

**College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies**

**Updated Calendar Entry**

**Doctor of Psychological Science (Clinical Psychology)**

**Summary Page**

<b>College</b>	College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies
<b>School in which the programme is primarily located</b>	School of Psychology
<b>Programme Title (in full)</b>	Doctor of Psychological Science (Clinical Psychology)
<b>Course Instance</b>	1DY1
<b>Sub-awards (where applicable)</b>	N/A
<b>Proposed for CAO or CRM entry</b>	Yes
<b>Award type (Tick as applicable)</b>	Major
<b>Award Level (NQF)</b>	Level 10
<b>Programme Directors</b>	Dr John Bogue
<b>Mode of Study (Tick as applicable)</b>	Full-time
<b>Programme Duration</b>	3 years
<b>Start Date</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Programme ECTS (Total)</b>	270 ECTS

## Calendar Entry

### Programme Title

Doctor of Psychological Science (Clinical Psychology)

### Introduction

The Doctor of Psychological Science (Clinical Psychology)<sup>1</sup> is a professional doctorate programme that provides professional training in clinical psychology in accordance with the accreditation standards of the Psychological Society of Ireland and of the British Psychological Society. The programme involves full-time study for three calendar years, and is provided in partnership with clinical psychology services in the Health Services Executive (HSE) and other agencies. The HSE provides the clinical practice placements for the programme and oversees the supervision of the students while on these placements. Each student is offered a contract of employment for 3 years as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist with the HSE or other healthcare organisations and 60% of their fee will be paid by the HSE.

The programme structure is based on the scientist-practitioner model, which requires that professional psychologists should be knowledgeable in both research and clinical practice, and provides students with an integrated education and advanced training in the academic, practical and research aspects of clinical psychology, drawing on a variety of theoretical orientations, particularly the cognitive-behavioural approach.

The programme is delivered over three years (weighted @90 ECTS per year) through a combination of Taught Modules; Supervised Clinical Practice in areas such as adult clinical psychology, child and adolescent clinical psychology and intellectual disabilities; and a Research Project in a relevant clinical area. The supervised clinical practise placements shall normally be completed over the three years of the programme, as follows:

- Two Clinical Practice Modules weighted at 30 ECTS each in Year 1 of the programme.
- Two Clinical Practice Modules weighted at 30 ECTS each in Year 2 of the programme.
- Two Clinical Practice Modules weighted at 10 ECTS each in Year 3 of the programme.

### Aims and Objectives of the Programme

The overall objective of the programme is to produce competent and capable staff grade clinical psychologists to work in the Irish health service and provide a solid foundation for subsequent specialisation through continuing professional development (CPD). The programme particularly emphasises to trainees the need to

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<sup>1</sup> DPsychSc (Clinical Psychology) (1DY1)

have an on-going programme of post-qualification CPD to enable more specialist skills to develop in a chosen area and to ensure that they are aware and understand their ethical and legal responsibilities in a clinical settings.

Specific aims of the programme are to:

### ***Clinical***

- Train Clinical Psychologists to work in an applied clinical setting and an appropriate theoretical context, in a variety of roles and settings and with a variety of client groups in the Irish health service at a Staff Grade level in the profession.
- Be responsive to the needs of the Health Service in terms of clinical psychology training.
- Be responsive to the needs of the profession of clinical psychology and to developments in the profession of clinical psychology in terms of the content and structure of the training programme.

### ***Academic***

- Provide a broad theoretical and academic knowledge base across a range of core competencies and clinical specialist areas.
- Provide opportunities to explore and increase trainees' understanding of theory-practice links.
- Develop good oral and written communication skills as required for the practice of clinical psychology.

### ***Research***

- Provide research and evaluation training to enable the clinical psychologist to practice within the evidence-based environment of the health service.
- Promote an appreciation of the importance of ongoing service-based research and to provide the requisite skills and confidence to enable trainees to conduct research in the clinical setting.

### ***Professional***

- Promote the personal and professional development of trainees.
- Promote the development and adherence to a high level of ethical and professional responsibility in trainees.

### ***Organisational***

- Develop in trainees an understanding of the broad social, cultural, political and organisational context in which clinical psychologists and the health service operate.

Students are expected to have an awareness of issues pertaining to minority groups and the clinical practice implications arising from same to ensure that services are optimally and sensitively orientated towards such clients. They are also required to conduct themselves at all times in a manner fully consistent with the values espoused in the Code of Ethics of the Psychological Society of Ireland.

## **Learning Outcomes for the Programme**

On the successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the literature pertaining to a range of psychological models across the life-span and in varying contexts.
- Interpret theory-practice links with regard to psychological assessment, formulation and intervention.
- Recognise the importance of personal and professional development and the need to develop an ethical and professional practice in accordance with the PSI Code of Ethics.
- Practice the skills and competencies acquired and developed, within the evidence based environment of the HSE.
- Apply critical and reflective skills with regard to clinical practice and the contexts within which health care is provided.
- Analyse organisational issues and the socio-cultural and political contexts in which clinical psychology and health services operate.

## **Programme Content**

### ***Academic Modules***

The academic programme includes core modules required for accreditation, as well as other courses, designed to enable students to be effective practitioners in a variety of clinical settings. The modules cover the following areas:

- Adult mental health
- Clinical child psychology
- The psychology of learning disability
- Neuropsychology
- Health psychology
- Substance abuse
- Professional issues (including ethical and legal issues)
- Methods of psychological research

### ***Practice Placement***

Formal training in relevant clinical skills will be provided prior to placements. Further clinical training, as well as the development of consultation and presentation skills, will be provided by means of lectures, seminars, workshops and demonstrations

throughout the programme. These will be delivered by experienced practitioners as well as by University staff.

Clinical competence is developed in six placements over the three years of the programme. The placements provide trainees with experience of clinical psychology practice under the supervision of experienced clinical psychologists. All students will have placements in mental health settings working with both child and adult clients, and in services for people with learning disability. Other placements shall include services for elderly people, rehabilitation services, services for people with acquired brain injury, services for people with addictions, and appropriate settings in general hospitals. A key aspect of the placement experience will be the development of personal awareness and interpersonal sensitivity.

### **Research Projects**

The programme will develop students' research skills so that, on qualifying as clinical psychologists, they will have both the competence and confidence to undertake clinical research in professional settings and take a generally critical approach to their professional work. Students will complete a dissertation in the final year of the programme in addition to small-scale research projects completed in Years 1 and 2. The dissertation will comprise of a substantial project of empirical research on an approved clinically-relevant topic.

### **Overall Structure of the Programme**

The modules for the programmes are comprised of 270 ECTS delivered at 90 ECTS per year over three years, as outlined below.

<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>ECTS</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Core/Optional</b>
<b>YEAR 1</b>				
PS6143	Theoretical Issues 1	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6142	Research Methods 1	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6140	Clinical Practice 1	30	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6141	Clinical Practice 2	30	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6139	Report of Clinical Activity 1	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
<b>YEAR 2</b>				
PS6148	Research Methods 2	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6147	Theoretical Issues 2	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6145	Clinical Practice 3	30	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6146	Clinical Practice 4	30	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6144	Report of Clinical Activity 2	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
<b>YEAR 3</b>				
PS6153	Theoretical Issues 3	5	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6149	Report of Clinical Practice Activity 3	5	Sem 1 & 2	Core

PS6150	Report of Clinical Activity 4	5	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6151	Clinical Practice 5	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6152	Clinical Practice 6	10	Sem 1 & 2	Core
PS6125	Research Methods 3 and Thesis	55	Sem 1 & 2	Core

These modules are delivered in six academic blocks, a dedicated thesis write-up block, and within mid-placement teaching blocks, as outlined below<sup>2</sup>.

First Year	Second Year	Third Year
<b>Academic Block 1</b> <b>Programme and HSE Induction</b> <b>Child and Adolescent Psychology</b> 9 Weeks (August/September to early November) Child and Adolescent ID Introduction to Research Methods and Skills (focus on quantitative research skills training) Placement Preparation	<b>Academic Block 3</b> <b>Adult Clinical Psychology</b> 6 Weeks (August/September to mid-October) Qualitative research skills training and Systematic Review Training Thesis proposal preparation seminars including methodology and design Adult ID Placement Preparation	<b>Academic Block 5</b> <b>Life-span Disability</b> (Approx. last two weeks of September). Advanced Issues in disability Research time for thesis write up (Primarily)
<b>Child &amp; adolescent clinical psychology placement</b> (Commences approximately early November and runs to end of August)	<b>Adult clinical psychology placement</b> (Commences mid-October and runs to end of April).	<b>Life-span Disability Psychology Placement continues in Year 3</b> (From approx. start October to 3rd week in January).
<b>Academic Block 2</b> <b>Child and Adolescent Psychology</b> (3 weeks from approximately early May) Advanced issues in Child and Adolescent Psychology PPD Research Methods Skills Child and Adolescent ID	<b>Academic Block 4</b> <b>Life-span Disability</b> (4 weeks of May of Year 2). Intellectual Disability Advanced Research Methods, Statistics and Design Thesis Preparation Placement Preparation	<b>Academic Block 6</b> <b>Advanced Issues (incl. Older Adults and Clinical Neuropsychology) and Thesis Write Up</b> (5 Weeks – January February) Neuropsychology & Older Adults Academic Programme Professional & Service Issues Forensic Psychology topics Advanced Clinical Psychology Academic Programme. Research and data analysis seminars pertaining to theses. Placement Preparation
<b>Child &amp; adolescent clinical psychology placement</b> (Continues to August of Year 1)	<b>Life-span disability psychology placement</b>	<b>Advanced Placement</b> (End of February to end of Training)

<sup>2</sup> This overview is for guidance only and may be subject to revision. Where assignments are due on a Monday and Monday is a Bank Holiday, the submission is on the next working day.

	<i>(Commences and runs from approx. June to September)</i>	NOTE: THESIS WRITING BLOCK RUNS FOR 2 weeks in MAY.
<b>Assignments In Year 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay - Child &amp; adolescent clinical psychology.</li> <li>• Quantitative Small Scale Research Project</li> <li>• Case study on child &amp; adolescent clinical psychology.</li> </ul>	<b>Assignments In Year 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay - Adult clinical psychology</li> <li>• Qualitative Small Scale Research Project or Systematic Review</li> <li>• Case study in adult clinical psychology</li> <li>• Essay - llife-span disability clinical psychology</li> </ul>	<b>Assignments In Year 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study in Life-span Disability (January)</li> <li>• Major Thesis (submission date: Monday in May)</li> <li>• Publication (July)</li> <li>• Case study with self-reflective theme</li> </ul>

### Assessment and Progression

All modules and the overall degree award is graded as PASS/FAIL on the following basis:

- Pass: 50% or above
- Fail: 49% or below

Overall performance is evaluated on the basis of a research dissertation, and a portfolio composed of: extended essays; reports on small-scale research projects; clinical case studies; and records of clinical placements. The dissertation, portfolio, and other relevant experience gained by the students, will be the subject of an oral examination by the External and Internal Examiners at the end of the programme.

Performance in the Clinical Placement modules will be assessed based on the report of the Placement Supervisor, taking into account the overall progress of the student on the programme and any exceptional or mitigating circumstances pertaining to that placement.

The extended essays will include three core placement essays (Child, Adult, and Lifespan Disability) not exceeding 4,000 words excluding references and appendices. The small scale research projects will comprise of one quantitative service-based research project (not exceeding 3,000 words excluding references and appendices) and one qualitative service-based research project or Systematic Review (not exceeding 4,000 words excluding references and appendices).

The Research Project (Thesis + Publication) shall be comprised of an Introduction (Section A), Paper for Publication (Section B) and Extended Discussion (Section C) as set out in the *Guidelines for Completing the D.Psych.Sc Thesis (Appendix 1)*. Trainees are required to ensure that all research conducted during their training receives ethical approval before commencing field-research/data collection. Ethical approval for all research projects must be obtained from the School Research Ethics Committee. Training on research ethics is provided in Academic Block 1, of Year 1.

Candidates will be required to attend for a viva voce examination with an external examiner and internal examiners for the programme. The internal examiner must not be the candidate's research supervisor. At the viva voce, candidates will be required to answer any questions concerning their thesis raised by the examiners. After the viva voce, the examiners record their agreed recommendations regarding the thesis in the Examination of Thesis Report. Such recommendations may stipulate that a candidate is required to make changes to their thesis for further consideration by the internal examiner solely or by the internal and external examiner jointly.

### **Role of the External Examiners**

The External Examiners appointed for the programme have responsibility for reviewing all aspects of the programme, and functioning as External Examiner for the viva voce examination. All External Examiners are members of the Programme Board of Examiners (BoE). External Examiners are appointed by the Standing Committee of the University's Academic Council following nomination by the Head of School in consultation with the Programme Director.

The External Examiners review samples of academic work and review the marking systems and criteria applied by members of the Programme Team across all areas of the Programme. The guiding principle is that the External Examiner must have enough evidence to determine that the internal marking is of an appropriate standard and is consistent. The External Examiners will normally see any work that has been failed or is a borderline fail and any assignments with discrepant marking. The External Examiners may also review random samples of submitted work and the grades that have been awarded to them. The External Examiners also assess the research theses in conjunction with an Internal Examiner, usually another staff member from the School of Psychology. The External Examiners may choose to participate in a face-to-face annual appraisal of a student if they decide that it is necessary.

### **Viva Voce**

The External Examiner is responsible for conducting the viva voce examination in conjunction with an Internal Examiner, usually another staff member from the School of Psychology. The thesis is the single largest piece of work submitted for the DPsychSc (Clinical Psychology), with an ECTS weight of 55/270, or 20% of the total programme. The thesis is graded as Pass (>50%) or Fail (<50%), but no quantitative score or percentage is recorded, only descriptive labels are used. These are:

**Pass** - outright pass with no corrections and no requirement for revision.

**Pass with minor editorial corrections** - mainly typographical, stylistic, or other minor edits. Reviewed by Internal Examiner only. Must be resubmitted within one month.



**Pass with stated minor revisions** - specified but circumscribed revisions which may include, for example, significant typographical editing, methodological clarification, additional minor data analysis, or additional conceptual elaboration. Reviewed by internal examiner only. Must be resubmitted within two months.

**Pass with revisions** – revisions are required that may include, for instance, the addition of new content, further data analysis, rewriting or restructuring of content and/or further consideration of the findings of the research. The corrections may be reviewed by the external or internal examiner. The revised manuscript must be submitted within three months.

**Refer - major revisions required** - Substantial deficiencies or weaknesses identified requiring major revisions - may include major editing and correcting, the insertion of substantial amounts of additional information, collection of additional data, additional data analysis, or radical reinterpretation of the findings of the study. The thesis may be re-examined by the extern and the intern. The examiners may also require that the candidate sit a second viva examination. Must be resubmitted within twelve months but a shorter time may be specified by the examiners.

**Fail** - outright fail where the examiners believe the thesis contains such serious flaws or deficiencies that revision and resubmission are not considered viable.

## **Progression**

All elements of the programme must be passed in order for the candidate to be deemed to have passed overall.

In the event that a failure rating is given to a written assignment, the following procedure for resubmission will be followed:

- The candidate will be required either to rewrite the assignment or to present new material for assessment by a specified date, and as determined by the programme team. Such new material must be on a topic from the same core area, and the topic/title will be determined by the programme team.
- Only one re-submission is permitted per assignment, and failure of a re-submission means that the trainee must repeat that module the following year.
- The candidate will not be allowed to continue with the programme if he or she fails more than two assignments in any given year of the programme, or more than three assignments in total over the course of training (either first submissions or re-submissions).

All placements must be passed in order to proceed with the Programme. Trainees may be allowed to repeat one placement over the course of training. If the placement is passed on repeat, the trainee will be allowed to progress on the Programme. The repeat placement may be with the same supervisor or with another supervisor working within the same clinical speciality. Failure of more than one placement, or failure of a repeat placement, will ordinarily mean failure of the Programme.

Where a placement assesses core clinical competencies (e.g. Clinical Placement 1 (Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology Placement)), and that placement is failed, then the student will immediately on notification of failure commence repeat of that placement. If the repeat placement is subsequently failed, then this will ordinarily mean failure of the programme. If it is passed, then the advanced competencies placement (e.g., Clinical Placement 2 (Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology Placement)) may be deferred to the end of training to allow the student remain in sync with their cohort. Where a placement assessed more advanced competencies (e.g., Clinical Placement 2), and this is failed, then this will ordinarily mean the student repeats this placement at the end of Year 3 of training.

Where a module or placement is incomplete (for example, due to a leave of absence or maternity leave), or failed, the module or placement, must be successfully completed by the end of training. Completion of an incomplete, postponed or failed module subsequent to the completion of their 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year will be subject to a training extension being granted by the HSE to the student in question<sup>3</sup>. In such cases students shall register for the 3DY1R Course Instance and will be charged a repeat fee as appropriate. The incomplete or failed module must be passed before the student's results can be presented to the final exam board.

### **Professional and Ethical Conduct**

Where a serious breach of professional or ethical conduct occurs in any area of the Programme, a trainee will not be allowed to remain on the Programme. In considering serious professional or ethical misconduct, the Board of Examiners will draw on the Code of Professional Ethics (PSI, 2011) and the University of Galway Student Code of Conduct ([www.universityofgalway.ie/codeofconduct/](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/codeofconduct/)) as key reference documents. The decision of the Programme Board in this regard will proceed through the normal channels for ratification by the relevant Board of Examiners of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies. Where serious misconduct has been identified, the Programme Director will bring this to the attention of the Director of Professional Development, The Psychological Society of Ireland.

A Programme Fitness to Practice Panel will be convened if a concern about a student's fitness to practice is raised by a clinical supervisor, clinical training co-ordinator or if applicable, by the student's employer. In the case of clinical psychology trainees, the employer will normally be their HSE line manager. The purpose of the Programme Fitness to Practice Panel is to assess whether the matter referred constitutes a Fitness to Practice concern that warrants referral to the University Fitness to Practice Panel (QA232: Fitness to Practice Policy).

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<sup>3</sup> This is required to ensure that the student has contracted employee status with the HSE and has HSE clinical indemnity and access to HSE IT systems.

## **Annual Review of Progress and Research Supports**

All students attend an annual review meeting with the programme team and the sponsoring agency (i.e. HSE or TUSLA). During this meeting the trainees' progress is reviewed, barriers to progress identified, and supports put in place. This tier of monitoring is important as it ensures that the programme can provide wrap-around and integrated supports involving both University and HSE/TUSLA staff and resources.

Trainees select a topic for their doctoral thesis at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> year or early 2<sup>nd</sup> year in collaboration with their academic supervisor (mandatory) and clinical supervisor (typically). They present this initial concept at a seminar day attended by members of the D.Psych.Sc Programme team, other staff from the School of Psychology and colleagues from the health services. Feedback is provided by the team. Trainees, working in collaboration with supervisors, prepare a Research Proposal that is reviewed by the Programme team. Once approved, and ethical approval is in place for the research, trainees commence their research c. January of 2<sup>nd</sup> year and submit their major thesis in May of Year 3. The viva voce examinations are held the last Thursday and Friday of Year 3.

Throughout Year 2 and Year 3 trainee progress is monitored by Dr Kiran Sarma, Senior Lecturer (Clinical Research Methods), who is the Research Director on the D.Psych.Sc Programme. This is Dr. Sarma's full-time role in the School of Psychology. Trainees have deadlines to submit Section A (Introduction), Section B (Research Paper) and Section C (Extended Discussion) and where these deadlines are not met Dr Sarma works with the Trainee to identify any impediments to progress and manage these. This would typically involve meeting with the supervision team to set interim goals and provide any necessary supports for the trainees.

## **Career Opportunities**

Career opportunities exist for professionally qualified clinical psychologists in a variety of health, forensic and social care settings. DPsychSc (Clinical) graduates mainly take up employment in the HSE, but are also employed within agencies such as the Brothers of Charity Services and the Irish Prison Service. Opportunities may also be found in educational services and institutions.

## **Accreditation and Memorandum of Understanding with HSE**

The programme is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland as a postgraduate professional training course in clinical psychology.

It is also subject to a Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the HSE and University of Galway which specifies, *inter alia*, that:

- The HSE and other sponsoring agencies will provide students selected for the programme with Trainee Clinical Psychologist contracts of employment for the duration of the programme, subject to the HR policies and procedures of the HSE.
- Successful candidates will have a salary paid by the HSE or other sponsoring agency in accordance with the prevailing Terms and Conditions for Trainee Clinical Psychologists and will also receive from their sponsors a specified contribution towards their course fees.
- Responsibility for the provision and supervision of clinical experience lies with the HSE.

The Memorandum of Understanding also outlines the composition and terms of reference of the Programme Board.

The term of the current Memorandum of Understanding extends to 2025.

### ***Provisions for Extending the Duration of Training***

Occasionally, a trainee may require the opportunity to extend the duration of training, for example, if the training schedule is interrupted due to serious illness or other factors of sufficient magnitude to require an extension of training. Where such factors occur, it is the policy of the programme to facilitate an extension of training where feasible. The implications of such an extension should be discussed between the trainee and their sponsoring organisation Line Manager and the Clinical Placement Coordinator. In line with the Memorandum of Agreement, the sponsoring agency will specify in the Contract of Employment and the Operational Guidelines for Trainees, the terms and conditions that attach to any extension to the period of training.

### ***Medical and Garda Vetting***

All successful applicants who are offered places on the Doctoral programme will be required to have Medical and Garda clearance: this will include medical assessment, screening and, if necessary, vaccination prior to the first clinical placement in accordance with the policies of the University and the HSE. A list of students will be provided by the University to the HSE, who will have responsibility for Garda clearance. All students will be requested to complete a self-declaration that states fully any criminal record that they may have.

### **Entry Requirements**

Candidates must hold an upper second-class honours degree or postgraduate diploma in psychology, recognised by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). Experience relevant to clinical psychology is an advantage. Short-listing is on the basis of a written application, taking account of academic qualifications and relevant experience. Short-listed applicants will be called for interview.

### **Number of Places on the Programme: 12**

**Fees:** €12,861, of which 40% will be paid by the student and 60% will be paid by the HSE. Students are also required to pay the €140 student levy.

If, for any reason, a student is required to register for a fourth year of the programme, he/she will be required to pay the stipulated repeat fee in full.

## **Chairperson of the Programme Board**

Dr John Bogue

## **Research Director**

Dr Kiran Sarma

## **Programme Board**

The programme board has been constituted, under the terms of the *Memorandum of Agreement between the HSE and University of Galway in relation to the Doctoral Programme in Clinical Psychology*, as a representative committee reflecting the partnership between the University, HSE, voluntary sector services and other important stakeholders, and includes:

- The Course Team.
- Head of Department of Psychology, University of Galway.
- Representative of HSE Management at national level.
- Representative from HSE West Management (LHO level).
- Principal Psychologists from each of the eight HSE West LHO's.
- Principal Psychologists from other sponsoring areas (currently sponsorships provided by HSE South and HSE Midlands).
- Principal Psychologists from two voluntary sector organisations (Brothers of Charity and Galway Association).
- Senior or Principal Clinical Psychologists reflecting core and specialist areas of clinical practice.
- Senior or Principal Clinical Psychologists reflecting core and specialist areas of clinical practice
- Clinical and academic contributors to the academic programme.
- A Basic Grade Psychologist who has recently graduated from the programme.
- A trainee representative from each cohort in the programme.

## ***Terms of Reference of the Programme Board***

Acting as a partnership between the University, HSE and voluntary sector services, the Programme Board will:

- Decide the overall design and delivery of the programme, subject to the standard practices of the University.
- Give guidance and direction in all aspects of the delivery of the programme, such as management and funding of the programme, selection of applicants, design of curriculum, assessment of trainees and the preparation for accreditation visits. Such tasks will usually be delegated to sub-committees of the Programme Board.
- Undertake annual reviews of the programme including review of the long-term objectives of the programme.
- Ensure that the Doctoral professional training course in Clinical Psychology comprehensively meets the training needs of clinical psychology in Ireland.
- Report as appropriate to the Department of Psychology and to the SPG.

- Consult with outside agencies such as the Psychological Society of Ireland on matters pertaining to the programme.
- Ensure that those qualifying from the programme are competent practitioners, adherent to the Psychological Society of Ireland Professional Code of Ethics.
- Such other actions, initiatives and policies as are necessary to facilitate management of the programme and communications between the parties.

## Appendix 1



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

School of Psychology  
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology  
(D.Psych.Sc.)

### **Guidelines for completing the D. Psych. Sc. Thesis**

Prepared by Dr. Kiran Sarma, Lecturer in Psychology, University of Galway.  
Clinical Research Director, D.Psych.Sc. Programme.

**September 2021.**

**Note:** This document supersedes information on the thesis presented in the Course Handbook.

## **Introduction**

The thesis is the single largest piece of academic and research work undertaken on the D. Psych. Sc programme. Under any circumstances a thesis is a major demand on time, energy and commitment. This is particularly so for a thesis undertaken while also juggling attendance at lectures, clinical placements, and assignments. For this reason, it will be to your benefit to be highly organised and systematic in the way you approach the task of completing the thesis. However, even the best plans come unstuck at times and you should anticipate that there will be obstacles and delays along the way. You must make allowance for this in planning your thesis schedule, especially at the stage of data collection as this is the activity that is most often misjudged in terms of allowing adequate time. You must also schedule regular meetings with your supervisor(s). The frequency of meetings will vary according to the stage of your research, but from the time of commencement of data collection you should aim to meet at least every 3-4 weeks.

## **Support**

### **The programme team**

The programme has been in existence since 2004 and we have accumulated a lot of experience on helping trainees through the thesis process. If at any stage of your research you feel overwhelmed by the task at hand, make contact with myself, or any of the other team members, and we will offer what support and expertise we can.

### **The School of Psychology**

At the time of writing the School of Psychology is comprised of 27 academic members of staff, two technicians, 3 administrators and an academic coordinator. There are also a large number of PhD students, many of whom have excellent research skills. You can draw on this pool of expertise and support for supervision or one-off advice. If you don't know who is in a best position to help you, contact me and I'll advise as best I can.

### **Blackboard**

All of my course handouts, SPSS files, Student Guides, forms (extension request forms, proposal forms etc.), insurance documents etc. are available on the Clinical Programme Blackboard site. The current codes for SPSS/PASW are available through our Chief Technician (Declan Coogan).

### **Books**

From your training to date you should have copies of the following:



Field, A. (various editions). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS*. Sage: London.  
 Pallant, J. (various editions). *SPSS Survival Guide*, OU: London.  
 Kazdin, A. E. (various editions). *Research Design in Clinical Psychology*. Pearson: London.

I also recommend you purchase a copy of Rudestam and Newton's (2007) *Surviving your dissertation* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition or later).

There are countless books on qualitative research in the University Library. Alternatively I have a good collection in my office, and you can photocopy relevant chapters.

### Dates for your diary

The following dates are provided to help you project manage your thesis research.

#### 2019 Intake: Milestones

<b>First Friday in December Year 3</b>	<b>Introduction and Methods Section (B) to Supervisor</b>
<b>First Friday in February Year 3</b>	<b>Results Section B to supervisor</b>
<b>First Friday in March Year 3</b>	<b>Full Section B to supervisor</b>
<b>First Friday in April Year 3</b>	<b>Full Section A (draft 1), B (draft 2) and Section C (draft 1) to supervisor</b>
<b>Last Friday in April Year 3</b>	<b>Submit thesis</b>

### Selecting a topic

The first step is to identify a research topic or question to be addressed. The initial research idea is likely to reflect the clinical interests of the trainee. It is advisable to pick a research question that is genuinely of interest as the thesis is a major undertaking and it is important that the trainee have a project that will maintain his/her interest and enthusiasm over a period of two years (and longer in terms of publishing). The specific research question is likely to evolve over time, as a result of reviewing the literature, discussing the idea with potential supervisors, and assessing the project viability in terms of time, access to a population etc. (Note: Some supervisors have a "store" of research projects, awaiting a student to take up a project).

I provide a copy of a published chapter titled *Selecting a suitable topic* in-class (taken from Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2007). *Surviving your dissertation: A Comprehensive guide to content and process*. Sage: London).

It is a requirement of your training that you gain experience gathering data during your thesis assignment. In some cases, particularly when working with research teams, it is acceptable to gain experience gathering data for a broader programme of research, and then use an existing dataset for your thesis. The important learning objective in this context is that you have experience gathering *the type of data that underpins your thesis* and can comment, based on first hand experience, on this in your thesis and viva voce. The decision to use existing datasets for the thesis is made by the programme team on a case-by-case basis.

## Supervision

Early in the process the trainee should identify potential supervisors (a member of the course team or an academic member of staff (full member of faculty) from within the School of Psychology at University of Galway and a clinical supervisor). The supervisors should support the trainee in considering the theoretical backdrop to the research, the research questions that are to be posed, and the research design to be utilized. The supervisor should also provide timely feedback on drafts. A list of academic members of staff in the School of Psychology who have supervised clinical trainees in the past is provided below, and more information is available on their individual websites ([www.universityofgalway.ie/psychology](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/psychology)):

Due to staff being on leave and on sabbatical, some members of staff will not be available for the full academic year, and supervisory arrangements can be shared.

**Note that your supervisor must sign the Submission Form (appended at the end of these guidelines), approving the thesis as ready for submission.**

**Please also note that your primary academic supervisor must be a member of academic staff in the School of Psychology. A post-doctoral researcher can act as secondary supervisor, but ultimate responsibility for supervision lies with the member of faculty.**

## Service User Involvement

Service user involvement should form part of the inception and design of the thesis. You should have a formal reportable approach to service user involvement (i.e. you should report this in the Method section of your thesis). Discuss how this will be achieved with your supervisor(s).

## Thesis Proposal

The short thesis proposal form should be submitted to the course team by the date indicated in the tables above. This should be completed on the *Thesis Brief Proposal Form*, available on Blackboard and in Appendix A, below. Trainees will also give a brief (10 minutes) presentation on their thesis topic in class in Block 3 (Jan-Feb of Year 2). This presentation will serve at least two useful purposes (a) it will help focus trainees on their task and (b) it will provide trainees with an opportunity to hear pertinent comments and feedback from peers members of the course team and clinical supervisors about their research idea. You will receive feedback from the course team on both the presentation and the proposal, which you can use in preparing the full proposal.

The trainee and supervisor(s) then make revisions and a full proposal is submitted to the Course Team. The proposal is completed on the University REC form (available at [http://www.universityofgalway.ie/research/vp\\_research/ethics.html](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/research/vp_research/ethics.html)), which saves you time later, and it should include your psychological measures, informed consent document and information sheets etc. We will also ask that you give a presentation on the thesis proposal to the course team, and potentially your classmates.

As part of the process, the views of the External Examiner regarding the proposal may be obtained.

Generally speaking changes to the proposal will be sought before the proposal is submitted to the University REC.

## **Ethics**

Ethical approval must be obtained from the School of Psychology REC (SREC). The SREC submission deadlines are provided each year by the Research Director, and it is important to note that from the date of submission, it can take a month to receive feedback from the REC.

In many instances approval of one or multiple local relevant RECs will also be required (to access a hospital, prison or clinic samples for example). Trainees are advised that The Council for Bioethics maintains a useful list of contact details for local hospital RECs ([www.bioethics.ie](http://www.bioethics.ie)). Detailed information and scenario training on the process is provided during Academic Block 1 (myself) and 2/3 (Dr. Molly Byrne or Dr Brian McGuire).

Students are required to ensure that all research conducted during their training receives ethical approval before data is collected. Prior to seeking ethical approval from any REC, please liaise closely with your thesis supervisor and keep me informed of your progress. The REC application must be submitted in hard-copy format, signed by an internal academic supervisor. An electronic version is also required. Please copy the myself and your supervisors on all communiqué with the REC.

## Assessment

The thesis is the single largest piece of work submitted for the DPsychSc (Clinical Psychology), with an ECTS weight of 55/270, or 20% of the total programme. The thesis is graded as Pass (>50%) or Fail (<50%), but no quantitative score or percentage is recorded, only descriptive labels are used. These are:

**Pass** - outright pass with no corrections and no requirement for revision.

**Pass with minor editorial corrections** - mainly typographical, stylistic, or other minor edits. Reviewed by Internal Examiner only. Must be resubmitted within one month.

**Pass with stated minor revisions** - specified but circumscribed revisions which may include, for example, significant typographical editing, methodological clarification, additional minor data analysis, or additional conceptual elaboration. Reviewed by internal examiner only. Must be resubmitted within two months.

**Pass with revisions** – revisions are required that may include, for instance, the addition of new content, further data analysis, rewriting or restructuring of content and/or further consideration of the findings of the research. The corrections may be reviewed by the external or internal examiner. The revised manuscript must be submitted within three months.

**Refer - major revisions required** - Substantial deficiencies or weaknesses identified requiring major revisions - may include major editing and correcting, the insertion of substantial amounts of additional information, collection of additional data, additional data analysis, or radical reinterpretation of the findings of the study. The thesis may be re-examined by the extern and the intern. The examiners may also require that the candidate sit a second viva examination. Must be resubmitted within twelve months but a shorter time may be specified by the examiners.

**Fail** - outright fail where the examiners believe the thesis contains such serious flaws or deficiencies that revision and resubmission are not considered viable.

The decision about which category applies to a particular thesis lies with the examiners, but should be based on the extent to which the features listed below are present or absent.

The thesis is not intended, or expected, to be equivalent to a PhD, either in volume or in scope (it is 20% of a programme which includes academic assignments, small research projects, and assessment of clinical competence) but is expected to be clinically relevant and of publishable quality. The research design, execution, analysis and interpretation should be of a high standard and appropriate to the research problem. Candidates must be able to justify them at the oral examination.

The word count should not exceed 1,500 (Section A) + 6,000 (Section B) + 2,500 (Section C) (excluding References and Appendices).

## Thesis structure

- 1. Title page.** This should include the following information;
  - The title of the thesis and the subtitle, if any.
  - The total number of volumes, if more than one, and the number of the particular volume.
  - The full name of the author, followed, if desired, by any qualifications and distinctions.
  - 'Thesis submitted to the National University of Ireland in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of D Psych Sc (Clin Psych).'
  - School of Psychology, University of Galway.
  - The month and year in which the thesis was submitted
  - The name of the Supervisors: Primary Supervisor and Other supervisors(s), the Department, the Faculty and the University in which the research was registered.
  
- 2. Submission form.** This should be attached to, or enclosed with, the thesis.
  - A copy of this form is provided in Section 10 (Miscellaneous) for your information.
  - Complete all relevant sections.
  
- 3. Front section.** Order your front section in the following way:
  - **Table of contents.** All pages in the thesis must be numbered and the page on which each chapter or section begins must be given in the table of contents. Put your page numbers in the centre of the bottom of the page.
  - **Acknowledgements**
  - **Abstract.** This summarises key findings in a single 300 word paragraph.
  - **List of tables** with page numbers.
  - **List of figures and illustrations** with page numbers.
  - **List of appendices** with page numbers.

#### 4. Layout and style

- **Text.** The text must be printed, typewritten or otherwise reproduced on good quality A4 size paper. It is recommended that 12pt Times New Roman font is used for the body text throughout.
- **Margins.** Set your left margin at 4cm and the other three margins at 2.5 cm.
- **Pagination.** Put no page number on the title page. Use roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, etc) for front section. Use numerals (1, 2, 3, etc) for all pages from the first page of the overview onwards to the last page of the last appendix. All page numbers should be placed in the centre at the bottom of the page.
- **Style.** Write in the style of high quality academic journals, and follow the style guidelines from APA (2003). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Washington DC: APA
- **Tables and Figures.** With the exception of material placed in the Appendices, tables and figures are normally embedded in the text (this convention differs for the journal article). Where possible, avoid splitting Tables or Figures across pages.
- **Line spacing** should be 1.5 or double spacing.

#### **Section A (Literature Review and Introduction):**

**A1. Overview.** This begins with a statement of the aim of your thesis and is followed by a statement of how the thesis will be organized. The overview gives the reader a mental map to help them through the thesis. It is usually written when the thesis is completed.

#### **A2: Searching and synthesizing the literature.**

Provide a narrative on how you approached the review in terms of the review questions that you were seeking to answer, and how you went about searching for and retrieving the literature. Please include a PRISMA-style chart that shows the datasets searched etc. if relevant. Please do not cast this as a systematic review, but you are demonstrating that there was a strategy behind the approach.

#### **A3: Target Journal**

Identify your target journal, explaining your rationale for selecting this journal.

**(c. 1500 words)**

#### **Section B (Publication)**

Section B presents a publication-length paper arising from your empirical research. This academic paper (amended based on feedback from the examiners) will be submitted for publication. This is a requirement of your training.

The paper will conform to APA format and will have Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion Sections. **Note that for the Discussion section here, ensure that clinical implications and recommendations of the work are appropriate to the findings. Note that a sub-section in the Methods section describing Service User involvement should be included.** References should appear at the end of this paper so that Section B is a stand-alone document ready for submission.

**The maximum word count for Section B is 6000 words.**

### **Section C (Extended Discussion)**

This concluding chapter draws the substantive material in the thesis together so as to demonstrate its coherence and the full extent of the contribution to knowledge that it offers. A broader consideration of the findings (high-level) and implications is expected. The Introduction to Section B (your paper) will have been relatively short, and Section C gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the broader theoretical, empirical and applied literature. You should also have a short reflection.

**The maximum word count for Section C is 2,500 words.**

### **Section D (References)**

Each reference, Section A-Section C, in the text must have an entry in the reference list. Entries should conform to APA journal style.

### **Section E (Appendices)**

Appendices related to ethics and materials should be presented in Section E. Additional results, which could not be presented in the academic paper (**Section B**), **should be presented (if relevant) here in tabular form.**

## **Submission**

- Three spiral or gum-bound copies of the thesis must be presented, initially for examination.
- An electronic copy of the thesis and your datafiles must be submitted for examination.
- If the Examiners recommend that the DPsychSc (Clinical) Degree be awarded, the candidate must re-submit a bound copy of the thesis, and where recommended, must embody any changes prescribed by the Examiners.
- The copy of the bound thesis shall be bound within boards. The binding shall be of a fixed kind in which leaves are permanently secured. The boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upon a shelf.
- The Examiners' report will not be considered by the Standing Committee until the revised Thesis, incorporating the recommended changes, and confirmed by the Intern Examiner, has been lodged with the Examinations Office.
- The Thesis shall include a bibliography of the works consulted in its composition.
- All academic and field/clinical supervisors must be provided with a bound copy of the final completed thesis. In addition, a bound copy of the finished thesis must be lodged with the University of Galway Clinical Psychology Programme Committee. This copy will be made available for consultation by trainees on request. It may also be appropriate to provide a bound thesis copy to any organisation or other such entity which has played a significant role in facilitating or supporting the research. If trainees are in any doubt as to whether or not a thesis copy should be provided under such circumstances, they should consult their supervisor(s) for advice.

## **Publication**

You must submit one paper emerging from your thesis for publication prior to the end of your training. You should liaise with your supervisors to identify an appropriate journal, and the draft paper should be reviewed by the supervisors prior to submission. On submission, and having passed your thesis, you will have completed the thesis process.

All supervisors should be listed as authors of any papers that derive from your thesis research.



## Appendix A: Thesis Brief Proposal Form



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### D. Psych.Sc in Clinical Psychology

#### Thesis Brief Proposal Form

Please complete this brief thesis proposal form and e-mail it to [kiran.sarma@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:kiran.sarma@universityofgalway.ie) and [alma.greally@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:alma.greally@universityofgalway.ie). We will provide feedback on this initial concept, which you can then incorporate into your full proposal. The full proposal is submitted on the Research Ethics Committee application form.

Trainee's name
Title of project
Date submitted
Supervisor(s)
Research Question (s)
Theoretical and scientific background (250 words)
Brief Plan of Investigation (what you intend to do) (250 words)

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<b>Describe how you will recruit participants</b>
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<b>What ethical issues arise from this research?</b>
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<b>For internal use.</b>
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Date reviewed:
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Who reviewed it:
------------------

Decision (accept, accept with revisions, reject):
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Feedback for trainee:
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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

### SUBMISSION FORM

SURNAME:

FIRST NAME:

STUDENT NO:

TITLE OF THESIS:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that the Thesis is my own work. I have not submitted this research towards another Degree or qualification in this University or elsewhere.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, as primary supervisor, approve this thesis as ready for submission for examination.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_