

PSYCHOLOGY

At Stirling, we conduct high quality, internationally recognised research which falls under three main themes - Health and Behaviour Change, Behaviour and Evolution, and Cognition in Complex Environments.

Our academic staff are internationally leading researchers in their own fields of interest. In the Research Excellence Framework 2021, we ranked 2nd in Scotland for research impact in Psychology. 100% of our research impact and environment, and 87% of our overall research in Psychology is classed as world leading or internationally excellent.

We put forward thinking ideas and practical experience at the core of your studies and we make sure our courses are of the highest industry standard through accreditation with the British Psychological Society.

Psychology students at Stirling aim to understand mind and behaviour in rich, complex, real-world physical and social environments. Our teaching is research-led, and we have key societal impact in areas such as improving face recognition, welfare of captive animals, and human health and wellbeing.

RESEARCH COURSES

Research excellence underpins all we do. As part of our research community, you will contribute innovative, practical and applied solutions to the challenges facing society today.

We offer the following research postgraduate degrees:

- Professional Doctorate Health Psychology

We offer research options, including PhDs, in the following areas:

- Animal behaviour
- Animal intelligence
- Animal social learning
- Cognitive and behavioural neuroscience
- Developmental psychology
- Evolutionary psychology
- Evolution of perception and behaviour
- Face research
- Health psychology
- Human–animal interaction
- Mobile cognition
- Social psychology

100% of our research impact and environment, and 87% of our overall research in Psychology is classed as world-leading or internationally excellent

REF 2021

Many of our courses offer multiple start dates, please check course webpages for details.



Full-time course



Part-time course



To find out more about identifying a supervisor and submitting a research proposal, visit: stir.ac.uk/research

AUTISM RESEARCH



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition, whereby autistic people experience and perceive the world differently to non-autistic people.

Autistic individuals experience a constellation of different strengths and challenges, typically characterised by differences within social communication and social interaction, sensory sensitivities, focused interests and repetitive behaviours. Autism research has the potential to help us better understand and support autistic people and their families.

MSc Autism Research is a unique course designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of both psychological research methods and current topics in autism research. You will learn about key areas of theory, research and ethical practices and this course will give you the skills and knowledge needed to conduct autism research, focused on the priorities of the autistic community.

You will undertake a practical placement in an autism-relevant context, identifying areas where you would like to enhance your experiences and skills. Past placements have included working with autism researchers across the UK, helping autism charities with policy, doing support work with autistic people, or gaining experience with social enterprises related to autism.

CORE MODULES

- Autism Research
- Psychological Research Methods I and II
- Key Skills for Psychology Researchers
- Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Placement
- Dissertation

CAREER PROSPECTS

The Autism Research course is designed for those going on to do further research in autism, or as the foundation for a career as an autism professional. Students who complete this Masters may also be eligible to apply for an ESRC 1+3 PhD studentship.

Course Starts: September



HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Our Masters course meets the British Psychological Society's requirements for Stage 1 training in Health Psychology.

Health psychology is the study of psychological and behavioural processes in health, illness and healthcare. The course is designed to equip you with the skills required to support people dealing with the psychological and emotional aspects of health and illness, as well as supporting people who have long-term conditions.

Health psychologists promote healthier lifestyles and try to find ways to encourage people to improve their health and also to improve the healthcare system.

Our Masters course has an experiential focus and emphasises the application of health psychology to real-world settings. The course is also accredited by the British Psychological Society meaning that we provide the best training possible to future health psychologists.

We are proud that our MSc Health Psychology course achieved 100% overall student satisfaction in the latest Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.



CORE MODULES

- Perspectives in Health Psychology
- Applications of Health Psychology: Communication, Systems and Context
- Qualitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Quantitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Individual, Social and Cultural Differences
- Approaches to Illness, Disability and Coping
- Dissertation

CAREER PROSPECTS

Our Masters provides you with the first stage of professional training towards becoming a registered Health Psychologist.

Health Psychologists are employed in various settings, such as:

- Rehabilitation programmes (e.g. for patients with coronary heart disease)
- Working with patients and carers in palliative care
- Working with primary health care teams in the community
- Influencing health behaviours (e.g. in smoking cessation programmes, weight reduction, or sexual health education)
- Health promotion in educational or industrial settings

Course Starts: September



HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION



Campus based
MA, MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Humans share this planet with other animals and these interactions are at the core of our everyday lives.

On this Masters in Human-Animal Interaction you will learn interdisciplinary approaches and a diverse range of methods used to research our relationships with other species. The course covers a broad range of topics and looks at human-animal interactions across a wide range of contexts - from pet owning to animal-assisted interventions, zoos, farms and conservation.

You will learn about the importance of both human and animal behaviour in shaping human-animal interaction, and the associated ethical issues, as well as learning to critically evaluate methods for measuring attitudes, interactions and their outcomes.

You will carry out a practical placement and research project to get direct experience tailored to your individual career goals, learning from recognised experts in this field.

You will have the opportunity to interact with Paws for Progress, a Dog Training Rehabilitation Programme hosted by the Psychology Division, which offers vocational, educational and therapeutic benefits to the human participants, improving their future outcomes. We also provide a range of networking opportunities that will enable students to interact with a range of industry professionals and research scientists.

CORE MODULES

- Human-Animal Interactions
- Key Skills for Psychology Researchers
- Psychological Research Methods I and II
- Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research (MSc)
- Qualitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research (MA)
- Research Placement
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

The course is designed for those going on to do further research in the field of human-animal interaction. It would also suit those who want to pursue careers where it would be useful to understand the theoretical and practical aspects of this field.

Course Starts: September



PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

The Psychological Research Methods course provides broad training in the fundamentals of psychological science – the modern approach to studying mind and behaviour.

This course combines training in psychological theory with practical research development, and provides a thorough introduction to quantitative and qualitative research, the analysis and interpretation of data, and a critical, sceptical approach to psychological science. The unique feature of this course is its flexibility – you can tailor your course to suit your specialist interest.

The specialist pathways aim to enhance your understanding of different methods and perspectives within the field of psychology. Opportunities for practical hands-on skills development are built in, ranging from low-tech observational assessment to high-tech eye-tracking.

You will meet the growing sector demand for a good understanding of human behaviour, the ability to interpret and analyse complex forms of data and communicate your ideas clearly with others.

CORE MODULES

- Psychological Research Methods (General)
- Psychological Research Methods I and II
- Qualitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Quantitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Key Skills for Psychology Researchers
- Research Placement
- Dissertation

PATHWAYS

You can opt to specialise in one of the following pathways:

- Child Development
- Cognition and Neuropsychology
- Evolutionary Psychology
- Perception and Action

CAREER PROSPECTS

This course is designed as a springboard for a career in psychological research and is ideal if you want to pursue a PhD in psychology. Graduates are also well placed for careers in clinical and health psychology, educational psychology and teaching, human resource management and personnel.

Course Starts: September
Flexible pathways available



PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY IN PRIMARY CARE



Campus based (Stirling and Dundee)
MSc

Our Masters course provides expert training in delivering evidence-based psychological therapies to adults in primary care.

Delivered jointly by the University of Stirling and the University of Dundee, it is designed by NHS professionals and clinical academics to give graduates the clinical and professional skills needed to work as a Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology within the NHS.

On completion of the course, with agreed and appropriate supervision as well as continuing professional development, you will be competent in the assessment and treatment of adult patients suffering from a range of common mental health disorders typically presenting in primary care settings.

NHS placements are embedded within the course, on average you will be working on placement three days and studying two days each week. One week each month is a teaching week where you will be expected to attend a combination of in-person and online teaching sessions.

CORE MODULES

- Assessment, Diagnosis and Formulation
- Principles and Methods of Psychological Therapy
- Common Mental Health Disorders in Primary Care
- Professional and Ethical Issues
- Research, Evaluation and Outcome
- Dissertation

CAREER PROSPECTS

This is a professional training course designed to give you both the clinical and professional skills to work competently in a modern NHS environment as a Clinical Associate in Applied Psychology (CAAP). Recent graduates have also gone on to work in other clinically related posts in both the private sector and public sector across the UK.

Applicants to this course simultaneously apply for employment with the NHS and, if accepted, their tuition fees are paid by NHS Education for Scotland.

Course Starts: January



PSYCHOLOGY (CONVERSION COURSE)



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

This is an intensive Masters course covering the basics of psychology, designed for students who already have a degree in another subject but want to 'convert' to Psychology.

This course provides in-depth and accelerated training in the basics of psychology where you will learn the key concepts and core knowledge of psychology, and also develop your research skills with our specifically designed modules in research methods.

The course includes a four-week placement to broaden your practical experience as well as a six-month independent empirical research project.

Our Masters course is accredited by the British Psychological Society. After completing the course, you will be eligible to apply for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society on a graduate basis, which is the first step towards becoming a Chartered Psychologist.



CORE MODULES

- Cognition and the Human Brain
- Qualitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Quantitative Analysis Methods in Psychological Research
- Practical Placement (four weeks)
- The Development of the Self in the Social World
- Dissertation

CAREER PROSPECTS

This course provides a pathway for graduates who wish to further their studies and develop careers in clinical and health psychology, educational psychology and teaching, and human resources management. The skills you gain are also readily transferable to other careers, as you will leave able to analyse complex forms of data and communicate ideas clearly to others, with a good understanding of human behaviour.

Course Starts: September





**PROFESSOR PAUL
DUDCHENKO**
**HEAD OF DIVISION
OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Paul is a behavioral neuroscientist interested in the brain areas necessary for memory and spatial cognition. His book, *Why People Get Lost*, provides an overview of what is known about how people and animals navigate, and what brain regions are critical for this ability.

MIND OVER MATTER

Why do you think the study of psychology has become so important in recent years?

When we think about the challenges we face today – public health, the environment, and societal cohesion – the solutions lie in changing human behaviour. It is true, of course, technology can and does help us. However, many solutions require us to make different choices. This is psychology. This field also seeks to understand the minds of other animals, in particular how evolutionary pressure shapes cognitive development.

Several courses within the Psychology Division at Stirling are accredited by The British Psychological Society. What does this mean and how does it benefit students?

This accreditation ensures that you will receive a high-quality, research-based education, and that you will be equipped to pursue further professional study (e.g. a PhD) in the field should you so desire.

What are the benefits of studying a psychology course at Stirling?

At Stirling, you will conduct a research project which is guided by staff members who are active researchers. We have dedicated facilities for studying child development, health psychology, perception and brain activity. You will also have the opportunity to develop your skills in data analysis.

Stirling has its own Psychology Kindergarten on site. How does this help Masters students in their study?

One of the unique features of Stirling is its on-site Kindergarten. This facility, within the Psychology Division, allows Masters students interested in cognitive development to work with children directly.

What are the main career pathways for psychology graduates?

Psychology is a broad field and its study will prepare you to think critically about human and animal

behaviour, conduct research and analyse data. These skills are well suited for careers in health-care, research and counselling settings.

What advice would you give to students thinking about pursuing a degree, and future career, in Psychology?

My advice is to be curious. You should ask yourself what areas of psychology are of particular interest to you. For me, it was the brain, but for others it could be social interactions or child development. I would then suggest reading biographies and first-person accounts of those working in your area of interest. In your studies, if you maintain your curiosity you will do well.