, a student must: a) Pass all modules and earn 60 credits OR b) Pass by compensation or pass by aggregation, as explained below. If a student passes by compensation or aggregation, he/she earns 60 credits for the year.
- A student passing by either of the above methods is given an overall mark and grade in accordance with the institutional marking scale.

Passing by Compensation at Final Assessment Stage

Any module(s) may be identified as “non-compensatable” – i.e., a student must pass the module, and may not fail it and pass by compensation.

In order to pass by compensation a student must: a) Have an overall mark of at least 40%, and b) Pass outright modules totalling at least 40 credits, and c) Get a minimum mark of 35% in each failed module, up to a maximum of 10 credits