



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

MSc in Health Psychology 2022-2023 Student Guide



Welcome to the School of Psychology, NUI Galway

Dear MSc Student,

Congratulations on securing a place on the MSc in Health Psychology at NUI, Galway. We hope that your postgraduate studies with us will be enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding.

This student guide has been compiled for your benefit by the MSc in Health Psychology Team and we hope you will find it useful. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this guide are accurate, some details about your course may change during the year and you will be notified about these changes as they become relevant. The most up-to-date information throughout the year will be posted on NUI Galway's Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment. You will have access to this once you are registered as a student with NUI, Galway.

Wishing you every success,





Prof Molly Byrne
Deputy Director MSc in Health
Psychology
(Director until January 2023)



Dr Jenny Mc Sharry
Director MSc in Health Psychology
(On sabbatical until January 2023)

The Core Team:
MSc Module co-ordinators 2022-23

PS579	PS584	PS585	PS587	PS588	PS6136	PS6137
Research Methods in Health Psychology	Health Promotion & Behaviour Change	Perspectives in Health Psychology	Psychological Processes in Illness & Health care	Biobehavioural Processes in Health & Illness	Dissertation	Research & Professional Skills
Prof Jane Walsh	Prof Molly Byrne	Dr Gerry Molloy	Prof AnnMarie Groarke	Dr Gerry Molloy	Dr Caroline Heary & Prof Molly Byrne	Dr Eimear Morrissey & Dr Jenny Mc Sharry
					 	 

Please note that other members of staff and external academics also contribute to the teaching and learning programme.

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The Academic Year at a Glance

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Teaching Begins	Monday 5 th September 2022	Monday 9 th January 2023
Teaching Ends	Friday 25 th November 2022	Friday 31 st March 2023
Examinations	Monday 5 th December to Friday 16 th December 2022	Monday 17 th April to Thursday 4 th May 2023
Holidays	<p>Christmas: Saturday 17th December 2022 to Friday 07th January 2023</p> <p>Bank Holidays Monday 31st October 2022</p>	<p>Easter: Good Friday 7th April to Easter Monday 10th April 2023</p> <p>Bank Holidays: Friday 17th March 2023 Monday 1st May 2023 Monday 5th June 2023 Monday 7th August 2023</p>

The University Academic Calendar is available here:

<https://www.nuigalway.ie/media/registrationoffice/files/All-students-22-23-Calendar.pdf>

Summer term

Your dissertation is due to be submitted during **August 2023** (see dissertation guide for further details).

Some dates for your diary

Registering for your course

Online registration will open from the week before the semester starts. Students should register as soon as possible to gain access to University services such as Student ID Card, Library and Blackboard. All registration information is available at:

<https://www.nuigalway.ie/registration/how-to-register/newstudentpostgrad/>

All fee queries should be directed to the Fees Office: fees@nuigalway.ie

2022	
Wednesday 7 th September 2022 10:00-11:00	Welcome and orientation (School of Psychology Building Arts Millennium Building (AMB))
Friday Oct 14 th 2022	Sustainable Digital Health Innovation Conference 2022 – Galmont Hotel, Galway
2023	
March 2023	MSc Project Presentations as part of the Dissertation module (PS6136)
May 2023	Annual Psychology, Health and Medicine Conference (TBC)

The School of Psychology

- Head of School:** Dr Padraig MacNeela
- Administrative staff:** Ms Nuala Donohue
Ms Sandra Hallinan
Ms Miriam Lohan
Ms Alma Greally (*attached to Clinical Psychology programme*)
- Postal Address:** School of Psychology,
National University of Ireland, Galway
- Telephone Numbers:** (091) 493454/ (091) 493101 (direct)
(091) 524411, Ext. 3101/Ext. 3454
- Website:** <http://www.nuigalway.ie/psychology/>
- Email:** psychology@nuigalway.ie
- Relevant key social media accounts:**
Twitter:
@nuigPsychology
@HealthPsychNUIG
@hbcrg
@mHealthResGroup
@CPainResearch
@PSI_DHP
and individual staff accounts

Background to the School of Psychology

The Department of Psychology at NUI Galway was established in 1971, and became the School of Psychology in 2007. The School has grown rapidly in recent years both in the range of teaching programmes and in its research activity. While embracing a wide range of philosophies and approaches characteristic of modern psychology, the School of Psychology is strongly identified with two main research themes:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Brain & Behaviour

The School has been located in the Arts Millennium Building (AMB) since August 2013. All activities of the School (Administrative, Technical, Academic and Laboratory) are located here, as will most of the MSc teaching and learning sessions.

Summary of Academic Programmes

Undergraduate. At the undergraduate level, the School offers a denominated BA in Psychology, a "double honours" programme accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), which also meets the requirements for graduate accreditation specified by the British Psychological Society. The Denominated BA in Psychology attracts students of the highest academic merit nationally, as measured by results in the Leaving Certificate Examination and end-of-year examinations in the First Year Psychology programme. In addition to the Denominated BA, a three-year sequence of Psychological Studies is offered, permitting students to combine Psychology with one other Arts subject to degree level. Provision can be made allowing the course of studies to be extended from 3 to 4 years, with students taking a study year abroad as their third year in both the Denominated programme, BA in Psychology (International) and Psychological Studies, BA (International).

In addition, the Psychological Studies programme can be followed by a one-year full-time postgraduate programme, the Higher Diploma in Psychology (Conversion). The combined qualification provides graduates with equivalent standing in psychology to that provided by the Denominated BA in Psychology. A second higher diploma, the two-year full-time Higher Diploma in Psychology (Full), is intended for graduates who possess an honours degree in any subject area other than psychology, and provides the equivalent course content to that of the denominated BA in Psychology.

The School of Psychology also provides input to programmes in Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Therapy, located in the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Postgraduate.

In 2007, a one-year full-time MSc programme in Health Psychology was introduced, replacing the former two-year Master of Psychological Science (Health Psychology) which was established in 1994 by Professor Ruth Curtis and her team. Professor Curtis is a fellow of the European Health Psychology Society and continues to maintain close contact with the course and our programmes of

research in health psychology. Our programme was re-accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland in 2021 for 5 years.

In addition, the School offers supervision to suitably qualified graduates in psychology who wish to carry out research leading to MLitt and PhD degrees. The School is particularly committed to expanding the postgraduate research programme, and numbers have increased substantially. In 2009/2010, the School introduced a range of Structured PhD programmes. These include the [Structured PhD programmes in Psychology and Health](#), and the [PhD in Health Psychology Practice](#), the first professional postgraduate health psychology training qualification in Ireland.

Several additional postgraduate taught and research programmes are on offer including a one year MSc in Clinical Neuroscience, a one year MSc in Consumer Psychology, a Board-certified Postgraduate Diploma/Masters Programme in Applied Behaviour, and a structured PhD programme in ABA. The School also offers a PSI-accredited three-year full-time postgraduate professional qualification in clinical psychology, the Doctor of Psychological Science (Clinical Psychology).

Facilities in the School of Psychology

Besides the usual rooms for lectures and accommodation for staff and students, the School has a variety of laboratories for experimental work. Equipment is available for research on psychophysiological functioning, visual perception; acquisition of motor skills; learning in humans; memory; the study of child behaviour; and the study of group processes. The School also has its own video studio, which is used for interview and communication skills training.

Laboratory Facilities. The School maintains a host of laboratory spaces suitable for supporting research in health psychology. These include: a haemodynamic reactivity laboratory; an EEG laboratory; a dual-use EEG/haemodynamic laboratory; an impedance cardiography laboratory; a cortisol laboratory with associated wet lab facilities; an interview/observation room (with adjacent control room); a temporal factors/psychophysics laboratory. Some research cubicles and lab areas are also available.

Psychological Test Library. The School has an extensive library of psychological tests, including intelligence tests, personality inventories, scholastic attainment tests, and measures of adaptive behaviour.

Resources at the James Hardiman Library. Over 4,000 books in psychology and closely related subjects are stocked by the James Hardiman Library. In addition, over 600 journals are available that deal specifically with psychology. The library has recently introduced a new electronic search engine called e-Knowledge. It can help you identify, locate and manage the ever growing collection of e-resources and e-journals.

Staff in the School of Psychology

For an up-to-date list of academic staff* within the School please see the Staff section of the School website:

<https://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/psychology/>

*Detailed biographical notes and publication lists for all academic staff are available on each staff member's website

Other NUI, Galway colleagues also contribute to our teaching programme including key PhD students and post-doctoral staff who are involved in health psychology related research projects. These include but are not limited to:

Research Staff

Name	Email @nuigalway.ie
Dr Eimear Morrissey	eimear.morrissey

Technical Staff

Name	Email @nuigalway.ie
Mr Joe Mee	joseph.mee
Dr Aoife Bernadette O'Brien	aoifeb.obrien

Administrative Staff

Name	Email @nuigalway.ie
Ms Nuala Donohue	nuala.donohue
Ms Alma Grealley	alma.grealley
Ms Sandra Hallinan	sandra.hallinan
Ms Miriam Lohan	miriam.lohan

School of Psychology office hours, appointments and requests for references

The main office of the School of Psychology, is located on the first floor of the Psychology building. The office is usually staffed from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 2.15 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Re: Appointments

Members of the academic staff are available to assist and advise students as much as possible. However, their availability is limited by their other responsibilities. Most academic staff will arrange particular hours of the week during which they are available for appointments. (Of course, staff will try to be flexible in the event of genuinely urgent or emergency circumstances).

Re: Requests for Academic References

It is likely that you will consider applying for further study or occupational opportunities, and it is normal in these circumstances to request academic references from members of the School's staff. It is recommended that you allow at least two weeks' notice, if you require a reference. However, individual staff commitments may vary. Students who wish to request such a reference should submit:

- (i) a copy of their CV;
- (ii) a copy of relevant academic transcripts of results; and
- (iii) details of the intended recipient of the reference (i.e., details of the course or programme to which they are applying, including "Instructions for Referees" or equivalent documentation supplied by the course organisers; prospective employers details) to the staff member from whom they are requesting the reference.

The MSc in Health Psychology

The MSc in Health Psychology is a one-year full-time, or two-year part-time taught Master's programme of academic study in the discipline of health psychology. The MSc in Health Psychology is [a fully accredited programme of the Psychological Society of Ireland](#).

The course is concerned with the application of psychological theory, methods and research to health, illness and health care. The course includes lectures, seminars and workshops on the biopsychosocial basis of health and illness; health promotion; models of health-related behaviour and illness cognition; applied health psychology; psychological processes in illness and healthcare and biobehavioural processes in health & illness. Students also take classes in research methods and professional skills in health psychology and carry out an empirical research project in a health-related area.

The overall aims of the course are:

- To equip graduates with a comprehensive knowledge base in health psychology, at postgraduate level
- To train students to conduct high quality research in the area of health psychology
- To prepare students to undertake future professional training in health psychology and other areas of psychology, such as clinical psychology.

Specific objectives are:

- To impart specialist knowledge of core theoretical issues, principles and methods in health psychology
- To support the development of research skills and research competencies relevant to health psychology and health-related settings in general
- To enable students to reflect on the application of research evidence to health, illness & health care
- To support students in the development of an ethical approach to their work and to increase awareness of professional responsibilities and the importance of scientific integrity
- To support the development of communication skills (written and oral) and the dissemination of research
- To help students understand the broader context in which they work

The full-time programme is delivered across three academic terms (Semester 1, Semester 2, and the Summer Term). Semesters 1 and 2 contain a number of taught modules, which are assessed based on course-work, continuous assessment assignments and written exams. Throughout both Semesters 1 and 2 and the Summer Term, students carry out and report on a significant piece of supervised research, which comprises a Minor Dissertation. In addition, to the dissertation, other forms of assessment include exams, essays and other forms of continuous assessment. The distribution of modules across terms is presented overleaf.

Programme Overview

Full-time MSc in Health Psychology One Year (90 ECTS)

Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer term
PS584 Health Promotion & Behaviour Change (10 ECTS)	PS587 Psychological Processes in Illness & Health care (10 ECTS)	
PS585 Perspectives in Health Psychology (10 ECTS)	PS588 Biobehavioural Processes in Health & Illness (10 ECTS)	
PS579 Research Methods in Health Psychology (10 ECTS)		
PS6137 Research & Professional Skills (10 ECTS)		
PS6136 Dissertation (30 ECTS)		

Part-time MSc in Health Psychology
Two Years (50 and 40 ECTS Per Year)

Year 1

Year one - Semester 1 (30 ECTS)	Year One - Semester 2 (20 ECTS)	Year One – Summer term
PS585 Perspectives in Health Psychology (10 ECTS)	PS587 Psychological Processes in Illness & Health care (10 ECTS)	No course work in Semester 3 (year 1)
PS579 Research Methods in Health Psychology (10 ECTS)	PS588 Biobehavioural Processes in Health & Illness (10 ECTS)	
PS6137 Research & Professional Skills (10 ECTS)		

Year 2

Year Two - Semester 1 (10 ECTS plus dissertation)	Year Two - Semester 2 (Dissertation only)	Year Two – Semester 3 Dissertation only
PS584 Health Promotion & Behaviour Change (10 ECTS)	No taught modules	
PS6136 Dissertation (30 ECTS) (S1 & S2 & S3)		

Semester 1

Semester 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 – 10	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G035 SPSS Training – PS579 (Prof Jane Walsh)	Self-study time	Self-study time
10 – 11	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G035 SPSS Training – PS579 (Prof Jane Walsh)	AMB G043 PS584 Health Promotion and Behaviour Change (Prof Molly Byrne)	Self-study time
11 – 12	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G043 PS579 Research Methods (Prof. Jane Walsh)	AMB G043 PS584 Health Promotion and Behaviour Change (Prof Molly Byrne)	Self-study time
12 – 1	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G043 PS579 Research Methods (Prof. Jane Walsh)	Self-study time	Self-study time
1 – 2					
2 – 3	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G043 PS585-Perspectives in Health Psychology (Dr Gerry Molloy)	AMB G035 PS6137 Research and Professional Skills (Dr Eimear Morrissey/Dr Jenny McSharry)	Self-study time
3 – 4	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G043 PS585-Perspectives in Health Psychology (Dr Gerry Molloy)	AMB G035 PS6137 Research and Professional Skills (Dr Eimear Morrissey/Dr Jenny McSharry)	Self-study time
4 – 5	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time

Semester 2

Semester 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 – 10	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time
10 – 11	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time
11 – 12	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time
12 – 1	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time
1 – 2		AMB G036 PS587 Psychological Processes in Illness and Health Care (Prof AnnMarie Groarke)			
2 – 3	Self-study time	AMB G036 PS587 Psychological Processes in Illness and Health Care (Prof AnnMarie Groarke)	AMB G043 PS588 Biobehavioural Processes in Health and Illness (Dr Gerry Molloy)	Self-study time	Self-study time
3 – 4	Self-study time	Self-study time	AMB G043 PS588 Biobehavioural Processes in Health and Illness (Dr Gerry Molloy)	Self-study time	Self-study time
4 – 5	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time	Self-study time

Module overviews

Semester 1

PS579
Research Methods in
Health Psychology

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Prof Jane Walsh
Contributors: Prof Jane Walsh and Dr Jenny Groarke

Description

This course will provide students with a clear understanding of advanced statistical methods used in health psychology research and clarify the link between research methods used in psychological research and the appropriate statistical methods used to analyse data. Students will become familiar with the APA (American Psychological Association) style of reporting the results of health research and will learn the skills needed to set up a database and analyse data using SPSS. The module will be delivered through lectures with in-class discussions and SPSS tutorials.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students will be able to:

1. Identify the pertinent questions to consider when developing the methodology in conducting research/developing your research proposal
2. Describe the components that should be dealt with in the methodology section of a research study
3. Identify the appropriate statistical test to analyse a given set of data/research design
4. Compute a variety of statistical tests on SPSS when given a set(s) of data
5. Interpret SPSS printouts
6. Prepare and present a set of results APA style

Basic Reading

Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2016). An introduction to statistics in psychology (6th ed.). London: Prentice Hall.

Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2017). Introduction to SPSS in Psychology: For version 23 and earlier (7th ed.). London: Prentice Hall.

Tabachnick, B.G., & Fidell, L.S. (2013). Using multivariate statistics (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Assessment

- One two-hour examination at the end of Semester 1 (70% of overall mark)
- SPSS assignment during Semester 1 (30% of overall mark)

PS584
Health Promotion
and Behaviour
Change

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Prof Molly Byrne
Contributors: Prof Molly Byrne and Guest
Lecturers

*Part-time students will complete this module in Year Two of the programme.

Description: The aim of this module is to introduce students to the study of health behaviour change. Students will explore the latest behaviour change research, theory and methods for designing, implementing and evaluating behaviour change interventions.

Learning outcomes: On completion of this module students will be able to:

1. Describe and critically evaluate key health psychology behaviour change theories.
2. Communicate the importance of behavioural science to changing health behaviour to a lay audience.
3. Critique health behaviour change interventions, including the use of psychology theory in intervention development, specification of behaviour change techniques and intervention components, and the evaluation of interventions through randomised controlled trials.

Basic Reading:

Morrison, V. & Bennett, P (2016). Introduction to Health Psychology. 4th Ed. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall. (Main Library 616.0019 MOR)

Michie, S., Atkins, L, & West, R. (2014). The Behaviour Change Wheel. A guide to designing interventions. Silverback Publishing: England.

Byrne, M. (2020) Gaps and priorities in advancing methods for health behaviour change research, Health Psychology Review, 14:1, 165-175, DOI: 10.1080/17437199.2019.1707106

Additional course content related reading lists will be provided.

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment. (2 assignments)

PS585
Perspectives in
Health Psychology

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Dr Gerry Molloy
Contributors: Dr Gerry Molloy and Guest
Lecturers

Description

The overall objective of this course is to examine how health and illness result from interacting biological, psychological, and social processes. Emphasising the role of psychosocial factors, evidence is considered showing that psychosocial factors explain comparable levels of variance in population health and illness than biomedical phenomena. Specifically, this module will give an overview of the various broad theoretical approaches and perspectives relevant to health, health behaviour and illness.

Specifically, in the module students will study:

- Health Psychology perspectives on topical health related phenomena
- Key ideas and theories in the practice of health psychology and the biopsychosocial foundations of population health and illness
- The relationship between health psychology and other related academic and practice disciplines

Learning Outcomes

On completing the course the student will be able to:

1. Identify, reflect on and critically evaluate the links between contemporary health inequalities and the discipline of health psychology
2. Identify, reflect on and critically evaluate the need for a psychological perspective in healthcare provider roles
3. Critically evaluate the various theoretical perspectives used in health psychology and related disciplines
4. Evaluate the contribution of related disciplines to health psychology by critically appraising medical and health services research that examine behaviour and other psychological factors

Basic Reading

Johnson, B. T., & Acabchuk, R. L. (2018). What are the keys to a longer, happier life? Answers from five decades of health psychology research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 196, 218-226.

Assessment

Assessment will be by continuous assessment (100%).

Semester 2

PS587 Psychological Processes in Illness and Health Care

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Professor AnnMarie Groarke
Contributors: Professor AnnMarie Groarke, Ms AnneMarie Keane, Dr Pádraig MacNeela, Dr Caroline Heary and Guest Lecturers

Description

This course covers the role and application of psychological processes in illness and health care delivery. In this module, students will examine:

- i. Predictors of adjustment to chronic illness/ the role and impact of illness representations
- ii. The impact of chronic pain upon psychological functioning and the psychosocial factors influencing coping and adjustment with pain in adults, along with key pain-management strategies and their application;
- iii. Judgement and decision making in a health-care context;
- iv. Preparing children for stressful medical procedures;
- v. The role of rehabilitation and interventions in the context of chronic illness, specifically cancer and cardiovascular disease

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the role of biological, psychological and social factors in illness and health care delivery contexts
2. Demonstrate the application of psychological processes in the rehabilitation and management of chronic illness and health care delivery
3. Critically evaluate the efficacy of interventions in the context of chronic illness and health care delivery

Basic Reading

Morrison, V. & Bennett, P (2016). Introduction to Health Psychology. 4th Ed. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall. (Main Library 616.0019 MOR)

Taylor, S.E. (2015). Health psychology (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill

Assessment

Two-hour written examination (70%), continuous assessment assignments (30%)

PS588
Bio-behavioural
Processes in Health
and Illness

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Dr Gerry Molloy
Contributors: Dr Anne Marie Keane plus
Guest Lecturers

Description

This course covers the role and application of psychological processes in the experience of stress, and the development of disease and illness, distinguishing between causal and mediating role(s) of stress.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students will be able to:

1. Describe and critically evaluate the role of biological, psychological and social factors in illness and health in relation to stress
2. Describe and critically evaluate the application of psychological process in the management of stress.
3. Critically evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of interventions in the context of both acute and chronic stress

Basic Reading

Morrison, V. & Bennett, P (2016). Introduction to Health Psychology. 4th Ed. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall. (Main Library 616.0019 MOR)
Taylor, S.E. (2015). Health psychology (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Assessment

Assessment will be by continuous assessment (100%).

Semesters 1 & 2

PS6137
Research and Professional
Skills

ECTS Weighting: 10
Module Coordinator: Dr Eimear Morrissey
(semester 1) & Dr Jenny Mc Sharry (semester
2)
Contributors: Dr Eimear Morrissey plus Guest
Lecturers

Description

This module introduces a variety of key research and professional skills relevant to Health Psychology.

Students will complete qualitative research and systematic review assignments to develop understanding of these methodological approaches and associated methodological issues. Students will also be introduced to professional ethics, public and patient involvement in research and health psychology competencies and careers.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Engage in reflective analysis of qualitative data
2. Outline the steps required to complete a systematic review and produce a protocol for a systematic review
3. Perform systematic literature searches and complete a systematic review
4. Critically discuss health psychology careers the role of professional ethics in health psychology research and practice

Recommended Reading

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). *Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis*. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications.
- Higgins, J. P., Thomas, J., Chandler, J., Cumpston, M., Li, T., Page, M. J., & Welch, V. A. (Eds.). (2019). *Cochrane handbook for systematic reviews of interventions*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). *Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement*. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 151(4), 264-269.
- Shamseer, L., Moher, D., Clarke, M., Ghersi, D., Liberati, A., Petticrew, M., ... & Stewart, L. A. (2015). *Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis protocols (PRISMA-P) 2015: elaboration and explanation*. *BMJ*, 349, g7647.
- Psychological Society of Ireland. (2011). *Code of professional ethics*. PSI.

Additional readings will be recommended by course contributors and/or posted on Blackboard.

Assessment

Assessment will be continuous (100%), based on a systematic review protocol (10%), systematic review (60%) and a qualitative assignment (30%).

Semesters 1 & 2, and Summer Term

*Part-time students will conduct their dissertations in Year Two of the programme.

PS6136
Minor Dissertation

ECTS Weighting: 30
Module Coordinator: Dr Caroline Heary (main contact) and Prof Molly Byrne

Description

In this module students conduct and report an original empirical research project in a health-related area. The project may be carried out in a psychological laboratory or in a community or health-care setting. Students are encouraged to engage with potential supervisors as soon as they commence their studies in September so that they can develop a research idea.

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a research proposal, with appropriate justification for the proposed study, drawing on appropriate theory and research.
2. Within the proposal, formulate an answerable research question or problem within the field of health psychology and propose an appropriate research methodology to answer it.
3. Complete a School Research Ethics Committee form, outlining ethical considerations in relation to their study.
4. Orally present their research proposal to their colleagues.
5. Conduct an independent piece of research, under the guidance of their supervisor.
6. Work effectively with their supervisor and complete their research study within the timeframe allocated.
7. Collect and analyse data using the appropriate methods (or where appropriate use existing data)
8. Critically examine their own empirical findings and draw sensible conclusions from these.
9. Write up their research in manuscript format suitable for submission to either the British Journal of Health Psychology or the Journal of Health psychology

Basic Reading

American Psychological Association (2009). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association (6th Edition).

Wood, C., Giles, D. & Percy, C. (2012). Your Psychology Project Handbook. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited (2nd Ed).

Assessment

Manuscript based on empirical work (100%).

Submitting your work

As well as written examinations, students will be assessed on the basis of submitted work with respect to certain modules. Submitted work will include assignments set by lecturers. Please take note of the following regulations.

1. Submission arrangements.

With regard to continuously assessed work (e.g., essays), all materials for examination should be submitted electronically, via the Blackboard Turnitin facility, unless alternative arrangements are in place. Students will be notified of such alternatives where relevant.

Please anonymise your submitted work by using your student ID and NOT your name.

2. Word count guidance for continuous assessment

A 10% deviation from the stated word-count is accepted for all assessments.

3. Copies.

You are requested to keep a copy of all submitted work. In the unlikely event that a submitted piece of work is misplaced or that a dispute emerges as to whether or not a piece of work was originally submitted, the *student* will be responsible for supplying the School with a copy of the submission on request.

4. Late Submission of Course Work/Assignments.

All work submitted late will attract a reduced mark, except in particularly extenuating circumstances. The School has decided upon a uniform deduction of **10%** of marks **per day** overdue. This system is intended to ensure that students who meet deadlines are not disadvantaged by fellow students being allowed to submit work late. Accordingly, the system is *not* intended to disadvantage students who encounter genuinely problematic circumstances that interfere with their ability to meet deadlines. Should students experience such circumstances, they are requested to notify the School at the earliest possible opportunity (e.g., *in advance* if possible) so that a fair allowance can be made. If a student is unable to meet a deadline as the result of an illness, an allowance can normally be made so long as medical certification can be produced.

All requests for extensions to continuous assessment deadlines due to illness should be submitted by email to the programme director(s) and the relevant module co-ordinator including a copy of the medical certification.

5. Plagiarism.

Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's work as your own. It can refer to the copying of someone else's work, the adaptation of it for a different purpose, or to the close paraphrasing of it.

Plagiarism goes against the spirit of university education, and to a great extent defeats its purpose. Plagiarising other people's work does not entail true learning, as the information you read and transcribe is processed by you at a cognitively superficial level. Therefore, in a case of plagiarism, the offender is depriving themselves of valuable opportunities to exploit the challenges of a learning environment. Given that most learning is transferable, the offender may also find that their ability to perform well in other assignments is not helped – or indeed is somewhat undermined – by their plagiarism. On the other hand, when an assignment is conducted honestly, it generates useful associations and thought processes that impinge positively on the student's ability to perform well across a range of areas of study, as well as in the area in which the assignment is based. **Self-plagiarism is also prohibited.** This can occur when identical material is submitted for assessment for different parts of the course or across different courses. While it is likely and indeed encouraged that students link assessment tasks on various parts of the course to areas of interest e.g. the

dissertation topic, students are not permitted to submit identical material for separate assessments. Where students are not sure if they are self-plagiarising they should consult the module coordinator or their supervisor for guidance.

In order that conscientious students receive fair marks for work conducted honestly, plagiarism is treated as an extremely serious academic offence (equivalent to cheating in an examination hall). Everything you submit in written form should be your own work, written in your own choice of words. If you wish to refer to the work of another author, you must credit him or her in your text. Otherwise, text copied from other sources – even in small amounts – is completely prohibited. This applies to all written work that you present for your course. It includes the copying of published texts, text downloaded from the Internet, course notes, and the work of other students (or other people generally). **Please note that the 'Turnitin' facility on Blackboard assesses all submissions for degree of plagiarism and unacceptable levels of plagiarism will result in the severest penalties, which depending on the circumstances may include a formal warning, a mark of zero being awarded to your work or your case may be referred to a committee for further investigation. Further information is available at <http://www.nuigalway.ie/plagiarism/>**

6. Feedback

It is course policy that brief narrative feedback will be provided in addition to grades through Blackboard within 3 weeks of submission for all continuous assessments. Where relevant, module coordinators will make students aware in advance of any non-standard feedback delivery.

Assessment

Assessment

As well as continuously assessed work, you will be required to take written examinations at the end of Semester 1 (PS579) and semester 2 (PS587) as part of the overall assessment of your performance.

- 1. Grade bands.** For the MSc in Health Psychology, grades will be based on the following bands:

Percentage	Honours band
70–100	First class honours (equivalent to a Distinction in the UK)
60–69	Second class honours, Grade one (equivalent to a Merit or Commendation in the UK)
50–59	Second class honours, Grade two
40–49	Third class honours
0–39	Fail

- 2. Checks and Appeals.** At the end of the year, after official University transcripts of results have been issued, students are entitled to seek ‘checks’ or ‘appeals’ of their results. Checks and appeals involve payment of an administrative fee, and are subject to formal University procedures operated through the Examinations Office. Further details are available at <https://www.nuigalway.ie/exams/results/appeals/>
- 3. Resits/Deferrals.** Should the need arise for a student to sit a repeat paper or a deferred written examination, this must be scheduled to occur after the full examination cycle for the programme has elapsed. As the MSc in Health Psychology runs through the Summer Term, the full examination cycle is not said to have elapsed until after the examination of Dissertations in August/September 2023.
- 4. Psychological Society of Ireland accreditation.** In order to complete the MSc all modules must be passed to comply with PSI accreditation guidelines

NOTE: The information presented above is for guidance only. Students are referred to the University’s *General Calendar* for information on regulations regarding University courses.

Other Important Information

Attendance

As all lectures, seminars and learning activities for all modules involve developing knowledge and skills in the research and practice of health psychology attendance is a course requirement. Students not attending lectures and seminars for a given module will not have the opportunity or be able to achieve key learning outcomes and this may affect the grade awarded for that module.

Attendance will be collected at all classes to monitor attendance. If you cannot attend for some reason, we would ask you to notify the relevant module leader ideally before the lecture, and if this is not possible then immediately afterwards. Failing to do this is demonstrating a lack of professionalism and courtesy to the module co-ordinators.

Overall Time commitment

Although we appreciate that many students work part-time in addition to their studies we would highlight that those taking the full-time course are expected to devote full-time hours to their studies. A notional number of hours per 10 ECT module is approximately 15 hours per module per week. This would break down into 2 hours face-to-face contact and about 13 hours of self-study. In weeks where there is assessment or group work these figures may be higher. Therefore, in full-time study it would be expected that students devote approximately 40-45 hours per week and in part-time study approximately 20-23 hours to their studies.

Student Liaison with External Bodies

The co-operation of schools, hospitals and other centres in the research work of the School is greatly appreciated. It is the policy of the School to seek the assistance of such outside agencies only for research work at postgraduate level. Any such contact must be with the permission of an assigned lecturer/supervisor or the Head of School.

Computer Facilities

All students may register without charge with the University's Computer Services. In this way they are given access to a number of PC LAN rooms and the University's mainframe computers. The school will also provide access to experimental software in the school PC room throughout the year. Students will have access to these PCs for project and assignment work.

Professional Organisations

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the professional body and scholarly society for psychology in Ireland. Students are entitled to apply for Student Subscribership of PSI. For a small annual fee, Student Subscribers receive PSI's monthly bulletin *The Irish Psychologist*, *The Irish Journal of Psychology* and the many notices issued by the PSI about its programme of activities. They also can avail of reduced registration fees at events organised by the Society. Students are strongly encouraged to become Student Subscribers of PSI. Application forms are available from the School Office, online at www.psihq.ie, or from: The Psychological Society of Ireland, Floor 2, Grantham House, Grantham Street, Dublin 2.

Students may, if they wish, apply for student membership in other psychology organisations such as the American Psychological Association, Association for Psychological Science, and the British Psychological Society (BPS).

Students are also encouraged to join the PSI Division of Health Psychology. The Division's primary aims are to promote awareness of health psychology in Ireland as a distinct specialism, to develop a clearly-defined career pathway for Health Psychologists in Ireland, and to promote and encourage research in Health Psychology and the application of this research to improve health services and the health status of the people of Ireland. The Division of Health Psychology organises training events throughout the year and an annual scientific conference. The Division may provide a useful forum for students to keep up-to-date with developments in the area of Health Psychology in Ireland. Affiliate membership of the Division is available to those studying in a postgraduate training course in Health Psychology for a small fee. Further information is available on the Division website at:

<https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/groups/Division-of-Health-Psychology>

The NUI Galway Student Psychological Society

The NUI Galway Student Psychological Society was established to promote the learning and enjoyment of psychology in the university. In order to become a member of the Society and to receive the regular updates sent out by the Society, students are requested to register at the NUI Galway Societies' Office, submitting their name, e-mail address, identification number and phone number to that office.

<http://www.socs.nuigalway.ie/>

Student services, policies for students and student code of conduct

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the full range of University student services, relevant university policies for students and in particular, the student code of conduct, which should guide your general approach to time as a student at NUI Galway. These can be found here:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/student-services/policies/>

If you have a problem

If you have a query or concern regarding an element of the course, we would ask you to speak with the relevant module co-ordinator in the first instance. Thereafter, the Programme Director(s) (Prof Molly Byrne and Dr Jenny Mc Sharry) are available if you have any queries or concerns. The Head of School, Dr Pdraig MacNeela, is also available to you if you have concerns which cannot be dealt with by the Programme Director(s).

Indicative continuous assessment deadlines Semester 1 (Subject to change)

PS584	Health Promotion and Behaviour Change (Full time students only in year 1)	10 ECTs
PS579	Research Methods in Health Psychology	10 ECTs
PS585	Perspectives in Health Psychology	10 ECTs
PS6137	Research and Professional Skills	10 ECTs
PS6136	Minor Dissertation (Full-time students only)	30 ECTs

Please add the exact dates as you get them in the first week as there will be assignment congestion that you will need to manage.

Week number	Continuous assessment 1	Continuous assessment 2	Continuous assessment 3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.		PS579 MCQ (10%)	
5.	PS585 Practitioner reflection (2,000 words-40%)	PS6136 Brief Research Proposal (1-2 pages)	
6.			
7.	PS579 MCQ (10%)		
8.		PS6137 Qualitative Reflective Practice (Group presentation)	
9.	PS584 CA1 RTE Brainstorm article (1000 words)		
10.	PS585 Discipline Analysis (2,000 words-40%)	PS6137 Qualitative Reflective Practice (Reflective Account 1000 words)	
11.	PS585 Two-minute video (20%)		
12.	PS579 SPSS Assignment (20%)	PS584 Critical Review of Intervention (2500 words-60%)	PS6136 Ethics application & research proposal
Exam Period 6 th Dec- 17 th Dec	Date to be confirmed PS579 Exam (60%)	PS6137 Systematic Review Protocol (1500 words)	
Semester 2 March 2022	PS6137 Systematic Review (3000 words)		