

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	MSc Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Psychology
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	MSc Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
FHEQ level of final award:	7
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma
Accreditation details:	MSc CBT and PGDip CBT meet minimum training requirements of <i>British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies</i> (BABCP) (Level 2, BABCP). NB: Postgraduate Certificate CBT and MSc CBT (Top up) are NOT accredited
Length of programme:	1 year Full Time 2 years Part Time
Mode(s) of Study:	Full Time Part Time
Mode of Delivery:	Blended learning
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	Psychology (2019)
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	
Course Code(s):	MSCBTHBF/ MSCBTHBP – Master’s FT / PT PDCBTHBF/ PDCBTHBP – PGDip FT / PT
UCAS Code(s):	
Approval date:	May 2023
Date of last update:	September 2024 / February 2025

2. Programme Summary

This programme enables you to apply for accreditation as a CBT Therapist with the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) . Throughout your time on the course you will develop your understanding of CBT and the theory, research and

complex issues you may have to face in a professional environment. We will help you gain the skills to support, provide care and improve the psychological wellbeing of others.

Actively promoted by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), CBT is an evidence-based therapy recommended to treat a range of mental health problems. The techniques can be applied in general medical, nursing and psychological practice. So, whether your goal is to become a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist or you want to apply the techniques in a broader context, this course gives you the skills and practical training you need to be confident in theory and practice.

We value our partnerships within the local community, including the West London NHS Trust, one of the largest mental health providers in the UK. The Trust is responsible for well-known institutions such as Broadmoor and other clinics treating more specific illnesses, like personality disorders.

Buckinghamshire New University offers flexible study spread over two years, allowing you to study alongside employment and fit things around your lifestyle. Whether you're training to build skills to apply in your current role or looking to change your career path, this course ensures you can immediately apply Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques in a professional setting.

Our MSc in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is ideally suited for those who are seeking accreditation and the completion of a master's level project on a CBT topic. You will have met the national training standards for BABCP accreditation through completion to PGDip level but you will need to submit an extended piece of written work to complete to master's level.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Prepare learners to become competent Cognitive Behavioural Therapists by providing the necessary theoretical and practical training to meet the minimum training standards of BABCP
2. Facilitate learners to develop the knowledge, expertise, and skills necessary to practise ethically and with cultural competence in line with the BABCP BAME Positive Practice Guide
3. Equip learners to recognise personal limitations and refer clients on when necessary
4. Enable learners to deliver formulation driven CBT treatments/interventions for common psychological problems based on a sound understanding and application of CBT theory and evidence
5. Provide learners with an up-to-date and advanced training in CBT theory and practice

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
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K1	Articulate systematic understanding and a critical awareness of current mental health problems informed by your area of professional practice.
K2	Demonstrate a critical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
K3	Advance comprehensive understanding of research techniques applicable to CBT research and scholarship.
K4	Evidence understanding that enables you to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline of CBT.

Analysis and Criticality (C)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Differentiate comprehensive understanding of ethical and professional issues as they relate to the practice of CBT and develop a broad culturally sensitive approach.
C2	Appraise CBT research and clinical practice methodologies, developing critiques and, where appropriate, proposing new hypotheses.
C3	Analyse complex issues systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data in order to ensure positive outcomes for clients.
C4	Evaluate when applying your in-depth working knowledge of the practice of CBT in therapeutic settings.
C5	Assess disorder specific models in your therapeutic setting in accordance with NICE Guidelines.

Application and Practice (P)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Execute practical application of CBT in therapy sessions with clients from western and non-western cultures in accordance with the BABCP BAME Positive Practice Guide.
P2	Develop, reflecting on issues in your CBT practice and the impact this has on your own mental health as part of the management of your wellbeing.
P3	Advance developments in CBT theory and research to practice in your clinical setting.
P4	Apply self-direction and self-reflection in tackling and solving problems, demonstrating flexibility in planning and implementation of treatment, research and projects at a professional level.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

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

ID	Learning Outcome
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T1	Implement a range of digital literacy skills to provide CBT in remote as well as in person settings.
T2	Execute clinically appropriate and well-informed decisions in difficult and unpredictable therapeutic situations for the safety of your clients, vulnerable adults and children.
T3	Apply your own learning independently, both as part of your studies and your continuing professional development as required by BABCP.
T4	Articulate effectively with service users, relevant health professionals and other professionals (such as interpreters) using a range of relevant written, oral and digital skills in a manner fit for purpose and audience.
T5	Develop your knowledge and understanding of the third wave of CBT applications.

Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens.

On this programme, attributes are developed through the practical application of acquired CBT knowledge and skills within the context of NICE Guidelines and BABCP Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics (K1, K2, K3, K4, C1, C5 and T3). The attributes of self-development, social, cultural and ethical awareness are developed through supervised clinical placements(C4, P4 and T3. A self-reflective approach aimed at ensuring the best outcome for an increasingly diverse service user population is fostered (P1, T3 and T4). The acquisition of effective clinical practices and professional standards prepares highly employable, culturally aware therapists ready to take on the ever-increasing challenges of the mental health needs of the digital age, in all settings, public and private (K4, P1, P3, C3, C5, K4, T1,T2).

4. Entry Requirements

The University's [general entry requirements](#) will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

There are two pathways for meeting the entry requirements for PG Dip / MSc in CBT

Pathway 1

Have completed training in an eligible core mental health profession, as featured on the BABCP eligible professions list (<https://babcp.com/Accreditation/Provisional-Accreditation/Core-Professions/Core-Professions-list-and-criteria>)

And

The learner will need to have completed one year accountable practice in a mental health setting, following the attainment of skills and competencies of core professional training. The one-year accountable practice would have been

completed prior to commencing the course (this can be the year leading up to the course).

Pathway 2

Have a good undergraduate degree – 2:2 or above (we advise this be in a Psychology related area).

And

One year accountable practice in a mental health setting, following the attainment of skills and competencies required for the BABCP KSA portfolio requirements <https://babcp.com/Accreditation/Provisional-Accreditation/Knowledge-Skills-and-Attitudes>

Additionally: The professions listed here may be eligible for the condensed portfolio requirements (BABCP guidance - <https://babcp.com/Accreditation/Provisional-Accreditation/Knowledge-Skills-and-Attitudes/Professions-eligible-for-Condensed-KSA-Portfolios>)

Or

If the applicant does not meet the requirements for a condensed portfolio, they will have to complete a full portfolio: [KSA Portfolio Guidelines](#)

Please note:

Successful applicants who have enrolled at BNU will be provided support to develop this portfolio.

The portfolios will need to have been reviewed by the KSA course trained marker (<https://babcp.com/Accreditation/Provisional-Accreditation/Knowledge-Skills-and-Attitudes>)

For all pathways - Additional requirements:

- A clinical placement needs to be in place prior to commencing the course. Clinical cases required for this course would be 16+ years old presenting common mental health problems – anxiety, trauma and depression. Psychological trauma training is in year 2 for part-time learners or half way through the course for full-time learners – we do not recommend working with trauma at the start of the course.
- Clinical supervision of a clinical placement will need to be in place prior to acceptance on the course – Clinical supervisors will need to confirm that they have agreed to provide clinical supervision and they are BABCP accredited therapists.

Evidence of BABCP accredited Postgraduate Diploma can provide direct entry to complete the dissertation and gain an MSc at pass level through [accreditation of prior learning](#) (APL) process.

5. Programme Structure

Pathway 1 or stand-alone course [add further tables for each additional pathway]

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Level 7	<p>Core modules: PSY7022 Introduction to CBT (20) PSY7023 Introduction to Anxiety (20) PSY7027 Introduction to Depression (20) PSY7024 Advanced CBT Skills for Anxiety (20) PSY7025 Advanced CBT Skills for Depression (20) PSY7026 Advanced CBT Skills for Practitioners (20)</p> <p>Core modules: EDU7008 Extended Research Project (60 credits)</p> <p>Opportunity modules: No Opportunity modules are available at this level.</p>	<p>Postgraduate Certificate, awarded on achievement of 60 credits</p> <p>Postgraduate Diploma, awarded on achievement of 120 credits</p> <p>MSc 180 Credits</p>

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to changes in the subject area.

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and teaching

The teaching and learning strategies employed within this programme reflect the nature of the learning experience at level 7 and the skills required for employment in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. There is a focus on applied practice and being able to transfer theoretical knowledge to the field while developing the interpersonal qualities required for therapeutic environments. Students will be encouraged to develop their independent learning skills and abilities to stay abreast of the latest developments in CBT, the wider domain of mental health and therapeutic approaches.

Assessment

As per the teaching and learning strategy, the specific assessment methods are determined at modular level, but are designed to reflect the course aims and learning outcomes, to equip students with practitioner knowledge and experience, academic and cognitive, and critical and transferable skills. The knowledge, experience and skills will create culturally aware, prepared, and responsive graduates to practice safely, confidentially, collaboratively and inclusively.

The assessments used in this programme are novel, varied, and reflective of the requirements of the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) and the need to respond to the wider therapeutic field.

Contact Hours

Learners can expect to receive approximately 10 hours of scheduled learning activities per week (6 hours for part-time). This may include lectures, seminars, workshops, demonstrations, practical sessions, or supervision. The contact hours also include the required number of placement hours and associated supervision. A full breakdown of contact hours can be found in individual module descriptors.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (2023)

This programme conforms to the approved University procedures as detailed on the University website with the following exceptions:

- None of the assessments can be condoned; all elements must be passed to pass the course
- No modules to be condoned

8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies
- Library resources, include access to books, journals and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable
- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of learner and course administration
- Central student services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, student finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has a number of ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in external surveys
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Education Committee
- Review by the relevant PSRB(s)
- Periodic Subject Review events held every five years
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – see detailed mapping below
- The QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement
- The BNU Qualifications and Credit Framework
- The BNU Grading Descriptors
- The University Strategy

Mapping of Subject Benchmark Statement and any relevant Apprenticeship Standard to Programme Learning Outcomes

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard: Psychology L6	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
understand the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline, its historical origins, development and limitations	x				x															
recognise the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning and its significance	x					x		x		x										
demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning, how they are conceptualised across the	x		x	x	x			x												x

core areas and how they interrelate																				
demonstrate detailed knowledge of several specialised areas and/or applications, some of which are at the cutting edge of research in the discipline	x						x			x				x						x
demonstrate a systematic knowledge of a range of research paradigms, research methods and measurement techniques, including statistics and probability, and be aware of their limitations		x	x	x																
reason scientifically, understand the role of evidence and make critical judgements about arguments in psychology		x	x	x																
adopt multiple perspectives and systematically analyse the relationships between them								x									x			

detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and evaluate their significance		x						x	x				x					x			
recognise the subjective and variable nature of individual experience						x		x					x					x			
pose, operationalise and critique research questions		x																			
demonstrate substantial competence in research skills through practical activities		x	x												x						
reason analytically and demonstrate competence in a range of quantitative and qualitative methods		x													x						
competently initiate, design, conduct and report on an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision, and recognise its theoretical, practical and methodological implications and limitations		x	x												x						

be aware of ethical principles and approval procedures and demonstrate these in relation to personal study, particularly with regard to the research project, and be aware of the ethical context of psychology as a discipline		x				x									x				
communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means																x			x
interpret and use numerical, textual and other forms of data																			
be computer literate, for the purposes of furthering their own learning and in the analysis and presentation of ideas and research findings																x			
solve problems by clarifying questions, considering alternative solutions and evaluating outcomes									x					x			x		

be sensitive to, and take account of, contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams						X						X						X			
undertake self-directed study and project management, in order to meet desired objectives		X		X										X					X		
take charge of their own learning, and reflect and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of future learning														X					X		

Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Level 7																				
Introduction to CBT	x		x	x		x	x													
Introduction to Anxiety		x				x			x	x						x				
Advanced CBT Skills for Anxiety								x	x					x			x		x	
Introduction to Depression		x		x		x				x						x				
Advanced CBT Skills for Practitioners								x			x			x				x		x
Advanced CBT Skills for Depression									x		x	x		x				x		
Dissertation			x	x			x						x	x						