CITY
ST GEORGE'S
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

DPsych Guidance for Prospective Applicants 2026-2027

DPsych Application Process – City St George's, UoL, 2026-27 Intake

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DPsych Application Process – City St George's, UoL, 2026-27 Intake

Important dates:

Event	Date
Applications close	21.2.2026 at 24:00 (midnight)
Interviews begin	April 2026 dates TBC
Successful applicants advised of decision	June 2026

Before starting your application, please read through this document carefully.

There are two stages to the selection process for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at City:

1) a written application, which is used by the programme team to short list candidates, and

2) an interview process, which is used to select the strongest candidates from the short list.

The programme receives a high volume of applications each year. This inevitably means that selection is competitive and only the strongest applicants will be offered a place. The team makes its decisions based on evidence gathered throughout the application process.

Please note we will only consider applications that meet the programme's eligibility criteria, as listed below, and have included all the required documents. Receipt of applications will normally be confirmed via email.

Application checklist:

- Degree transcripts and certificates, as well as evidence of any other relevant qualifications you hold.
- Copy of Passport
- Research proposal (up to 1000 words).
- Service user involvement strategy (up to 300 words).
- Personal statement.
- References x 2 (1 x academic and 1 x relevant employment or voluntary role).
- A letter from the British Psychological Society conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC).
- Where applicable, evidence of relevant English Language qualifications.

Please note: the application page that you upload documents to is a generic postgraduate webpage. As such, the upload areas do not completely match DPsych requirements. To work around this, you should either upload more than one document to the relevant section or upload any additional documents to the "Miscellaneous" section at the foot of the Documents Checklist Tab (Document Upload Review section) in the on-line

application. Please be assured that all documents you upload will be received and reviewed by the admissions team.

Academic eligibility criteria:

Minimum 2:1 Honours degree or above that confers the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society (BPS), or if you do not have a 2:1 or above then a Master's in Psychology BPS accredited will be accepted, including a Conversion to Psychology.

International Equivalences:

If you are applying with a degree from an institution outside the UK, the following is an indication of international equivalents of an upper second-class degree from a UK institution. Please note these figures are intended as a guide only: individual applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- China: Bachelor's degree (Xueshi) in a suitable subject with an overall grade of 75 – 85% (depending on the standing of the awarding institution).
- USA: Bachelor's degree in a suitable subject with CGPA 3.2.
- India: Bachelor's degree in a suitable subject with CGPA 6.5 / overall 65% / 1st Division classification.
- Turkey: Lisans Diplomasi or a Műhendis Diplomasi with a minimum CGPA 3.0 or 65%.
- Italy: Diploma di Laurea in a suitable subject with a minimum score of 104.

Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the British Psychological Society (BPS):

The evidence would normally be in the form of a letter from the BPS confirming that you are a Graduate Member and that you have been granted GBC. If you are unsure whether your undergraduate degree confers GBC, please contact the BPS for clarification.

References:

When applying, you must provide two referees: one from an academic referee and one from a relevant organisation at which you have been employed or volunteered.

A reference request will be sent to the email address provided in your application and your referee may submit an electronic reference. References may also be written, either on a provided reference form (with an institution stamp) or on headed paper.

We will not chase references directly and we may not be able to consider an application before both references have been received. We therefore recommend that you follow this up directly with your referees to avoid delays with your application.

Personal statement:

You are required to write a personal statement in which you reflect on the personal and professional considerations that led you to apply for this training in counselling psychology. Please demonstrate your ability to write clearly and professionally.

The following are suggestions for inclusion:

- Your motivation for training as a counselling psychologist. This may include reflecting on relevant personal, academic, and professional experiences.
- Your decision to apply for the City St George's DPsych, in particular.
- Your understanding of the demands of the training, and any other concerns you might have about it, and how you might respond to them. How you overcome personal and professional difficulties more widely.
- Your experience of research, learning, and education more widely.
- Your experience of clinical work, including your understanding of your current strengths and challenges and your experience of working with colleagues and clients.
- How your positioning (e.g., your personal value system, demographics, and experiences) may impact your clinical work. This may include reflection on your experience of working with people whose positioning differs from yours.
- Your hopes for the training and aspirations for the future.

Mental Health experience:

Substantial experience – at least one year, not necessarily full-time – of mental health/counselling/clinical work, including some face-to-face work. This might include roles such as: Assistant Psychologist, mental health support worker or healthcare assistant, or counsellor. We will consider experience from any setting – e.g., NHS, charity, private – and either paid or unpaid work. However, we are looking for more than befriending or mentoring and **will not consider healthcare roles outside mental health**. You must be able to demonstrate that you can conceptualise a client's problems and understand what it means to work therapeutically with them one-to-one. Insufficient clinical experience is a common reason for applicants not being successful.

Therapeutic/Counselling skills training:

Successful completion of a counselling skills training – minimum 35 hours - leading to a certificate. If you have not taken a counselling skills course, but have other relevant therapeutic training, this will be considered. We run a five-day workshop at City that equips you with relevant skills for application, and there are other similar courses available on the market.
Find out more and obtain a place on the City run Counselling Skills Workshop here.

Research Proposal:

You are required to submit a research proposal as part of your application to demonstrate your capacity to undertake research at doctoral level. This will also be evaluated through consideration of your prior research training and experience. The research proposal should be original and not related to previously conducted research, and no more than 1000 words. Your proposal should include a suggested research question, methodology, ethical considerations, analytic strategy and potential implications for counselling psychology research and practice.
Please note submission of this proposal will not be considered a final choice of research topic if you are successful in your application to the DPsych.

In developing your research proposal, you should consider the following:

Your research should make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge within Counselling Psychology. In general, you should focus your research on an area that has clear applicability to clinical practice, that is likely to engage practitioners, and that will add to the knowledge base underpinning the clinical practice of Counselling Psychology. This requires consideration of how service user populations might benefit from the outcomes and how service delivery might be enhanced. You are encouraged to read the British Psychological Society guidance on impact for doctoral research in developing your proposal.

In considering the above, it is important to understand that the existing body of research in Counselling Psychology in the UK, due to the relative youth of the discipline, has often been internally focused on the profession and its practitioners, using small-scale qualitative projects. Rather than perpetuate this in doctoral projects currently undertaken in universities, the drive from the profession is to broaden this considerable annual research effort into areas that are applicable to, and will be valued and esteemed more generally by, applied psychologists working in many different settings including the NHS, forensics, independent, and Third Sector services.

You should also think carefully about where to conduct your research. There is a common belief that conducting research with clinical populations in a service setting, especially the NHS, will be difficult and that it will take considerable time to get the necessary approvals. This is largely a myth. Where there are large, well-organised research and development departments, considerable assistance is often afforded to trainee researchers, student projects are often expedited, and service managers and clinical leads are eager to sponsor research in their settings. We therefore encourage trainees to carry out their research in conjunction with one of their clinical placements, though this is not a requirement.

Service User Involvement Strategy:

In addition to your 1000-word research proposal, you are required to outline a strategy for how you will involve/consult with/incorporate the views and perspectives of mental health service users in your research. These may or may not be study participants. This can be considered in relation to each stage of the research process including design, evaluation, and dissemination. This service user involvement strategy should be no more than 300 words.

Please note: When you upload your research proposal online, you will see a separate list of the sections the research proposal should include. You will also see additional upload points for a non-technical summary of your research, the full title of your research, and a list of your prior publications. Please ignore this, as these instructions and upload points are for PhD candidates, not DPsych candidates. Please follow the instructions in this document, above, and upload only a research proposal and a service user involvement statement.

English Language requirements

If English is not your first language, you need to provide evidence of your English proficiency.

We accept the following English language qualifications only:

- A first degree from a UK university or from the CNAA.
- A first degree from an overseas institution recognised by City as providing adequate evidence of proficiency in the English language; for example, from institutions in Australia, Canada, or the USA.
- GCE O-level/GCSE - grade C or above.
- CSE - grade C or above.
- SEB - grade C or above.
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English – Pass.
- IELTS – Overall score of 7 or above and at least 6.5 in each subtest.

IT Skills:

All students are expected to be computer literate.

APL/AEC (Accreditation of prior learning/existing competence) Requirements:

It may also be possible to receive APL for certain modules in Year 1 of the programme. A common request is for APL for our module "Cognitive Behavioural Approaches in Counselling Psychology". Module APL will only be granted for study at Level 7 (typically High Intensity Diploma). We are not able to accept trainees into the second or third year of the programme.

DBS Check/Occupational Health:

All students commencing the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology are required to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. You are advised to visit the DBS website for further information. The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are "protected". This means that they are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be considered. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

Students are also required to complete an Occupational Health questionnaire prior to admission and if required, to attend an Occupational Health appointment in the first weeks of the course to ensure you have health clearance to practice. Immunisations may be required to protect both potentially vulnerable service users and students on clinical placement. Successful applicants will be given specific details of your mandatory appointment during your induction if required.

The DBS check and occupational health procedures are designed to check whether you are suitable to start the programme. Their costs are borne by the programme. They do not assess or give any guarantees about whether someone completing our programme will be registered by the HCPC.

Programme contact: Dr Angela Loulopoulou, Programme Director

FAQs:

What qualities are you looking for in a good applicant?

We are looking for a combination of relevant experience, clinical skills potential, capacity to undertake doctoral level research, excellent interpersonal skills, and reflective capacity.

When is the programme taught?

This is a full-time programme, and trainees are expected to be available on working days in person. On occasion, there may be a need to attend some sessions online. The programme is taught on different days depending on the year of study. Trainees are required to attend lectures during working hours onsite at the University for the academic year. Please be aware that trainees may occasionally be required to attend meetings and events at the University on other days of the working week than their normal University attendance day, and dates and times are always subject to change for each academic year.

Can I work and complete the programme at the same time?

The Professional Doctorate is a demanding, full-time programme, requiring about 35 hours of study/practice every week for around 46 weeks of the year. Trainees cannot

continue working full time alongside it. With good organisational skills, it may be possible to some fit part time work around the requirements of the programme. You should be aware that those who are deemed unable to devote sufficient time to their studies may not be offered a place on the programme. In some cases, trainees have paid work in relevant employment that can meet some of the placement requirements. However, this would need to be agreed with the University on acceptance of a place.

Who arranges placements?

It is the trainee's responsibility to find and arrange their own placements. This allows you to build a unique portfolio of clinical placement experience according to your professional interests and desired career direction, provided you obtain a sufficient breadth of experience. Considerable advice and support are offered from the dedicated placement team as well as personal tutors, and the university has a substantial database of placement opportunities across many settings including NHS and Third sector. If your application is successful, on acceptance of the place, you will be sent further information relating to finding placements.

Do placements have to be in London?

No, you can undertake your placements wherever is convenient for you if they meet the programme's requirements and are approved in advance by the Placement Team and your personal tutor. Please be aware that, if you live outside London and choose to enrol on this programme, it is your responsibility to be able to attend all teaching in term time and there is an 80% attendance requirement. Living outside London will not be considered a valid reason for non-attendance.

Will I be able to apply to become a Practitioner Psychologist if I complete this course?

Yes: our course is HCPC approved and accredited by the BPS and provides graduates with eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC and chartered membership with the BPS. If you wish to practice outside the UK, it is your responsibility to find out from the relevant territory whether this qualification will be accepted. We cannot advise on practising outside the UK or whether the qualification is transferrable.

What are the employment opportunities following completion of the programme?

HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologists may work in a variety of settings, including the NHS (e.g. inpatient settings, community mental health teams, and specialist services such as early intervention with different clinical populations, such as older adults); the independent hospital sector; forensic settings, including HMPS and probation; organisations, in areas such as occupational health; the Third (voluntary) sector; industry; government; private practice, including Employee Assistance Programmes; and academic and research settings, among others.