Psychology
College of Life and Environmental Sciences

Foundation in Systemic Practice
Systemic Series Handbook

Trainee Handbook
Academic Year 2017/2018
Please consult ELE for updated and revised electronic versions of this handbook and for the Programme Handbook which includes information the procedural aspects of the programme such as how to submit work, mitigation and referencing.
# Table of Contents

Welcome to the University of Exeter .............................................................................. 4  
University of Exeter: General Information .................................................................. 5  
Meet the Systemic Staffing Team ................................................................................. 8  
Welcome to the Systemic Series - Foundation in Systemic Practice ......................... 9  
  - Course Philosophy ........................................................................................................... 9  
  - Programme Aims ............................................................................................................. 10  
  - Rationale .......................................................................................................................... 11  
  - Intended Learning Outcomes ....................................................................................... 12  
  - Criteria for Completing the Course ............................................................................... 13  
  - Teaching/Learning ......................................................................................................... 13  
  - Transferable Skills ......................................................................................................... 15  
Assessment ....................................................................................................................... 15  
  - Guidelines on Written Assessments – PBL 2 – LD and Systemic. ............................ 15  
  - Reflective Portfolio ......................................................................................................... 16  
  - AFT Requirements ......................................................................................................... 16  
Key References ............................................................................................................... 18  
  - Core Texts ....................................................................................................................... 18  
  - Additional Resources and Recommended Reading ....................................................... 18  
  - Key Papers ....................................................................................................................... 18  
  - Websites .......................................................................................................................... 20  
Appendix 1 - Marking Criteria for Problem Based Learning (PBL) Reports ............ 21
Welcome to the University of Exeter
College of Life and Environmental Sciences, Psychology and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

We are very excited to welcome you to the Foundation in Systemic Practice taught within the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. This training complements our already highly successful and expanding portfolio of Systemic programmes and contributes to our wider clinical training portfolio. We also have a firm commitment to evidence based clinical practice and as such we endeavour to ensure all of our training programmes are firmly embedded within current research. This commitment is in no small way aided through the Mood Disorders Unit which is involved in undertaking clinical research which has national and international significance.

These are exciting and challenging times for us all. The team of highly experienced clinical trainers will endeavour to deliver the highest quality training to enable you to work competently and effectively as a supervisor within your service.

It is likely that you will find the training intensive and challenging, but hopefully enjoyable and especially practice enhancing.

Professor Eugene Mullan, Academic Lead for Clinical Professional Training
University of Exeter: General Information

The University Campus

The campus is compact and well signposted.

Key buildings you may wish to access include:

- The Forum (for Student Information Desk, non-academic enquiries & the Library)
- Devonshire House (cafés, shops, SU bar etc.)
- Reed Hall Mews (Student Health Centre).
- Northcote House houses the University’s administration (the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Academic Secretary have their offices there, plus the Faculties Office, Registry, Accommodation and Examinations).
- The Sports Hall & open-air swimming pool adjacent to Cornwall House (open end of May to middle of September) and an indoor pool at St Luke’s College.

Student Information Desk

The Student Information desk is based in the Forum. Opening times are detailed online, and you can log enquiries in person, online at [https://sid.exeter.ac.uk/](https://sid.exeter.ac.uk/) or via telephone: 01392 724724.

The SID desk will routinely deal with most enquiries, including those to do with IT.

Library Facilities

The main library facilities are at the University of Exeter Streatham Campus. The library is stocked with psychology texts. The library catalogue, including access to electronic journals, and facilities for reserving and renewing books are on the web [www.exeter.ac.uk/library](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/library).

Programme members are entitled to five Inter-Library Loan (ILL) tokens per year. The tokens are paid for by the College; they can be obtained from the Programme Administrator. If an increased allocation is required please speak to the Programme Director for more information.

Access to external Libraries

The SCONUL Access scheme is a UK based method to allow students access to other HE Libraries. It is a co-operative venture between most of the higher education libraries of the UK and Ireland.

It is available to:

- Academic staff on open or fixed term contracts
- Postgraduate research students registered for a PhD, MPhil or similar qualification
- Part-time, distance learning and placement students
- Full-time postgraduates

SCONUL Access also provides for a reference only service for full-time undergraduate students. These students are NOT entitled to borrow from other Libraries under the SCONUL Access scheme. More information can be found on the University Library website at www.exeter.ac.uk/library.

**Study Skills Service**

The Study Skills Service offers confidential help to any student who would like to improve their study skills. The Study Skills Advisors can help with the following:

- Reading effectively
- Selecting reading from book lists
- Planning and writing assignments or essays
- Taking useful notes
- Revising for exams
- Organising your time
- Generally evaluating your study skills

This service is available to postgraduates, who can and do consult the Study Skills Advisors. Help is available throughout each term and during part of each vacation - see www.exeter.ac.uk/student-engagement-skills

**Students with Disabilities**

The University employs Disability Advisors who offer support to students with disabilities and endeavours to provide facilities and equipment suited to people’s individual needs www.exeter.ac.uk/accessability.

**The Wellbeing Service**

More information regarding services provided by Wellbeing can be found here: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/

**Protection of Dignity at Work and Study**

The University of Exeter is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working and learning environment, which is free from unfair discrimination and will enable staff and students to fulfil their personal potential. All individuals should be treated with dignity and respect whether at work or study: staff and students have an important role to play in creating an environment where harassment is unacceptable.
The purpose of this policy is to assist in developing a working and learning environment and culture in which harassment is known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to deal with harassment without fear of ridicule or reprisals. The policy aims to ensure that if harassment or bullying does occur, adequate procedures are readily available to deal with the problem and prevent it reoccurring. Harassment can have a detrimental effect upon the health, confidence, morale, learning and performance of those affected by it. A list of current advisors can be found on the above link.

The policies can be found at on the HR website:
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/employment/hrpoliciesatoz/

**Sexual Harassment**

The University defines sexual harassment as ‘attention of a sexual nature which is offensive or unwanted’. There is a leaflet available on the nature of the problem and how to deal with it. A copy is available on each of the year’s notice boards and a further copy can be obtained from Reception. If you feel that you have experienced sexual harassment then read this document and discuss the matter with any of the University’s trained advisors or with any member of Psychology. This service is confidential and further action is taken only with the knowledge and permission of the programme member.

It is worth pointing out that the University’s policy on protection from sexual harassment extends to its staff as well as programme members.
Meet the Systemic Staffing Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Sherbersky</td>
<td>Systemic Series Convenor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: 01392 726453</td>
</tr>
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Welcome to the Systemic Series - Foundation in Systemic Practice

Course Philosophy

Hannah and Mark welcome you to the Systemic/ Family Psychotherapy team at the University of Exeter.

Programme members undertaking the systemic series are all experienced practitioners in the Mental Health field. The programme is designed to increase each participant’s knowledge and understanding of systemic clinical theory and practice. Successful completion of clinical and written assignments and appropriate participation in seminars and at lectures will lead to the awarding of a foundation in systemic practice (AFT accreditation pending).

A major contributing resource to the programme is the knowledge and experience that programme members bring with them. We intend to draw upon and honour this knowledge and experience in order to develop clinical skills and increase awareness and theoretical understanding. It is important, however, that understanding and use of theory is integrated with clinical application in a rigorous and constructively critical manner. The series seeks to actively promote anti-oppressive practice throughout the teaching and organisation of the course, together with the implementation of an equal opportunities policy.

This systemic series provides participants with a grounding in the theory and practice of family/systemic therapy. Through the introductory teaching in year 1 and the more specific systemic teaching on evidence based practice in year 2, participants are exposed to research into this psychological approach generally. This is in order to promote both a constructively critical and questioning attitude to one’s own therapeutic approach whilst at the same time promoting an awareness of other approaches. The successful completion of the systemic series after year 2 will result in the award ‘Foundation in Systemic Practice’ via The Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (AFT). We hope that graduates will be able to act as ‘product champions’ for systemic practice and to be available as teachers and consultants in the various settings in which they work.

Teaching takes place in seminars with occasional workshops and lectures. Assessment leading to the award of the foundation will be based on written assignments and completion of a reflective portfolio.
Programme Aims

The aim of this course is to help course participants draw upon and utilize a systemic approach to support the development of their knowledge and skills in their training as Clinical Psychologist. We believe in the importance of developing sound theoretical frameworks and this course seeks to familiarize participants with the foundations of systemic theory and practice, and the evidence base whilst applying these foundations to their clinical settings.

The knowledge and skills development that is part of this course can be applied across multiple contexts. We pay particular attention to ways of working in practice and in supervision that serve to meet the needs of the most marginalized client groups. Attention to issues of power and difference and the promotion and development of anti-discriminatory practice are central the course philosophy and permeate all aspects of the teaching.

Great emphasis is placed on the use of theory in practice and we aim to provide a course that integrates systemic theory into clinical practice across multiple contexts. The aim of this course is to develop skills through role play, small group work and supervision.

The course draw upon the fourth edition of the AFT Blue Book, which outlines the requirements for a foundation in systemic practice and adheres to the AFT Code of Ethics and Practice.
Rationale

The purpose of this curriculum is to provide trainees with the basic theoretical context for conceptualising and developing clinical skills necessary to work systemically with individuals, couples and families. The curriculum rests on the core competencies drawn from the 4th edition of the AFT Blue Book (training standards), and the CYP-IAPT systemic family practice curriculum. This course aims to cover the basic key competencies, as in an introductory systemic therapy course. It should give a real understanding of systemic precepts; an ability to employ a systemic approach and make informed choices for when such an approach would be indicated; a capacity to use major core systemic tools of intervention appropriately; and the knowledge to achieve this within an understanding of the evolution of systemic theory and practice. The emphasis is upon how to work with multiple family members to build an alliance and work on an agreed set of goals in order to address the mental health needs of children, families and couples.

Work with families is a significant component of treatment in CAMHS and other child focused mental health settings and there is growing evidence for positive outcomes from family interventions. In addition, work with families often accompanies other interventions and can make an important contribution to the development and maintenance of the therapeutic alliance. It can also support adherence to other interventions. Many mental health professionals currently work with families as part of their professional role and this curriculum provides evidence based training to support that work. The series will cover the basic knowledge and clinical skills in working systemically with children, young people, families and couples and this will serve as the foundation of evidence based techniques, intervention and treatment models, such as the Exeter Model.

This series is informed by:

The competence framework developed by Roth, Calder and Pilling (2011), and published at: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinicalpsychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinicalpsychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm)


Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of the series trainees will demonstrate –

A basic knowledge of the core principles of systemic practice, including an introductory knowledge of:

- The evidence base for a systemic approach in work with children, adolescents, families and couples; specifically systemic work with clients with eating disorders and depression.
- Basic principles and core components of the systemic approach.
- Ability to explain the rationale for and process of systemic work, including the ability to:
  - Explain the family approach to all family members, in developmentally appropriate ways.
  - Provide a clear rationale for a systemic approach and discuss possible outcomes.
  - Explore with the family and its individual members the different understandings and meanings of the specific presenting problems.
  - Explore with the family wider systems issues, resources and availability of support.
- Ability to undertake a systemic assessment taking into account the problems and the context in which they present as well as the process of referral and the opportunity to involve the wider system.
- Ability to take into account throughout the therapy process factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, disability and other issues of inequality affecting the family.
- Ability to locate the child, young person and the presenting problem within the wider system (family, social community settings, personal networks, cultural and wider socio political environment. individual and their difficulties.
- Ability to develop a shared formulation with the family and its individual members.
- Ability to map the effects of the presenting problem on the family and wider system.
- Ability to explore constraints, such as language, beliefs, narratives, wider social discourses and interactions and how these affect the ability of families and family members to find new ways forward.
- Ability to start establishing the context for a systemic intervention including family members and wider social and professional networks.
- Ability to explain and review the likely course and process of the systemic work, continuously and throughout the therapeutic process.

- Ability to discuss flexibly the possible roles of family members and, where appropriate, the wider network, in the therapeutic process.

- Ability to work towards employing therapeutic skills, including the capacity to develop the therapeutic alliance with each family member.

- Ability to encourage family members to use their own resources and employ problem solving skills.

- Ability to use a range of techniques to explore meanings, behavior, emotions and relationships and their inter-connections.

- Ability to monitor and reflect on therapist’s own internal processes and responses to the family.

- Ability to discuss how trans-generational patterns may affect current family life and relationships.

- Ability to actively track and work with behavioural processes and problematic communication patterns within the session.

**Criteria for Completing the Course**

For successful completion of the Foundation in Family Therapy by the end of year 2, trainees will have;

- Attended all year 1 and 2 taught sessions (at a minimum of 80% attendance)
- Participated in the Problem Based Learning (PBL) 2 presentation
- Submitted and passed the summative assignment; PBL 2 write up
- Submitted a reflective portfolio of a minimum of 2000 words.

**Teaching/Learning**

The series currently consists of 13 three 3 hour sessions in year 1, and 11 sessions in year 2 – a total of 72 hours face to face teaching. **By the end of the second year, trainees will have completed the foundation in systemic practice (AFT accreditation pending).** In the third year of DClin training there is a further 24 hours of teaching.

13

Foundation in Systemic Practice - Student Handbook
Year 1 – teaching includes an introduction to; Hypothesizing, core systemic concepts, circularities, circular questions, externalizing, family life cycle, systemic self-awareness, family scripts, genograms, reframing, enactments, Functional Family Therapy, systemic interventions for anorexia and a systemic understanding of learning disabilities.

Year 2 – teaching includes an overview of; Family Intervention for Psychosis and Bipolar, Systemic Couple Therapy, Working with older adults, Diversity – race, ethnicity, gender and intersectionality workshop.

Year 3 - Trainees additionally receive a four day intensive training in the Exeter Model; an innovative systemic treatment for couples with depression. The Exeter Model is a systemic behavioural empathic model with well-defined, specific strategies that create empathy and understanding. The training manual that accompanies the model was developed in collaboration with the Mood Disorder Centre (MDC). The Model represents a collation of the purely behavioural techniques indicated by the RCT manualized research informing the NICE recommendation and also the systemically informed techniques that are both behavioural and or empathic identified by the UK Expert Reference Group on Couple Competencies.

Trainees will be expected to adopt an adult approach to learning, contributing from their existing knowledge and skills and acquiring new knowledge and skills through attendance at University lectures, locality sessions (guided self-study) and private study. They will also be encouraged to reflect and draw on their own family of origin experiences and explore personal resonances to increase self-reflexivity. A variety of teaching/learning opportunities will be offered including, lectures, small group working, and experiential learning exercises. Trainees will also be expected to undertake preparatory reading and complete learning projects for some teaching sessions. Core references will be provided prior to the course and additional references and handouts will be given for specific sessions.

Problem Based Learning (PBL)

Problem based learning (PBL) is used to complement and facilitate learning from the more traditional teaching seminars. PBL uses stimulus material (in this instance clinical cases or referrals for psychological input) to engage trainees in considering the problem in the same context as ‘real life’. Information is not given on how to tackle the problem, but trainees work with the problem by drawing on their resources including their supervisors. Trainees work cooperatively in small groups with access to a tutor who facilitates the process. The work is carried out intensively into one problem over a period of time. Following which the PBL group will then deliver a 45 min presentation. The group will be given formative feedback, which they use to inform their individual written assessment (summative). The second PBL on the DClin programme focuses on a problem in a Learning Disabilities context which the trainees will develop from a systemic approach.
Transferable Skills

Trainees will continue to build upon their core systemic therapeutic skills of creating alliances, gathering information, making a systemic formulation, planning and carrying out an intervention, drawing the intervention to a close and evaluating the outcome. Trainees will be encouraged to link the teaching to related systemic subjects within other series such as LD, ROP etc.

Assessment

Summary

Written assessment and submission dates;

- PBL 2 Presentation – (formative) – presentation; 13th March 2018
- PBL 2 Write up — summative submission date; 23rd April 2018
- Reflective Portfolio – (formative) submission date; 15th June 2019

Guidelines on Written Assessments – PBL 2 – LD and Systemic

Following the presentation trainees will continue to work on the PBL exercises independently, using placement experience and new learning as an additional resource, and will submit an individual written report for each PBL.

The report should be no more than 3000 words in length. However, trainees are strongly encouraged to use all of the word count.

The primary purpose of this piece of work is not to simply replicate the content of the presentation but to critically reflect on the work (both in terms of content and process) produced by the group so as to identify strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken in the light of new learning. Therefore, the main focus of the work should be on critical reflections, strengths and weaknesses, the identification of the area/s for development and the actual development of these areas based on your new learning and convenor feedback. The report should be concise, logical and coherent in structure and should seek to review any specific questions raised in the PBL exercise.

The report should contain enough detail from the presentation to ensure that it is intelligible as a stand-alone piece of work. Copies of PowerPoint slides or other media used in the presentation must be included in appendices. You should use the guidelines and or marking criteria below to help you structure your reports.
Marking guidelines - see (Appendix 1)

**Reflective Portfolio**

Of not less than 2000 words. This portfolio is formative and will be marked as ‘extensive’, ‘satisfactory’ or ‘insufficient’. The ‘extensive’ and ‘sufficient’ equate to a pass, and insufficient to a ‘fail’ according to AFT standards. Portfolio to be submitted electronically.

The portfolio must include;

- A reflective commentary on the systemic teaching/journal evidencing their ethical position, how students have met the systemic competencies and the AFT code of conduct.
- Evidence and reflections of systemic observation/experience in practice.
- All locality pack tasks to be included.

Optional; may also include evidence of any systemic CPD attended, additional relevant training.

**AFT Requirements**

Consistent with AFT criteria, the course considers four components:

1. **Theory**
   Teaching, PBL and self-study

2. **Practice**
   Trainees are required to bring clinical material to the teaching seminars to reflect on, and at times for systemic supervision. There is an expectation that systemic teaching and skills will be integrated back into the trainee clinical placement.

3. **Personal Development**
   Reflective Portfolio – Of not less than 2000 words. Including a reflective commentary evidencing their learning over the first year years of the systemic series. Providing some evidence of their ethical position, how they have met the systemic competencies outlines in the Blue Book and the AFT code of conduct. To include all the Locality Pack tasks and any CPD or additional systemic training information. Trainee will be expected to draw on their own family of origin stories and invited to reflect on their own systemic self-awareness.

4. **Ethics**

16
Foundation in Systemic Practice - Student Handbook
Course members will be marked on their integration of ethical issues within their assignments. They will also be expected to reflect on their ethical position both within the teaching and the reflective portfolio.

**COURSE CONTENT**: (On ELE under Systemic)
Key References

Core Texts


Additional Resources and Recommended Reading


Key Papers


by Thomas C. Todd (Author), Cheryl L. Storm (Author)


Mason, B (2012) The personal and the professional: core beliefs and the construction of bridges

Foundation in Systemic Practice - Student Handbook


Websites

Association of Family Therapy http://www.aft.org.uk/view/index.html?tzcheck=1

Systemic Competencies
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/Systemic_Competences/competences_required_for_effective_systemic_therapies.pdf

Child IAPT
## Appendix 1 - Marking Criteria for Problem Based Learning (PBL) Reports

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<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
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</table>
| **Description of the Problem.** | This should be a *brief* and concise summary of the problem/s arising from the PBL task. This is not just a description of an individual client’s clinical symptoms and but should also include a broad systemic formulation and a summary of the wider organizational problem/s raised by the task, e.g. how do we develop and provide services in a resource limited setting? How do we balance ‘real-world’ and ‘ideal-world’ approaches? How do we synthesise all of the group member’s views? (GM, PA, PF, R, OSIL) | **Extensive** Strong and convincing evidence that the work is of professional doctoral standard. Demonstrates advanced and original scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review.  
**Sufficient** Satisfactory or good evidence that the work is of professional doctoral standard. Demonstrates some scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review.  
**Insufficient** Inadequate or no evidence that the work is of professional doctoral standard. Demonstrates little or no original scholarship of a quality to satisfy peer review. |
| **Group Process and Strategy** | This is a *brief* description of how the group worked towards achieving their solution/s and should focus on both process and strategy.  
Systemic principles and ideas may be used to describe the process. (GM, PPSV, CT, OSIL). |                                                                                                                                                                |
<p>| <strong>Group Solution/s.</strong>       | A <em>brief</em> summary of the ideas and solution/s identified by the group with reference to the group’s slides, presentation and hand-outs included in the group presentation, which should be included in the appendix (GM, PF, PI, CT) |                                                                                                                                                                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Solution/s.</strong></td>
<td>This should be a description of the trainee’s ideas for additional solutions to the problem, based on further learning from convenor feedback, placement or elsewhere. These ideas should show clear systemic theory-practice links with reference to the appropriate literature (GM, R, PA, PF, E, PPSV). This section should be the main focus of the write-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Reflections</strong></td>
<td>In this section, the trainee is encouraged to offer both reflective and reflexive comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the work in terms of both process and content, and will be expected to draw on systemic ideas related to reflexivity (GM, R, E, PPSV, CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact on Learning</strong></td>
<td>This section is for the trainee to describe the learning impact of completing the PBL task and writing the report on the development of their clinical and/or academic competencies. (GM, E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>A concise yet inclusive synthesis of all the main arguments in the report, ending with a clear concluding statement (E, CT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td>The report should comply fully with APA guidelines in terms of content and style. The appendices or report should include a summary of the convenor feedback from the presentation (GM, R, PPSV, CT)</td>
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</table>
2.2.1 Generalisable Metacompetencies (including Relationships) = GM
2.2.2. Psychological assessment = PA
2.2.3. Psychological formulation = PF
2.2.4. Psychological intervention = PI
2.2.5. Evaluation = E
2.2.6 Research = R
2.2.7 Personal and professional skills and values = PPSV
2.2.8 Communicating and teaching = CT
2.2.9 Organisational and systemic influence and leadership = OSIL