

Programme Regulations: 2025/26

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology – 8861F

Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (International route) – 8824F*

***This programme has been suspended for 2025/2026 entry**

Notes:

- (i) *These Programme Regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Doctor of Philosophy Degree Progress Regulations and Assessment Regulations and the University's Taught Programme Regulations.*
- (ii) *As the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) is a qualification leading to professional registration, the University has an overriding duty of care to ensure that all trainees graduating from the programme not only meet the academic requirements but are also physically and mentally fit to practise and are of good character. The case of any student whose fitness for professional practice is a matter for concern shall be considered under the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure.*
- (iii) *Trainees will be required to undergo appropriate DBS and Healthcare checks as stipulated in University and School policies.*
- (iv) *Trainees will be required to fulfil all requirements for placements (including clinical access) as dictated by the relevant Care Quality Commission Regulated provider.*
- (v) *The DClinPsy programme is an attendance-based programme and is principally delivered face to face at the Newcastle City Campus and associated clinical locations. Although some teaching and structured guided learning may be delivered online, due to the clinical and integrated structure of the programme, sessions planned for face-to-face delivery cannot be substituted by other forms of delivery, including blended, online and remote.*

1. Programme Structure

- (a) The programme is available for study in full-time mode only.
- (b) The period of study shall be 3 years starting in October. One additional extension year is permitted as PGR submission period for research submissions only. A further additional extension year can then be applied for via the NuReflect system providing reasons and evidence. The maximum candidature is 5 years.
- (c) During the programme of study all trainees studying for the DClinPsy have to attend all required teaching and placement activities
- (d) The programme of study comprises taught, research and clinical placement elements. All elements of the programme are compulsory to be completed simultaneously throughout the programme.
- (e) Trainees shall follow the course of study prescribed below:

Year 1:

In the first year of the programme trainees will receive a comprehensive induction programme including general therapeutic skills and an introduction to the cognitive-behavioural model (CBT), neuropsychology, neurodevelopmental conditions, and working with children and families. Teaching sessions are also delivered on equity, diversity and inclusion and personal and professional development. Trainees have the opportunity to make theory-practice links and develop their clinical skills during Placement 1, which typically provides opportunities to work with adults, children and young people, and/or people with neurodevelopmental conditions or neurodisabilities. They are introduced to the research methods teaching and assessment part of the programme and develop a research proposal for their thesis submission.

Year 2:

In the second-year trainees continue to develop their general clinical skills and the model of focus is that of systemic and family therapy. Additional to the topics covered in Year 1, teaching is also provided on working with older adults and in forensic psychology settings. Alongside this, trainees complete their second and third placements and start their fourth placement, which typically provides opportunities to work with older people and people with physical health conditions, with people who have acute or severe and enduring mental health difficulties, or child and/or neurodevelopmental/neurodisability services (depending on which placements they completed in first year). They are progressing with their research and should have obtained ethical approval for this and are collecting data as appropriate. They continue to develop skills within neuropsychology and are developing reflective practice and competencies within leadership. Trainees also undertake foundation level systemic training as part of the systemic stream. This course is AFT accredited.

Year 3:

In their final year trainees complete their fourth placement and select a 10 ½ month elective placement in an area linked to their competency needs, pathway requirements if relevant, or of clinical interest; this will take the form of two parts. In addition to the topics covered in previous years, they receive teaching in specialist applications of clinical psychology, health psychology, transdiagnostic approaches and therapeutic models with an emerging or developing evidence base. They submit their thesis and defend it at viva. The focus within this year is on preparing trainees for working post-qualification and navigating issues of professional practice within the NHS beyond the programme.

2. Assessment Methods

Academic and Clinical Assessments

- (a) The programme's marking system is based on three grades for all academic assessments (Distinction; Pass; Fail) and two grades for the clinical assessments of placement and OSCE (Pass; Fail).
- (b) Summative assessments are used throughout the programme to monitor progression, with formative assessments also being utilised developmentally and primarily within year 1. The table of summative assessments is shown below. All summative assessments must be passed for candidates to progress and be considered for the award. Further details of the assessment methods and structure can be found in the Degree Programme Specification and the Programme Handbook.

Assessment schedule

Taught and Clinical Assessments

Year	Summative Assessment
ONE	Essay
	Clinical Placement 1
	PPD Reflective Assessment Part 1
	Case Study 1
TWO	Clinical Placement 2
	Clinical Placement 3
	Case Study 2
	Systemic Competencies Written Assessment (Portfolio)
	Service Based Project
	Clinical Placement 4
	Case Study 3

THREE	PPD Reflective Assessment Part 2
	Elective Clinical Placement 5 Part 1
	Elective Clinical Placement 5 Part 2

Year	Formative Assessment
ONE	Two 'patches' for PPD portfolio
	Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) in Risk Assessment
TWO	None
THREE	None

Research Assessments

- (c) The assessments that make up the research element of the award are detailed in the table below. The Programme's marking system for research assessments follows the University's Doctor of Philosophy Degree Progress Regulations and is detailed in the Joint Examiner's Report Form. The Empirical Paper and Viva Voce Examination may be passed with Distinction (see Progression and Award, section 3 (e).

Year	Summative Assessment
ONE	Project Proposal
TWO	None
THREE	Research Conference Project Presentation
	Literature Review
	Empirical Paper
	<i>Viva Voce</i> Examination

Year	Formative Assessment
ONE	None
TWO	Pilot Review
THREE	None

- (d) All submission procedures and policies are detailed in the Programme Handbook and are required to be adhered to.

3. Supervisory Teams

Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

As a professional doctorate, the responsibilities that are normally held by the supervisory team and especially the Academic Supervisor in post-graduate research are distributed across the NHS line manager, the course tutor, the research supervisor, and, where appropriate the research programme link tutor. The Programme Handbook outlines the roles of the line manager, the course tutor and the research programme link tutor. The Research Learning Agreement a) identifies the NHS line manager, the course tutor, the research supervisor, and, where appropriate the research programme link tutor, and b) their roles and responsibilities.

4. Progression and Award

- (a) A student registered for the degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology shall comply with the University's requirements for progression and award.

- (b) Student progress is monitored via regular team Progress meetings. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate competence in all elements of the programme and be in good standing professionally in order to progress from one stage to another. In order to progress to the next year of the programme, candidates must pass all associated taught, research and clinical placement assessments and have attended all required teaching and placement activities:
- (i) *Clinical Placement*
Clinical performance on placement is evaluated and documented by external placement supervisors who provide comprehensive evaluation and feedback on trainee performance to the programme team. The recommended decision regarding the placement will be determined by the University Clinical Tutor team based on the external placement supervisor documentation. This recommendation will be ratified by the Board of Examiners, who will make the final decision. 50% of programme time is required to be spent on placement; which equates to a minimum of approximately 338 days. Completed placement days will be monitored by trainees across each placement to ensure they are on track to meet this.
 - (ii) *Professional Conduct*
Professional conduct will be monitored across university and clinical settings throughout the training programme, and the Newcastle University Fitness to Practise policy will be followed where issues are raised. Details around expected professional standards and conduct are provided within the Programme Handbook.
 - (iii) *Attendance at Teaching*
Attendance at all teaching activities is a requirement of progression, notwithstanding authorised absence due to sickness or other exceptional circumstances, or limited exceptions to account for the programme's annual leave policy, as outlined in the Programme Handbook. Trainees have a responsibility to acquaint themselves with any teaching missed (e.g. by discussion with peers and placement supervisors, reading handouts and presentations, watching recordings, consulting relevant reference lists and accessing recommended materials). In circumstances where trainees have accumulated more than three full days of missed teaching per academic year (either consecutively or an accumulation that adds up to more than three full days), their course tutor will be notified by the progress committee. The course tutor will contact the trainee and arrange a meeting to formalise a collaborative plan that addresses any gaps in knowledge and how to remediate these. The plan will depend on the sessions missed and trainee circumstances. It is the trainee's responsibility to ensure the fulfilment of the plan and progress will be reviewed at a follow up meeting with the course tutor. Attendance will be monitored throughout each year of the programme. If satisfactory academic progress is not made then the programme team will utilise the University Support to Study and/or Fitness to Practise procedures. These issues will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners at the end of each year of the programme.
- (c) Following the annual progress review undertaken by the Board of Examiners, taking into account research, academic, clinical and placement assessments performance, alongside professional conduct, one of the following recommendations with regard to each candidate will be made to the Graduate School:
- (i) That the candidate's performance is satisfactory and that the candidate should proceed to the next stage.
 - (ii) That notwithstanding some concerns, the candidate's overall performance is satisfactory and that the candidate can proceed to the next stage.
 - (iii) That the candidate's performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for an alternative exit award is recommended instead of a submission for the Doctor of Clinical Psychology examination.

- (iv) That the candidate's performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Doctor of Clinical Psychology examination is recommended, and that the candidature is terminated.
- (d) Before being awarded the degree of Doctor of Clinical Psychology, a candidate must:
 - (i) Satisfy the entrance requirements for the degree.
 - (ii) Register for and make satisfactory progress in the relevant programme of study.
 - (iii) Satisfy the examiners in all academic, clinical and placement assessments in all areas of competence in accordance with the examination requirements.
 - (iv) Submit literature review and empirical paper and defend them satisfactorily at *viva voce*.
- (e) The degree may be awarded with Distinction in Research if the examiners judge that the candidate has a Distinction in both (i) the Empirical Paper assessment and (ii) and the performance of the *viva voce* examination.

Resit Opportunities

- (f) Candidates who fail an academic or clinical assessment are entitled to one reassessment of each failed assessment provided that no more than 4 assessments are failed at first attempt across the whole of the programme.
- (g) For cohort 2024 and onwards, when calculating the number of failed at first attempt assessments, a Clinical Placement fail will count as 2 fails.
- (h) Failure to pass any assessment at second attempt leads to exit under normal circumstances.
- (i) Candidates must successfully complete all clinical placements (including both parts of the elective placement) in order to meet the clinical competencies of the programme. Only one placement resit opportunity is offered across the whole of the programme. This would be undertaken within the normal duration of the programme. A candidate failing a placement will be required to undertake their next placement as a resit and must pass the resit placement in order to continue on the programme. No further resit opportunities for any other placement will be available to the candidate and a second failed placement during the training period will result in exit from the programme.
- (j) Candidates undertaking their final year placement will undertake the placement in two placement periods, usually running from November to April (Part 1) and May to September (Part 2). If a fail is awarded for Part 1 and all previous placements have been passed, then Part 2 will act as the resit attempt. If a fail is awarded at Part 2 (and this is a first fail), a decision will be made by Board of Examiners regarding approaching NHS England to seek additional funding to allow a resit attempt into additional training time. If additional training time is not granted the candidate cannot be considered for the DClinPsy award but may be considered for an exit award by the Board of Examiners.
- (k) In addition to failure to pass assessments, serious issues relating to a candidate's progress in the areas of professional and clinical practice, which are considered a breach of the HCPC Standards of Conduct and Ethics, may be considered by the Programme Director with consultation of Board of Examiners as grounds for failure of the programme. Newcastle University Fitness to Practise policy will be utilised where appropriate.
- (l) Resit opportunities for research assessments are detailed in the Joint Examiners' Report Form.

Exit Awards

- (m) Recognising that there may be various circumstances preventing a candidate from completing the full DClinPsy Programme the Board of Examiners may recommend an award of:
 - (i) "*Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Applications of Psychology*" subject to a candidate passing all assessments within the first year of the programme.

- (ii) *"MSc Clinical Applications of Psychology"* may be considered subject to a candidate passing all assessments within the first and second year of the programme.
- (iii) Neither of the awards in m(i) and m(ii) meet registration requirements for the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

5. Interruptions and Extensions to Candidature

- (a) The Programme Director may permit the interruption of a candidate's programme of study for a specified period. Any request for interruption will require supporting evidence.
- (b) No candidate may, without the special permission of the Dean of Postgraduate Research, present themselves for examination on more than two occasions, or present themselves for examination or re-examination more than six years from the date upon which they started the programme of study.
- (c) For candidates who are unable to, or decide not to, submit the thesis by the submission deadline, late submission will usually result in viva at the next normal examination opportunity (which may be at the next routinely scheduled occasion at the following year).
- (d) Candidates must submit within their maximum candidature, however, in exceptional cases, an extension of time for submission may be granted by the Dean of Postgraduate Research. Candidates granted extensions of time in accordance with this provision will be required to register as 'extended submission' candidates and may pay tuition fees as stipulated in the University's fee schedule. It is expected that candidates who are registered as 'extended submission' will continue to receive regular structured interactions with members of the supervisory team and full access to Library and computing facilities will be available.
- (e) NHS England state that no funded programme can run twice the length of the commissioned time (i.e. 6 years), this means that there can only be an interruption of studies (such as maternity leave or sick leave) for a maximum of 12 months within this candidature period of 5 years, equating to 6 years in total.

6. Additional Pathways

- (a) CBT Elective Pathway: This pathway is accredited at Level 2 by the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) and is offered to allow a small number of trainees to undertake the pathway as an elective option in their third year to gain additional therapeutic accreditation and training. An application and selection process is in place, which is outlined in the Programme Handbook. In brief, this mirrors the existing process for allocation to any elective placement, whereby trainees submit a written expression of interest for a placement option via a standard form that we provide. University Clinical tutors then review the expressions of interest against the trainees' current training portfolio with respect to their clinical experience and demonstrated competencies. Allocations to electives are then made on an individual basis to ensure that trainees have gained the broad knowledge and skills required by the end of their training to qualify and practice as a Clinical Psychologist. With respect to allocation to the BABCP pathway, trainees must only have competencies outstanding that can be met on this specific placement option to be eligible for consideration. Successful trainees receive additional training and are required to complete additional assessments to successfully complete the training standards required. The Pathways Team will provide confirmation to BABCP as to whether trainees have successfully completed the training standards required by the accrediting body and trainees can apply for individual accreditation with BABCP upon successful completion. The requirements and outcome of the pathway are outside those of the DClinPsy programme and will have no implication on the overall DClinPsy award.
- (b) Systemic Practice Elective pathway: An Intermediate level in Systemic Practice elective pathway which is accredited by the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT), is offered and will

allow a small number of trainees to undertake the pathway as an elective option in their third year to gain additional training.

As with the BABCP pathway, a similar application and selection process is in place. To achieve the required clinical hours and gain further Systemic understanding, trainees undertake a specialist Systemic based placement for their elective placement in order to receive the correct level of supervision and systemic practice opportunities.

Aside from undertaking a systemic focussed placement, trainees are required to attend additional teaching days, submit written assignments, a portfolio and deliver a presentation. This intermediate level course is delivered in collaboration with colleagues from local NHS Trusts (CNTW, NUTH & TEWV). Completion of the Intermediate Pathway enables trainees to complete the second level of training recognised by the Association of Family & Systemic Therapists. On successful completion trainees may be referred to as “Systemic Practitioners at Intermediate Level”. The requirements and outcome of the pathway are outside those of the DClinPsy programme and will have no implication on the overall DClinPsy award.

7. Exemptions to the University Regulations

- (a) Due to the integrated nature and professional requirements of the award, the following variations to the University Regulations have been approved:

Non-modular structure

The programme does not operate a modular credit-based system for its taught element, and instead uses an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Programme regulations therefore appear different in style and substance from other programmes of study. Regulatory requirements in relation to module and credit are not applicable.

Taught Programme Regulations

The programme uses an alternative method of marking assessments. Each component of assessment does not carry a percentage mark, and assessments are not weighted.

In order to meet professional standards relating to the clinical nature of this award and to ensure attainment of learning outcomes discretion is not used by the Board of Examiners.

As the programme is non-modular progression, award and classification and reassessment requirements are individual to the programme.

University Doctor of Philosophy Assessment Regulations

Exemption to University Regulations to allow the award of a Distinction in research.

- (b) In the event of any inconsistency between the programme and University regulations in relation to the above section, the programme regulations take precedence over the University regulations. Further guidance is available in the programme handbook. All **policies and procedures outlined in the Degree Programme Handbook** should be adhered to, and failure to do so may result in referral to the internal DClinPsy Progress Committee and/or Degree Programme Director to determine next steps.

8. Professional Accreditation

- (a) The programme leads to the award of a degree which is accepted as a professional qualification by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Throughout the programme, trainees need to demonstrate Fitness to Practise in order to complete their clinical placements and graduate from the programme.

