



**STAFFORDSHIRE
UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty of Sciences
Department of Psychology and Mental Health**

UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE IN PSYCHOLOGY

Award Handbook

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CONTENTS

1.0	Welcome and Introduction	1
1.1	What is UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE IN PSYCHOLOGY?	1
1.2	Staff Contact Details	2
1.3	Course Aims and Learning Objectives	2
2.0	Course Structure and Content	4
2.1	Introductory Psychology (SHS85110-1)	4
2.2	Introduction to Research Methods (SHS85109-1)	5
2.3	Course Delivery	6
2.4	Study Expectations	6
2.5	Academic Support	7
3.0	Assessment	9
3.1	Assessment Details	9
3.2	Summative Assessment in Introductory Psychology	10
3.3	Summative Assessment on Introduction to Research Methods	12
3.4	Coursework Assessment Criteria	13
3.5	Draft Assessments	13
3.6	Disagreements about Marks for Assessed Work	13
3.7	Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism	14
3.8	Procedure for Submitting Coursework	15
3.9	Attempting all assessments	16
4.0	Learning Resources	17
4.1	The Library	17
4.2	Course Texts	18
5.0	Additional Information and Support	20
5.1	Study Skills	20
5.2	IT Support	21
5.3	Twitter account	22
5.4	Careers Support	22
	Appendix A: Essentials of Blackboard	24
	Appendix B: Assessment Criteria for Essays	27
	Appendix C: Grading of Assessments	28
	Appendix D: Computer hardware/software requirements	31
	Appendix E: Ethics	33

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the University Certificate in Psychology at Staffordshire University. In this handbook you will find information on the course structure and content, course aims and objectives, the staff involved, assignments, distance learning access, how to communicate with us, other learning resources, expectations for study, regulations, and student feedback and evaluation.

1.1 *What is UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATE IN PSYCHOLOGY?*

The University Certificate in Psychology, is designed to provide an appropriate entry qualification for conversion honours degrees in psychology. Conversion degrees, such as our own Graduate Diploma in Psychology, offer a fast track route to eligibility for Graduate Basis for Registration with the British Psychological Society, and are therefore the first step towards further postgraduate training in psychology aimed at professional status.

In order to be accepted onto approved Conversion degrees like the Graduate Diploma students must first possess a degree in a discipline other than psychology. A second requirement is that they have studied the equivalent of half a year, or 60 credits of psychology, at degree level. Our University Certificate in Psychology provides the necessary 60 credits for those who have not studied any psychology before. The content is designed to feed directly into our own Graduate Diploma in Psychology Conversion degree, though we anticipate that it should also be acceptable to other Conversion degrees as an entry qualification.

In addition students who complete the University Certificate in Psychology successfully will attain a certificated University Certificate.

1.2 Staff Contact Details

Award Administrator:

Mrs Amanda Dinnivan

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The above staff are responsible for the overall running of the course. In addition, you will be allocated a **personal tutor** who will contact you within the first few weeks of the course to introduce themselves. Your personal tutor is your first point of contact if you need to talk to someone urgently about a difficulty (i.e. not just seeking clarification or advice on an academic issue).

1.3 Course Aims and Learning Objectives

It is important that you have a clear idea of both the aims of the course (i.e. what it sets out to achieve), and its learning objectives (i.e. what you should be able to achieve more specifically in terms of demonstrable outcomes once you have completed the course).

1.3.1 Course Aims

The aims of the University Certificate in Psychology are:

- To offer a well structured and coherent learning experience for students, which provides the opportunity to gain a basic foundation in the core areas of Psychology
- To facilitate the development of a range of skills, both discipline specific and more general, which will be required for future honours level study in psychology
- To offer a stimulating and supportive learning environment which caters for a range of student needs, with the opportunity to engage with enthusiastic and well qualified staff

1.3.2 Course Learning Outcomes

Learning objectives specify what you should be able to do when you have successfully completed a specified amount of studying. They therefore provide a way for you to keep a track of what you should be achieving and the key skills and abilities that you are going to be assessed on.

There are specific learning objectives associated with each module and each topic (full details of these specific objectives can be found under the relevant section on Blackboard). However, for the course as a whole, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic understanding of a range of psychological concepts and theories.
- Demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge in core areas of psychology.

- Demonstrate the ability to access relevant material from a range of available sources.
- Demonstrate basic understanding of research design, research ethics, data analysis, and descriptive and inferential statistical testing.
- Demonstrate the ability to solve problems through the use of appropriate psychological models and research methodology.
- Demonstrate reflection on a range of psychological issues and ideas.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply psychological concepts and methods to real life issues.
- Demonstrate discipline-specific skills in written communication e.g. citing research evidence and presenting arguments for and against particular psychological approaches or perspectives.

2.0 Course Structure and Content

The course consists of two 30 credit modules: (i) Introductory Psychology, and (ii) Introduction to Research Methods. The course material should be followed in the order that it is presented. You are assessed at different points throughout the course and you need to ensure you have read the appropriate material.

2.1 Introductory Psychology (SHS85110-1)

Introductory Psychology covers a variety of basic psychological material in 5 core areas: social psychology, developmental psychology, individual differences, cognitive psychology, and biological psychology.

Social Psychology is the study of social interactions and influences in relationships and groups. You look at the following areas: social perception and communication; attitudes and attitude change; prejudice; behaviour in small groups.

Cognitive Psychology is the study of the internal workings of the human mind, for example, thought, language, perception and memory. You look at the following areas: perception; memory; problem-solving; learning.

Developmental Psychology looks at how we develop from birth to adulthood. You look at the following areas: theories of cognitive development; social development.

Individual Differences looks at the psychology of human individual differences, the ways which we are different. You look at the following areas: intelligence; personality.

Biological Psychology looks at how the brain is involved in human behaviour. You look at the following areas: basic anatomy of the brain; anatomy of the neuron; physical development of the brain; functional development of the brain.

2.2 Introduction to Research Methods (SHS85109-1)

This module is rather different in focus, and concentrates on the methods through which psychologists collect, analyse and report their conceptual and theoretical ideas. It also covers research design issues and basic statistical techniques. It is divided into 10 topics that follow on from each other in a logical order. Thus while you might exercise *some* freedom in terms of the order you study Topics in Introductory Psychology, it is crucial that the Topics in this module are studied in the correct order.

1. The principles of ethical research and research design
2. Levels of measurement and descriptive statistics

3. Normal distribution & Z scores
4. Hypothesis testing and parametric assumptions
5. Effect size & power, reliability & validity
6. Tests of difference (Parametric: t tests)
7. Test of difference (Non-parametric)
8. Correlation
9. Analysing nominal data
10. Qualitative research methods

2.3 Course Delivery

The course material will be made available via the Blackboard learning system. Once you have enrolled on the course you will be able to use the user name provided in your induction letter to access Blackboard.

🔗 <http://blackboard.staffs.ac.uk>. All materials for your first module (Introductory Psychology) will be available when you log into Blackboard. Don't feel daunted by this – **take your time** and please try to work through the material sequentially. Materials for the second module (Introduction to Research Methods) will be made available after completion of Introductory Psychology. Help on 'getting started with Blackboard' can be found in Appendix A.

2.4 Study Expectations

The Distance Learning mode of study gives you a fair amount of freedom in the pace of study. You might study at a steady pace throughout, or study harder at some periods and take a bit of a break during others. However, it is important that you are aware of the likely commitment required in terms of total study time and study time per topic. While we appreciate that you may need to continue in full-time employment during your study period, we do assume that you will be able to study enough during evenings, weekends and holidays to meet this expectation.

To give you a clearer idea of what is involved, the total learning hours for 60 credits is approximately 600 hours. These need spread to be out across the duration of the course (about 31 weeks). From this you could work out an approximately weekly number of study hours.

Do remember this is only an estimate and you may need more or much less time than this! Also remember that study time includes the time spent revising for and taking module tests, and preparing for and writing coursework assignments. Having a weekly timetable of all your commitments, which explicitly includes study time, may ensure you don't fall behind. Evidence suggests that concentration suffers if you study for more than 50 minutes without a break, so bear this in mind. It is also important to allow yourself some relaxation time to 'switch off' before going to bed, if you are working in the evening.

The other obvious feature of Distance Learning we need to consider is the absence of direct face-to-face access to tutors for support and clarification. You will need to quite rapidly refine your independent learning and time management skills, and be quite disciplined in your approach to your studies. However, since you already have a first degree in another discipline, and probably significant work experience too, we anticipate that you will be able to transfer these generic skills and experience - for example IT skills, written communication skills and focused reading skills - to this learning experience. Remember that the material you are engaging with is at the standard of degree level/Year 1. We therefore feel confident that it will not prove to be too great a challenge for you! We do offer some Study Skills advice in Section 5.1.

2.5 Academic Support

There are a number of potential sources of support you may need to draw on during the course of your studies. In each case it is important that you know how, when and who to contact.

In all cases it is required by the University that you email tutors via your Staffordshire University web mail address -@student.staffs.ac.uk. We will also use this address if we need to contact you personally, so remember to check your mail box frequently. You can access your student email using MyPortal which can be found here: <https://myportal.staffs.ac.uk>. Just log in with the same password you use for Blackboard and a link to your student email appears in a box on the right-hand side of the screen.

Academic Queries: If you have specific queries on topic content you should initially post your query on the **Discussion Board**. However, if you do need to talk to someone, contact the staff member identified as responsible for it (see Staff Information on Blackboard). You can email or telephone; obviously the former is better, as it avoids the frustration of not finding the person in their office at the time you call.

Remember that staff do have other teaching, administrative and research commitments that mean they are not on site every day. We will normally answer every query within two working days, unless unavoidably prevented e.g. through illness. We will try to inform you via 'Announcements' of any staff absence longer than a day or so.

If you feel the query is more urgent, and really cannot wait up to three days, then either signal this with the word 'urgent' in your email subject heading, or contact the Psychology Office on 01782 294543. The Secretary will pass your message onto the member of staff you wish to contact immediately.

Other Queries: Queries about more general difficulties or problems e.g. illness, general progress, enrolment etc. should be addressed initially to your personal tutor.

Support from fellow students: Whilst the services listed above can provide more formal institutional support, the mutual or peer support provided by fellow students is also important. To facilitate this we have set up a **Discussion Board** called the **Student Café Bar** on Blackboard. Here you (and we!) can post more general comments you may wish to share with all staff and students on the course. Through this you might also choose to share individual emails with each other for further contact – this is entirely up to you!

2.5.1 Course Engagement Policy

In order to check that you have gained access to Blackboard successfully, we will be monitoring your interactivity with Blackboard. Every time you log on or enter a specific site through Blackboard we will know. Students who are not engaging with the material as much as their peers (deemed as the lowest 10%) will be chased by their personal tutor to ensure everything is alright. This will come eight weeks after enrolment. Another measure of successful learning will be through the online Discussion Boards (see section 2.5 on Academic Support for more information on use of Discussion Boards). Students are strongly encouraged to use these to talk with each other and their tutor about course related enquiries. Chat room apathy (entering discussion boards, but not leaving any information) will also be checked to ensure that students are engaging with the material and each other.

3.0 Assessment

3.1 Assessment Details

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment does not receive a formal grading but is designed to help you assess how well you are working towards and meeting the learning objectives of the module.

This should occur through completion of the **Activities** which you will find associated with each section of each topic.

Activities will vary depending on the module and the topic. On Introduction to Research Methods for example, many of the activities will involve working through sample data to produce descriptive and inferential statistics. On Introductory Psychology there will be even more variety. You may be asked to read a section in a course text and answer a question on it, apply some psychological concepts to a real life situation, think of an example of a concept, critically evaluate an idea or methodology, or comment on some existing research.

Once you have completed an activity you should refer to the Activity Feedback section documents where you will be given an indication of what you should have learnt from the activity. Remember it is really important to tackle the activity properly, before looking at the feedback - this way you really will learn so much more from doing it.

Summative Assessment

This refers to work that is formally graded and is described further below.

3.2 Summative Assessment in Introductory Psychology

There will be two on-line multiple choice tests (counting 20% each) and one 2,000 word essay (counting 60%) for the overall assessment of this module.

1. Multiple Choice Questionnaires (MCQs)

Each MCQ will be timed for 45 minutes, and consist of 30 questions. MCQ 1 will cover social psychology, cognitive psychology and individual differences (intelligence), and MCQ 2 will cover developmental psychology, biological psychology and individual differences (personality).

MCQ's will be available online from the time specified from the start of the module until the assessment deadline. **You can take your MCQs anytime during the module but they must be completed by the deadline.**

You can access the test at any time during this period. Once you have accessed the MCQ it will remain open until you decide to submit. You have 45 minutes in which to complete the test. *Please note that Blackboard will give you a 1 minute warning but will not prevent you from submitting past the time set.* Make sure you keep an eye on your time as tests which go over the 45 minutes may be subject to penalties. **This timing will not give you enough time to look up all the answers, so you will obviously need to do some revision before you take the test!**

A practice MCQ consisting of 25 questions will be made available some time before the 'real' one - again watch for the Announcement.

MCQ grades will be made available to students online once all marking is complete. These can be accessed directly from Blackboard, and again we will announce when they become available.

2. Essay

You are required to write a 2,000 word essay. You have a choice of 6 titles, from the following areas:

1. Social psychology
2. Cognitive psychology
3. Individual differences (intelligence)
4. Individual differences (personality).
5. Developmental psychology
6. Biological psychology

The deadline for the essay is the same as for the MCQs.

3.3 Summative Assessment on Introduction to Research Methods

1. Concept Tests

There are two online concept tests (counting 20% each), which will run in a similar fashion to the MCQ's on Introductory Psychology, but which will contain short answer questions., which you must answer in 45 minutes. Answers have to be typed into a box following each question. Each test will be available from the start of the module until the assessment deadline. **You can take your concept tests anytime during the module but they must be completed by the deadline.**

2. Practical Report

There is one practical research report of 2,000 words and counting for 60% of the overall assessment of the module. **The deadline for the practical report is the same as for the concept tests.**

Writing practical reports is a key skill if you are studying psychology. There is an approved format which is in line with the way in which research is reported in academic journals. You can find full details of how to write practical reports correctly in the Supporting Documents section under 'Assignments' on Blackboard.

3.4 Coursework Assessment Criteria

There are two types of coursework you will be asked to complete: essays, and practical reports. It is important that you understand the assessment criteria that will be used to grade your work. These criteria also derive from the learning objectives of the module concerned and can be found in appendix B (also available on 'Assignments' in Blackboard). Details of the way in which we grade your work, and regulations regarding assessment of work, can be found in Appendix C.

3.5 Draft Assessments

At University, you are expected to be able to demonstrate your ability to produce work independently. **We are therefore unable to comment on full drafts of assessed coursework in advance of a deadline date.** However, both modules provide opportunities for formative learning via various activities. Although we cannot read full drafts of your work, we will, wherever possible, be happy to discuss your assignment with you in advance of the deadline.

3.6 Disagreements about Marks for Assessed Work

The mark you receive for your assessed work comes at the end of a rigorous marking and moderation system. Some of you, but not all of you, will notice that your work has been marked by more than one person. This is because, in accordance with University policy, we double mark a proportion of all assessments to ensure that the standard is consistent across the module. In assessment boards, we also compare marks across modules to make sure that no one module is seriously out of line in terms of marks with others. Samples of marked work are also sent to a team of external examiners (academics in other Universities) who will

confirm that marking and standards are appropriate and comparable to those in other Universities.

If you are not happy with the mark you receive for assessed work, you should first ensure that you read the feedback for that work. If you then want to talk more about it, you should contact your personal tutor, or the tutor who marked your assignment.

Because of the rigorous system we have in place to ensure standards, unfortunately it is not possible for you to appeal against the academic judgement that has led to you being awarded a particular mark. If however, you believe a genuine error has been made with your mark, you should contact one of the award leaders.

3.7 Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to passing someone else's writing off as your own. You will naturally, in the process of writing course assignments, make notes from and paraphrase the content of a variety of primary and secondary sources. This is perfectly acceptable in relatively small doses. What you must not do is copy out chunks of material word for word without acknowledgement. If you do feel it necessary to use direct quotes then you must place them in parentheses and provide the appropriate reference, including page number. Where plagiarism or academic misconduct is detected in students' work, and can be proved, that work can be awarded a zero grade.

We take instances of academic misconduct very seriously indeed, and you should note particularly that you will be submitting coursework via Turnitin UK, the University's plagiarism software. This software is capable of detecting similarities between student's work as well as finding the original print or internet sources of copied text. A detailed account of how to do this is available in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

The University has regulations concerning academic misconduct in any form of assessment. **IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO FAMILIARISE YOURSELVES WITH THESE.** These are detailed in the University's Academic Award Regulations. These University regulations can be found under the Student Information section of the University Web site http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/academic_misconduct_tcm44-26770.pdf

3.8 Procedure for Submitting Coursework

Staffordshire University uses anonymous marking procedures, unless it is not appropriate to do so. You should therefore submit your essays and practical reports identifying yourself only by the Student Number you are given at enrolment. Please ensure that your student number is stated on the work itself (e.g. on the title page) and the cover sheet that you complete prior to submitting your work. **The filename for your work should be your student number followed by the assignment type (i.e. essay or lab report). For example '0124565_essay.doc'.** We will identify your work by name after marking is completed.

You should submit an **electronic copy** of you work through **Blackboard**. If you encounter a problem when submitting your work via Blackboard you should email a copy to Amanda Dinnivan (a.m.dinnivan@staffs.ac.uk) to arrive by the deadline date. You will receive guidance on exactly how to submit online through Blackboard when you begin the course.

The turn around time for marking is 20 working days. The anticipated feedback return times for all assessments will be published on Blackboard. All marks for your work are provisional until final ratification by the appropriate Assessment Board.

PLEASE NOTE

It is important that you do everything you can to meet the deadlines. If you do not do this you will only get behind with the programme of work and compound the

pressure on you at later points in the course. We do, however, recognise that a range of reasons, most obviously illness, may materialise which prevent you from getting work in by the deadline specified. In these cases we follow the University extenuating circumstances procedures. For further details please refer to:

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/images/extenuating_cir_tcm68-15855.pdf

NOTES

- We cannot give you an 'extension'. If you have not completed the work for the deadline you can either submit the work within the next 10 days and it will be marked but the grade capped at 4, or if you have a good reason for not doing the work, you submit with an attached filled out extenuating circumstances form with supporting evidence and this claim will go to the extenuating circumstances panel and will either be upheld or not. If upheld, you will get a normal mark for the work, if not the work will be marked as if late and capped at grade point 4. Over the 10 days and the work will be regarded as a non-submission. We are making a note of this here so that you know not to contact us asking for an extension over the deadline as we can not give you one.
- Due to University regulations, if you do not submit work for a module (without extenuating circumstances) you will be classified as a non-completer and withdrawn from the course. You will not be able to re-sit any components of the course if they were not attempted the first time round (with the exception of work covered by extenuating circumstances).

3.9 Attempting all assessments

It is important that you attempt ALL assessments for all your modules. You should ensure that the appropriate coursework is submitted on time and required timed assessments (including exams, class-tests, presentations, vivas) are attended. The University has changed its regulations to minimise the number of students who do not complete modules. Now, **your right to a second (referral)**

attempt at a failed assessment(s) will be conditional on whether you have or have not made a first attempt (unless a successful claim for extenuating circumstances has been made) at the assessment(s). What does that mean? It means that in most cases, unless a successful claim for extenuation is made, students who have not attempted assessments will not be allowed a referral for the module, will therefore fail the module and if a core module, fail the award!


Attempting all assessments is therefore ESSENTIAL.

This re-enforces the fact that it is always better **to submit a half-finished assignment than not submit anything or attempt an examination you are not confident about than not attend** – you may gain sufficient marks to pass the module or at least allow the possibility for compensation between modules (if allowed by your award).

If there are **extenuating circumstances** that prevent you from submitting / attending assessments then **ensure you gather evidence to support an extenuating claim.** Again, submitting a draft assignment by the required deadline is better than nothing and if the extenuation claim is successful a further assessment opportunity can always be offered. If you are unable to attend a timed-assessment due to an extenuating circumstance you should also **inform the Faculty at the earliest opportunity** and then make an extenuation claim.

4.0 Learning Resources

4.1 The Library

You will find the library a useful resource, in particular the online journals. You can access the library via:  <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/uniservices/infoservices/library/>

From this page you can access e-books via the Ebrary, and journals via Swetswise e-journal service. If you have difficulty accessing library resources, please contact the library helpdesk.

University Libraries – Under a recent agreement between University libraries (UK Libraries Plus) all distance learning students can now join their local University library (with a few exceptions) and use most of the facilities available, including borrowing books. Information at: <http://www.access.sconul.ac.uk/index.html>

4.2 Course Texts

As soon as possible after enrolment we recommend that you purchase the essential course texts. You may also want to consider buying (or reading) some of the recommended texts.

4.2.1 For Introductory Psychology

Essential reading:

- Martin, N.G., Carlson, N.R., & Buskist, W. (2010). *Psychology*. (4th Edition). Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

Recommended reading:

Ashcraft, M. H. (2005). *Cognition*. Harlow: Pearsons Education Ltd.

Boyd, D. & Bee, H. (2008). *Lifespan Development* (5th Edition). Harlow: Pearson Publishers.

Eysenck, M. & Keane, M.T. (2005), *Cognitive Psychology: A Student's Handbook*. Hove: Psychology Press.

Harris, M. & Butterworth, G. (2002), *Developmental Psychology: A Student's Handbook*. Hove: Psychology Press.

Hogg, M.A. & Vaughan, G.M. (2008) *Social Psychology (5th Edition)*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

4.2.2 For Introduction to Research Methods

The choice of which text book to purchase for this module depends, to a larger extent, on you own individual needs and ability. Therefore, we have provided to brief description of each book to help you make your choice.

Essential reading:

- Dancy, C. P. & Reidy, J. (2007). *Statistics without maths for psychology (4th Edition)*. Harlow: Pearson Publishers.

This book provides good all round coverage of research methods, statistics, and using SPSS. Unfortunately, the most recent edition is written for SPSS version 15, so you will notice some minor differences from the version of SPSS you will be using (i.e. version 17). However, your lecture notes and workbook activities will provide guidance on using SPSS version 17.

Recommended reading:

- Clark-Carter, D. (2009). *Quantitative Psychological Research: The Complete Student's Companion*. Hove: Psychology Press.

This book guides the reader through all stages involved in undertaking quantitative psychological research, from accessing the relevant literature, through designing and conducting a study, analysing data, and reporting the research. This book does not cover the use of SPSS, so if you choose this book you may also need to purchase a book specifically designed to cover SPSS (see below).

- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS (3rd Edition)*. London: Sage.

This book provides excellent coverage of research design, statistical analysis, and SPSS 17. However, the level of explanation goes beyond that required for the course, which many students may find overwhelming. For this reason, we haven't made it the essential text, though it would be suitable for students who are confident with statistics or want a more detailed text. This book also has the advantage of referring to SPSS 17 and will last you through further psychology study.

Be sure to also check the 'Books' section on Blackboard for each module. This may contain more up-to-date recommended reading, as we will update Blackboard if new and improved books are released during the course.

5.0 Additional Information and Support

General information for students of Staffordshire University can be found on the University web site  <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/current/student/index.php>

General induction information for Faculty of Sciences students can be found at: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student_information/

The Student Union web site is linked from the above address. You can find general information about careers, disability services, counselling etc on

 <http://www.staffsunion.com/>

5.1 Study Skills

Despite the fact that you have already proved yourself to be good student and have therefore presumably already developed a range of effective study skills, it is worth considering what additional or different skills you might need as an independent distance learner studying psychology for the first time. To help you, we have

provided guides on a number of key study skills in psychology on Blackboard; these include: essay writing, referencing, reading, writing, critical evaluation, and exam skills. The library also provides useful study skill information via

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/uniservices/infoservices/studyskills/index.php>

5.2 IT Support

Details of the computer hardware/software requirements for the course are described in Appendix D.

IT support is available from the University Information Technology Service (ITS)

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/uniservices/infoservices/it/help/helpdesks/index.php>

If you have problems with Blackboard or your own computer system you should contact the Student IT Help Desk on 01782 294771 or Email libraryhelpdesk@staffs.ac.uk. We will ensure that the problem is resolved as soon as possible if it originates from our end of things. For problems originating in your own system this provides a diagnostic service to try to identify the type of problem that you are having, and therefore who you can contact to fix it:

- To talk through connection problems to attempt to identify where the fault may lie
- To give advice on standard packages
- To check your account
- To supply a list of PC hardware repairers in the local area
- To send copies of IT documentation which should help solve specific problems

If you need other IT information please see:

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/information_services/

All the University computer systems are available for access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the year, subject only to breakdown and scheduled

maintenance. Advanced notice of scheduled maintenance will be communicated to you through the Announcements on Blackboard.

Please note that support for AppleMacs are limited and, indeed, the software provided for the Introductory Research Methods module will not run on a Mac without additional software which will not be provided.

5.3 Twitter account

Although you are free to use the Student Café on Blackboard as a place for informal discussion, we realise that you may want to communicate with each other via a less academic means that is not hosted by the University. This may help create a stronger sense of community and support. In order to facilitate this, we have created a Twitter account. Search for and follow '@CertPsych_Staffs.'

We hope that you will use this resource as a place to interact and build friendships with your fellow University Certificate in Psychology students.

5.4 Careers Support

The University careers service is able to provide a wide range of information and advice on potential career paths. The contact details can be found through the links on the Student Centre website.

 http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study_here/student_services/careers/index.jsp

Assuming you are intending to proceed to an accredited Conversion course after this one, with the intention of then pursuing more specialised postgraduate training in Psychology, you should also contact the British Psychological Society, if you have

not already done so. They provide a range of literature on the various specialist fields; their web site also provides a list of accredited courses in the different areas.

 <http://www.bps.org.uk/>

Successful completion of the University Certificate in Psychology can lead you immediately on to enrolment on our Graduate Diploma in Psychology. The Graduate Diploma will provide eligibility for Graduate Basis for Certification with the British Psychological Society, and can be studied over one year full-time or two years part-time. You may apply for the Graduate Diploma at any point throughout your studies on this programme and will be made a conditional offer subject to successful completion, thus guaranteeing you a place on the Diploma for the session immediately following your studies. We anticipate that the University Certificate in Psychology will also provide entry to other Conversion Courses in other institutions.

Finally, you can access further information regarding careers in psychology from the Study Skills section of Blackboard.

Appendix A: Essentials of Blackboard

A written guide to using Blackboard can be found by following the link on the Welcome announcement.

Before you start

To access Blackboard you must have a PC running Windows NT4, 95, 98, 2000, XP or Vista. You must also have either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox.

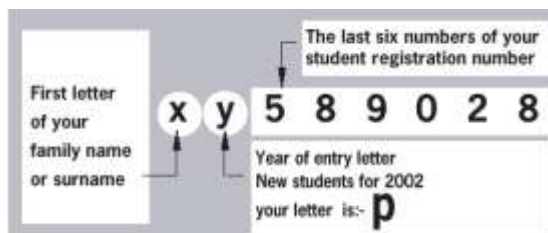
Username and Passwords

In order for you to access Blackboard you will need a username and password. You can work this out in the following way.

Your username is made up from:

- Your family name initial letter
- Your year of entry denoted by a single letter
- The last six digits of your student registration number

Now work out your own username as shown below:-



Password

Your initial password is your date of birth, typed as six numbers with no spaces e.g. 201082.

How do I access Blackboard?

1. Start your web browser.
2. Carefully type in the following address, which will take you to

 <http://blackboard.staffs.ac.uk>

3. Click on the **Login** button.



4. Now enter your username and password in the appropriate boxes and click the **Login** button once more.

Note: to exit Blackboard, when logged in, click **Logout** at top right of the screen.

What to do if Access Fails?

There are a number of reasons why your computer access may fail. If the problem originates with your own system e.g. your computer breaks down, or your internet access fails, then we will expect you to be responsible for sorting the problem out, though you can obtain diagnostic advice from the University's Technical Support group - see Section 5.2 .

If the problem originates at our end, e.g. with the Blackboard system or the University Server, we will probably be aware of it, but do email the Course Administrator (Amanda Dinnivan) to let us know if the problem persists for longer than 24 hours, or affects assignment submission.

On the odd occasion there may be planned updating work being carried out on the University server, email systems or Blackboard by our own Information Services. We will post an announcement on the Blackboard home page in advance if possible, warning you of the times when access will be restricted.

Appendix B: Assessment Criteria for Essays

- Work should be well-organised, with a logical sequence of points, a clear rationale, and effective introduction and conclusion.
- The style of writing should be clear, fluent and succinct. Spelling and grammar should be correct. Coursework must be presented in word-processed form.
- Work must not exceed the word limit assigned.
- Psychological evidence must be cited in support of statements made.
- Evidence of reading in psychology texts is essential.
- Good work will show some evidence of critical evaluation and the integration of ideas.
- Reference sections must be provided, and correctly formatted according to American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

Assessment criteria for practical reports

- Clarity of writing with an appropriate level of detail for the format. Spelling and grammar should be correct. The work must be word-processed.
- Reports should contain all the standard elements - Title, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, References (APA format) and Appendices.
- There must be evidence of reading in psychology texts.
- The results section should report the appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics, and effect sizes. Non-significant results should be accompanied by power analyses.
- The appendix must show all workings and contain copies of computer printout
- Good work will show evidence of wider reading in specific texts and will discuss the practical and theoretical implications of the study's findings.

Appendix C: Grading of Assessments

When you receive your work back after marking, you will find the mark is given as a Grade Point, between 1 and 15. Included below are definitions of the grade point system and an indication of how these grade points convert into percentages and classifications.

Grade Point	Knowledge	Communication	Analysis
15, 14, 13 First 70%+	subject/discipline-specific knowledge is used to illuminate the task and to make links with related issues/tasks i.e. a capability of extending particular analysis to other issues/tasks; where appropriate discipline/ paradigm boundaries are recognised and critical awareness demonstrated.	the structure is clear; the form of communication/medium selected is appropriate to the task; the argument is clear and coherently developed; appropriate technical and/or conceptual language or set of skills is used with confidence.	the focus of the question/problem/ task is understood; related issues identified; theory and concepts are deployed in a manner which is critically self-aware; ability to deploy competing/ alternative/ analyses/ perspectives/ solutions is apparent

<p>10, 11, 12</p> <p>Upper Second</p> <p>60-69%</p>	<p>subject/discipline specific knowledge is used to illuminate the task</p>	<p>structure is clear; the form of communication/medium selected is appropriate to the task, overall the argument is concise and coherently developed; an appropriate technical and/or conceptual language is used with reasonable confidence.</p>	<p>the focus of the question/problem/task is understood and one or two related issues identified; analytical techniques/ methods are theoretically informed; some awareness of competing/alternative analyses/perspectives/ solutions is apparent.</p>
<p>7, 8, 9</p> <p>Lower Second</p> <p>50-59%</p>	<p>there is evidence that subject specific knowledge related to the core issues or tasks has been selected</p>	<p>the structure is broadly appropriate, elements of development/progression and basic concepts are correctly used.</p>	<p>the focus of the question/ problem/ task is understood and key issues identified.</p>
<p>4, 5, 6</p> <p>Third</p> <p>40-49%</p>	<p>there is evidence of subject/ discipline/specific knowledge</p>	<p>one or two elements of an appropriate structure are present.</p>	<p>the focus of the question/problem/task is understood and one or two issues identified.</p>
<p>3, 2</p> <p>Compensatable Fail</p> <p>20-39%</p>	<p>subject/discipline specific knowledge is present but is anecdotal, scant and/or confused.</p>	<p>elements of an appropriate structure are present but overall the structure is partial and/or confused. Appropriate concepts are referred to but are poorly expressed.</p>	<p>the question/ problem/task is understood, but the key issues are ignored and there is no evidence of understanding concepts.</p>

1 Non-compensatable fail 1-19%	subject/discipline specific knowledge is not present	structure is inappropriate or missing.	there is no evidence of appropriate analysis or conceptual language.
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REGULATIONS

In order to be attain an accredited qualification (University Certificate) on the University Certificate in Psychology you must pass both of the 30 credit modules that make up the course, Introductory Psychology and Introduction to Research Methods.

Each module has a number of pieces of summative assessment. For each module it is required that each piece of summative assessment receives a minimum of Grade Point 2, and that the averaged marks for the module reach a minimum Grade Point 4, in order for the module to be passed.

Where the conditions above are not met, you will be given one referral opportunity to make good the failed piece or pieces of work. **Referred work will only receive a maximum of Grade Point 4.**

A transcript showing the marks received for summative assessments can be obtained on request. Otherwise you will simply be notified that you have passed or failed the course.

Finally you may wish to refer to the University's General Student Regulations on

 http://www.staffs.ac.uk/images/generalstudentregs_tcm68-12714.pdf

Appendix D: Computer hardware/software requirements

You will need a PC with Internet access and CD/DVD drive (for accessing CD roms which accompany some textbooks). We recommend the use of [Mozilla Firefox](#) or [MS Internet Explorer](#).

We also recommend using the latest version of some anti-virus software e.g. [AVAST](#). Unfortunately the required statistical software that we can provide access to under license will not run on Apple Macintosh computers. If you are planning to use a PC supplied by your employer it is essential that you obtain permission to use it for this purpose, and to load any additional software.

In order to run the statistical package SPSS you will also need to be running on Windows98, WindowsMe, Windows NT4, Windows 2000, or Windows XP. Acrobat Reader may be necessary for accessing some Web-based materials, but can be [downloaded directly from the Internet](#).

Version 17 of SPSS is called PASW 17. However in order to be consistent with existing textbooks, we will still refer to the programme as SPSS. You can download SPSS 17 from our server. Here are instructions on how to do it:

- Click the link for down loading SPSS:
<ftp://ftp.staffs.ac.uk/psychology/distancelearning/>
- Right click the file "PASW_Statistics_1702_win_en.exe"
- Left click on 'Save target as..'
- Save it to a folder e.g. c:\My Documents
- Double click the downloaded file
- Click 'Run'
- Follow the on screen instructions
- When prompted click the button next to 'Site license' (second option down)
- For User Name enter IT Services
- For Organisation enter Staffordshire University
- For Serial Number enter f633452c81d224cab53a

You will need to use some of this package on the **Introduction to Research Methods** module. Please note that you are entitled to this access to SPSS under a license for students held by Staffordshire University, and it is illegal for you to continue to use the package once you no longer have student status. The lecture notes will guide you through some of the basic processes in SPSS, and your reading will further help you to navigate your way around the programme.

Appendix E: Ethics

There are ethical guidelines which psychologists (*including you*) have to follow when carrying out a piece of research. In carrying out psychological studies, psychologists have three sets of responsibilities:

1. They have responsibilities to the **research community** - other psychologists and academics doing research - in that they should only publish results that are well founded. So this means don't make up your results.
2. They have a responsibility to **society**. They must consider the social and political implications of any work that they do publish. For example, studies of race and IQ, or the effects of mothers working on children's behaviour.
3. They have responsibilities towards their **participants**. This relates to how they do their work. They have a code of conduct to follow. This code of conduct is something you should be familiar with since you are training to be psychologists and will be carrying out research of your own.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) and the American Psychological Association (APA) have agreed a code of conduct, which you will cover in more detail in the course documents. In particular, when you come to conducting your research report you need to be aware of:

- **Confidentiality and Privacy.**

Psychologists approach this in one of two ways, they either guarantee anonymity or ask for permission to identify individuals. Most results are made anonymous by using an ID number rather than a name during analysis. If a procedure is in any way intimate or embarrassing, participants should be reminded that they can withhold information or can leave if they wish.

- **Debriefing.**

Participants should **always** be debriefed following participation in a study, i.e. the purpose of the study is revealed. The aim is to make the participants feel the same way about themselves as they did before the study.

There is further information on this in the course documents at the beginning of the Research Methods module.