



MSc Psychological Therapies Practice and Research

Research Handbook for MSc in Systemic Psychotherapy

2021-2024

**Please consult ELE for updated and revised electronic
versions of this handbook**

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Module PYCM051: Introduction to Psychological Therapies Research methods	4
2.1. Overview of the module	
2.2. Assignments	
3. Module PYCM001: Research dissertation project	11
3.1. Timeline	
3.2. Getting Started with your research project	
3.3. Supervision and research support	
3.4. Getting ethical approval.	
4. Submission of the Dissertation	18
5. Referencing	20
6. Code of Good Practice	22

Appendices **23**

- 1). Proposal Presentation Outline
- 2). Research Project Proposal Guidelines
- 3). Research Project Supervisory Contract
- 4). Research Supervision Log
- 5). Form to accompany Dissertation submission
- 6). Dissertation Marking Criteria
- 7). Research Reference lists
- 8) Suggestion appendices for dissertation
- 9) Module Records

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to help you to complete the assignment for the Research Methods (focused on the Research Proposal)(Module PYCM051) and then to produce your Research Dissertation (Module PYCM001).

In the module PYCM051, you will explore fundamental concepts in applied clinical research, with an emphasis on your needs as applied practitioners rather than academic researchers. The module provides an overview of qualitative research methods, develops your understanding of quantitative research as well as the process of research. The assignment will invite you to begin to prepare for your research dissertation.

The dissertation module itself provides you with an opportunity to study in detail a topic of your own choice. It will allow you to explore in some detail **your** understanding of the subject matter through the production of a piece of original research on a particular issue related to systemic psychotherapy.

As it is worth 60 credits, the dissertation will allow you to complete your Masters level award in Psychological Therapies Practice and Research.

Inclusivity and Diversity

Our intention is that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of teaching sessions, and that the diversity that students bring to this cohort be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intention to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender and gender identify, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture.

Your suggestions are invited, encouraged and appreciated. Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our training sessions conflict with your religious events, or if you have a disability or other condition necessitating accommodation, please let us know so that we can make the necessary arrangements for you.

Research Competencies

The learning outcomes of the modules reflect the requirement of the Association of Family Therapy Blue book and are the following:

- A sound and up to date knowledge and understanding of the range of research methods underpinning Systemic Psychotherapy and their applications to different situations and client groups.
- Knowledge of the current evidence base for Systemic Psychotherapy and relevant research findings from other areas.
- A knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods, which will enable the psychotherapist to evaluate research evidence and take an evidence-based approach to their own work.

- Sufficient knowledge of research methods to be able to plan and carry out a piece of research relevant to the field
- A critical approach to the knowledge and understanding of the range of theory, practice and research referred to in the above points.
- Take an evidence-based approach to their own work
- A working knowledge of at least one manualised approach to family therapy.
- An ability to be able to administer appropriate outcome measures and take a critical stance as to their use.

Throughout the course the following generic competencies apply to all the modules:

- A commitment to anti-oppressive and culturally sensitive practices taking into account differences in relation to the social GGRRACCEESSS (John Burnham and Alison Roper-Hall)
- An ability to take an active role in the development of personal learning and be able to identify areas of personal strength as well as areas for future professional development. This will include reflexive abilities about self and self in relationship.
- A capacity to use supervision and consultation processes and ability to consult constructively with colleagues.
- An ability to apply the **AFT Code of Ethics and Practice** to clinical work and an awareness and ability to consider and respond appropriately to ethical dilemmas.

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.aft.org.uk/resource/resmgr/resources/policies_and_guidance_docs/cred_and_training/aftbluebook_4th_ed_final.pdf.pdf

2. MODULE PYMC051:

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Overview of the module

- Introduction to research methodology: qualitative methods
- Conducting a literature review
- Systemic issues and researcher reflexivity
- Research Proposal Presentations

See Appendix 7 for Reference list

2.2 Module PYCM051 Psychological Therapy Research Methods: Assignments

Summary of assignments: Cohort 5

1. Critical review of a qualitative research paper using the CASP. Presentation to MSc group. (Formative) (on a Research day, 10th February, 2023)
2. Research proposal presentation (formative) (20 April, 2023)
3. Research Proposal (2250 words); Summative (100%) (19 May 2023)

Summary of assignments: Cohort 6

1. Critical review of a qualitative research paper using the CASP. Presentation to MSc group. (Formative) (on a Research day, 8th March 2024)
2. Research proposal presentation (formative) (25th April 2024)
3. Research Proposal (2250 words); Summative (100%) (17th May 2024)

2.2.1. Assignment 1:

Critical appraisal of a qualitative research paper (presentation, formative – peer feedback) (Due: 10th February, 2023)

Choose one of the three qualitative research papers (studies to be provided, for example, a research study using Thematic analysis, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis or a Delphi Study) to analyse using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist. See: <https://casp-uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CASP-Qualitative-Checklist-2018.pdf>

Complete the CASP checklist and be prepared to discuss your analysis in a peer group, using the prompts below:

- Briefly describe the paper including the issues raised in your CASP analysis
- What are the strengths and limitations of the paper?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the methodology used in this paper? How is the method linked to systemic ideas?
- Reflection: How has this critical analysis impacted on you personally and professionally?

Formative assignment submission: Submit the completed CASP Checklist (this can be copied into a word document and uploaded).

Add the CASP assignment to your portfolio. Include reflections on the discussion of your presentation using the form below).

Evaluation/Feedback:

Formative: Feedback/reflection form

Following the group discussion, trainees to each complete their own reflection of feedback using the form below.

Name: _____

Overall comments/learning:

Critical analysis

Strengths:

Areas for development:

Self-reflexivity/ diversity practice

Strengths:

Areas for development:

Style/presentation

Strengths:

Areas for development:

2.2.2. Assignment 2: Research Proposal

Research proposal presentation (formative)

Prepare a 10 minute visual presentation outlining your research proposal (see template, Appendix1). This is formative, so you will get feedback from the group to add to your final proposal.

Below are the guidelines for the research proposal presentation and assignment (see also Appendix 2). The presentation should be a brief overview of your research plan. (see also Appendix 1 for an outline of the Research/Service Evaluation **presentation**).

Guidelines for PYCM051 Assignment – Final proposal

Structured Clinical Research Proposal

Word Count: 2250

Assignment task

Prepare a concise structured proposal for a piece of clinical research with a systemic focus. This proposal should be the basis for the actual piece of research you are planning to conduct for your MSc dissertation project, leading to AFT accreditation. The assignment will be assessed on the basis of its scientific merit

and feasibility.

Guidelines

- Introduction (250 words) – a concise overview/summary of your research proposal
- Literature review (800 words) – summary the previous research/practice that leads you to your research question.
- Research Question - a clear statement of what you are aiming to find out.
- Methods (800 words) - a summary of your proposed participants, materials (assessment questionnaires etc) and methodology (what data will you collect, how and when?). Proposed analysis strategy (how will you score, interpret and present your data?). It can be a good idea to include an example of what you hope the data will look like (so maybe a graph showing a decrease in symptoms on a session-by-session basis if you are conducting a single case design). Consideration of important research ethics and user and or participant involvement issues.
- Researcher reflexivity (200 words) – your interest in the research and positioning. Socio-cultural issues, diversity and inclusion.
- Dissemination (200 words): How are you going to share the results of your research? Usefulness of the research. Potential target journals, sharing with user groups, conferences etc.

Note: Your work should be written succinctly and with clarity (in order to adhere to the prescribed word count) and be of a high standard of written English. Referencing should include a wide range of sources and the format consistent with APA guidelines. Word counts for each section are for guidance only.

Research Proposal Marking Guide

Structure	Assessed Skills	Fail (<49%)	Pass (50 – 69%)	Good Pass (60 –69%)	Distinction (>70%)
Introduction (10%)	Summarise complex information for a range of audiences.	<p>From: evidence of competence in research design but application is limited;</p> <p>To: negligible evidence of a basic understanding of research design.</p>	<p>Evidence of satisfactory and appropriate development of a feasible novel research proposal.</p>	<p>Good, consistent evidence of appropriate and effective use of research knowledge and design skills in the development of a feasible novel research proposal.</p>	<p>From: strong and convincing evidence of the considered use of research knowledge and design skills in the development of a feasible novel research proposal.</p> <p>To: overwhelming evidence of both insight and innovation in use of research knowledge and design skills in the development of a feasible novel research proposal.</p>
Literature review (35%)	Critically evaluate research relevant to your topic and professional work: identify gaps and how your research proposes to address these.				
Methods & reflexivity (35%)	State your research question and why it is important (and to whom). Consider methodologies appropriate to answer your research question, justify your choice of methodology, positioning yourself as researcher and critically reflect on limitations of the method and personal assumptions/biases/ interests.				
Dissemination (20%)	Communicate and disseminate research material in a clear and engaging way to a range of audiences.				

Module PYCM051 Research proposal

Programme Member	Delete as appropriate	Mark	Turnitin score
	Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail		
Overall Comments:			

Introduction (10%) and use of literature and development of research aims and questions (35% weighting)*	Fail (49% & below)	Pass (50-59%)	Merit (60-69%)	Distinction (70%+)
<p>Introduction and Literature review: Summarise complex information for a range of audiences. Review of the systemic literature and relevant concepts and theories. The review shows sensitivity to contemporary issues. Demonstrates relevance of the literature to the aims of the research and research question. Research aims and question challenge current thinking and show innovation. Develop an argument, show clarity of your idea and/or hypotheses</p>				
<p>Methodology (20% weighting)* <i>How do you plan to carry out the study?</i> Methodology is appropriate for the research goals. The methodology is grounded in theory demonstrating a critical understanding. State your research question and why it is important (and to whom). Consider methodologies appropriate to answer your research question, Recruitment strategy, data collection and ethics are well considered and appropriate.</p>				
<p>Critical reflexivity; limitations (15% weighting)* <i>How do you position yourself and how might you as researcher influenced the process?</i> A critical approach is taken to the data, discussing pro's and con's of the research (limitations; validity). Position yourself as researcher and critically reflect on limitations of the method and personal assumptions/biases/ interests. Give attention to the impact of power and social diversity. The research demonstrates an exceptional degree of usefulness to the systemic and/or broader therapeutic community.</p>				

<p>Dissemination (15%)</p> <p>Communicate and disseminate research material in a clear and engaging way to a range of audiences.</p>				
<p>Presentation and referencing (5%)</p> <p>Standard of presentation; highly logical and organised structure. Academic and reflexive writing style.</p> <p>References are well-chosen, correct and consistent. Sources of information are always cited, where necessary.</p> <p>Use of grammatically correct language.</p> <p>No or few typographical errors</p>				

* Please note: failure to pass these specific criteria will result in an overall failure of the assignment

If you have specific queries about the feedback you have received and would like to arrange a meeting to clarify any learning points please contact your tutor or academic lead.

3. MODULE PYCM001: DESIGNING, CONDUCTING AND WRITING UP A RESEARCH PROJECT

3.1. Timeline

- Submission of Research proposal (Appendix 1) (2,250 words)
- Allocation of supervisor.
- Completion of supervisory contract.
- Application for Ethics approval – School of Psychology, University of Exeter. Ensure that you understand if NHS Ethics approval is necessary and whether you are able to meet the time constraints.
- Submission of Dissertation (8000 words maximum excluding Abstract and Appendix. Note: Tables included in the main text of the dissertation are included in the 8000-word count. Tables in the Appendix are excluded from the word count.)
- Dissertation Submission date: July (of graduating year)

3.2. Getting Started

First start with a general topic for research it is important to remember that a dissertation is not a simple **descriptive** account of a particular area of study. Its success depends on finding a good research question or interesting theme; only if you have a suitable problem/question/issue to consider can you expect to develop a coherently argued piece of work.

Use the Research Proposal outline (Appendix 2) to formulate your ideas. There will be an opportunity to present your formative ideas for research at the end of the preparation module, and gain feedback at this stage.

Your topic should be related to psychological/systemic therapy.

If you have previously completed a Systemic PGDip and wish to progress to registration with the Association for Family Therapy, accrediting guidelines may require that your research dissertation be systemically focused. It would be helpful to explore the options with your research supervisor (see below) at an early stage.

3.3. Supervision and research support

You will be supervised by one of the MSc Systemic Psychotherapy tutors or Programme Leads. You may have one research supervisor (your sole or primary supervisor, providing 100% of your supervision). This will be a member of the MSc Systemic psychotherapy academic or research team. Alternatively, you may have two supervisors: the primary supervisor (providing 80% of the supervision) - will be a research specialist and the second supervisor (providing 20% of the supervision) will be

a member of the MSc Systemic psychotherapy team.

The following are the possible supervision arrangements and standards of what you can expect:

Primary Supervisor – 100%

Frequency of meetings	Meet monthly (contact may be over email and includes written feedback); possibly more frequently if needed and at specific challenging times.
Reading of drafts	Reads and comments on your whole report twice: Once in sections as it is written; a second time at the end of the process, just before submission.

	Primary Supervisor – 80% Research specialist	Second Supervisor – 20% Systemic specialist
Frequency of meetings	Meet monthly (contact may be over email and includes written feedback); possibly more frequently if needed and at specific challenging times.	Meet once a term, or specifically to address systemic questions, eg. Literature review, recruitment, discussion of results
Reading of drafts	Reads and comments on your whole report twice: Once in sections as it is written (excluding the Introduction and Discussion); a second time at the end of the process, just before submission.	Reads the Introduction and Discussion chapters once or the whole report once, with lighter touch comments.

Supervision expectations: Supervisors will be allocated after you have submitted your Structured Clinical Research Proposal in Module PYMC051.

Once you have been allocated a supervisor, students should approach their supervisors and make arrangements for a meeting. For the first meeting, students should bring a copy of the research supervisory contract (Appendix 3) to fill out. Completing the contract with your supervisor will clarify how often, and where or how, you will meet, when your supervisor is available to read a draft, etc.

Regular contact with your supervisor is essential, although you may find that the frequency of meetings varies depending on the stage of research you are in. In general, you should plan monthly meeting with your supervisor. This may include one-to-one tutorials, group format, e-mails, remote or telephone conversations. This contact is essential for monitoring progress and identifying any problems at an early stage.

Supervision Contract (Appendix 2): You should complete the Supervision contract with your supervisors to clarify expectations and arrangements.

Supervision Log (Appendix 3): You and your supervisor will keep a record of your supervision meetings. Please use this form for any research supervision discussions.

Group Research supervision will be included in the teaching programme. Supervisors should read your research proposal/plan.

Review of your written work: See the table above for expectations around reading drafts. ~~Plan~~ Allow supervisors plenty of time for this (and allowing for holidays) to ensure that you get feedback on this.

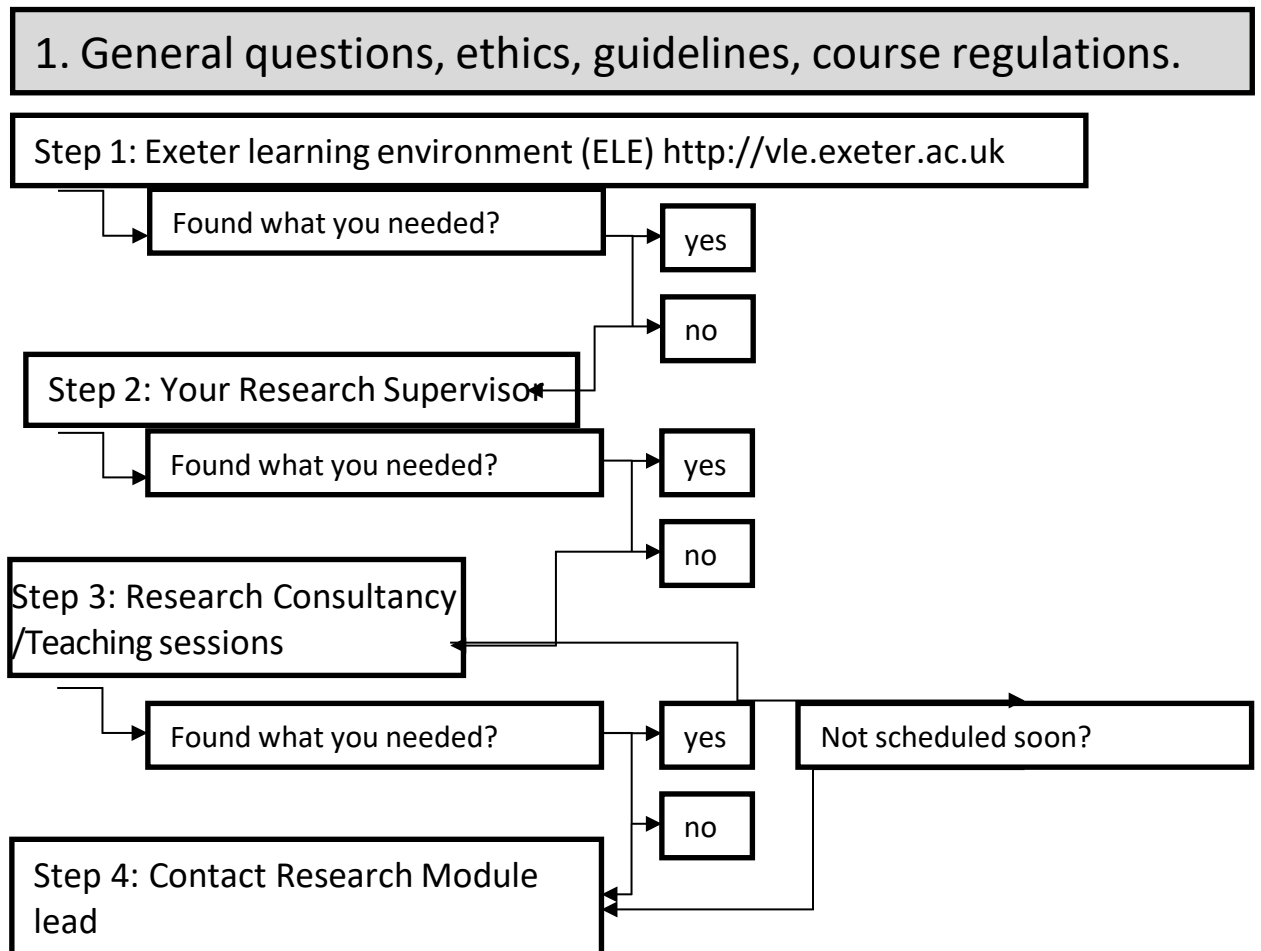
Dissertation marking: Dissertations will normally be marked by a member of the MSc, teaching team, or someone related to the teaching, and it will be moderated by the Research Module lead.

- ***See Appendix 6 for Dissertation Marking Criteria***

Remember: You are responsible for maintaining regular contact with your supervisor.

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND FACILITIES

How can I get support for research?



2. Issues around the research project

Methods & stats: ELE Special teaching Research supervisor Statistics helpdesk	NHS ethics: IRAS homepage ELE R&D dep. in your trust Research supervisor	General: ELE APA manual Journal guidelines Research supervisor
--	---	---

3. Issues/problems around supervision/supervisor

Research Lead. Programme lead

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND FACILITIES - how to get help with your research project and dissertation write-up.

There are a number of resources and support pathways available to MSc students, indicated on the flowchart on the previous page.

1. Exeter Learning Environment (ELE) <http://ele.exeter.ac.uk>. Look under the MSc Psychological Therapies pages, but you can access all the related courses with a wide range of research resources.
2. Consult your dissertation supervisor. Your most important source of support for this module.
3. Exeter-based twice-termly Research Teaching/Consultancy sessions (timetabled in the teaching sessions), focused on dissertation research and writing up details.
4. Email dissertation module lead.
5. Computing and Statistics Helpdesk: A computing and statistics helpdesk is available 9:30 – 12:30 on some weekdays during term time in the School of Psychology. The aim of this service is to provide immediate advice on statistical problems and computer programmes (they do expect you to know the basics of statistics before you go). Their email address is psy-helpdesk@exeter.ac.uk.
7. Issues/problems around supervision/ your supervisor. First point of contact: supervisor. If further input is needed, contact the Research module lead.

3.4. Getting ethical approval for your project

All MSc projects will need University Ethics approval from the Psychology Research Ethics Committee - see details below.

- If you need NHS Ethics approval you will need to plan 6 to 12 months for NHS approval (this timeframe is beyond the scope of the Masters programme). We therefore recommend that you avoid research questions requiring NHS Ethics approval as this will mean you need to extend the time to complete the module over several years. However, you must get NHS approval if you are conducting research with any patient and your research addresses issues of the services they receive in the context of the NHS.
- It may be that your topic fits the criteria for a Service Evaluation. See definitions:

http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/docs/DefiningResearchTable_Oct2017-1.pdf

In this case, you would get agreement of this from your NHS Research and Development Committee (for example, an email confirmation) and this would be submitted along with your ethics application to the Exeter Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

Psychology Research Ethics Committee (PREC)

How to apply (see Presentations by a member of PREC)

Complete the online form, append additional material if necessary, at:

<http://vle.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3553>

For problems with access to the documents or info, contact the chair of the PREC ethics committee (up to date details of this on the ELE site)

- PLEASE use **university template** information sheets/consent forms
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/>
- FOLLOW the **Psychology Ethics Checklist** (see ELE page)

Ethics application resources:

- **ELE ethics page:** <http://ele.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3553>
- UoE guidance on using Worktribe:
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/ethicssystemandtools/>
- **UoE Ethics Framework:**
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/codesandpolicies/>
- **Association of Family Therapy Code of Ethics**
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.aft.org.uk/resource/resmgr/resources/policies_and_guidance_docs/ethics/code_of_ethics_practice_fin.pdf
- **BPS (2021) Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research:**
<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/ethics-guidelines-internet-mediated-research>
- UoE guidance on **GDPR:** <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/gdpr/>
- Technical support: ethics@exeter.ac.uk
- Chairs of PREC: c.civile@exeter.ac.uk & i.p.l.mclaren@exeter.ac.uk.

Possible outcomes

- Approval (proceed with data collection)
- Conditional approval (must be resubmitted)
- Request for further information
- Rejection (no revision possible)

PREC will conduct **full review** if you are testing students, community volunteers or any participants **not** covered by an NRES approval.

- Add the outcome to your research dissertation submission and address any issues raised.

4. SUBMISSION OF THE DISSERTATION

Your dissertation must be submitted, with the appropriate Dissertation Application Form (see Appendix iii for the current version, but be aware that university forms may change. Check with the Course Administrator at the time of submission), in the following format:

- Candidates should submit their dissertations to the Programme Administrator, together with the required submission form.
- Dissertations should be submitted in accordance with any particular requirements relating to dates of submission stipulated for the programme.
- Every effort is made to expedite the examining of dissertations, but no undertaking can be given that the process can be completed within a particular period of time.
- When a report on a dissertation has been received, it is submitted by the Dean of the Faculty to the next meeting of the Vice Chancellor's Executive group which has been empowered by Senate to award degrees.
- Official notification of the result is sent to the candidate following confirmation of the examiners' recommendation by the Vice Chancellors Executive Group.

Presentation:

- Candidates for taught Masters degrees are required to submit to their School one electronic version. Candidates will be expected to keep an extra copy for their own use.
- All dissertations must include an **abstract of approximately 300 words** and placed so as to follow the titlepage.
- Candidates may not include in their dissertation material for which a degree has been previously conferred upon them, and any material which is not the candidate's own work must be clearly identified.

Arrangement of Theses/Dissertations

- **FIGURES:** No restrictions are placed on the size of the drawings, maps or similar material.
- **MARGINS:** 40mm on the left-hand side, 20mm on the right-hand side.
- **SPACING:** Double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used in typescript except for intended quotations or footnotes, for which single spacing may be used.
- **NUMBERING OF PAGES:** All pages, including abstracts, appendices, indices, drawings, maps, pages of photographs, etc should be numbered consecutively in one sequence, (ie, the titlepage, with declaration, is Page 1).

SEQUENCE: Material should be arranged as specified in the separate Module Guidelines.

- **TITLE PAGE: For dissertations submitted for degrees of taught Masters the title page should record:**
 - a) The full title (and sub-title if any) of the dissertation as approved;
 - b) For candidates for the Masters degrees, the statement:
"Submitted by (name in full) to the University of Exeter as a dissertation towards the degree of Master of Science by advanced study in Psychological Therapies Practice and Research (month and year of submission)"
 - c) The declaration: **"I certify that all material in this dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has previously been conferred upon me .(signature of candidate)"**
- **ABSTRACT**
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS:** The title page and abstract should be followed immediately by the Table of Contents which should give in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant sub-divisions of the work.

5. REFERENCING

Psychology has adopted the **American Psychological Association (APA) conventions** as the standard for citations and references. As such references must be completed in APA style. It is important that programme members are familiar with the precise details of citing and referencing. We use the standard of 'a publishable article' and we expect citations and references to adhere to that standard. The information given here is based on the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the APA, a copy of which is kept in the School Office.

Reference Section or Bibliography

The main conventions are as follows:

Journal Articles

A typical citation would be (Ablon & Jones, 1999) and the reference would appear as:

Ablon, J. S. & Jones, E. E. (1999). Psychotherapy process in the National Institute of Mental Health treatment of depression collaborative research program. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67*, 6-7.

Another example would be:

Kasen, S., Cohen, P., Skodol, A. E., Johnson, J. G., Smailes, E., & Brook, J. S. (2001). Childhood depression and adult personality disorder - Alternative pathways of continuity. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 58*, 231-236.

Books

A typical citation would be (Bateman, Brown & Pedder, 2000) and the reference would appear as:

Bateman, A., Brown, D., & Pedder, J. (2000). *An introduction to psychotherapy*. (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Another example would be:

American Psychiatric Association (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*. (4th ed. Revised ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Chapters in a book

If you have read a chapter in an edited book you would put the following citation in the text: (Aveline, 2006). In the reference section you would list it as:

Aveline, M., Strauss, B., & Stiles, W. B. (2005). Psychotherapy research. In G. Gabbard, J. S. Beck, & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Oxford textbook of psychotherapy* (pp. 449-462). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Citations in the main text

Citing in text means referring to author(s) with the dates (e.g., Eells, 1997) so that the reader can then go to the References and find them in more detail.

Eells, T. D. (1997). *Handbook of psychotherapy case formulation*. New York: Guilford Press.

Reference citations for two or more works within the same parentheses. List two or more works by different authors who are cited within the same parentheses in alphabetical order by the first author's surname. Separate the citations with semicolons. For example: Several studies (Balda, 1980; Kamil, 1988; Pepperberg & Funk, 1990). Exception: You may separate a major citation from other citations within parentheses by inserting a phrase such as *see also*, before the first of the remaining citations, which should be in alphabetical order. For example: (Minor, 2001; *see also* Adams, 1999; Storandt, 1997).

There are many different instances of citing and referencing (e.g., Internet resources, personal communication, conference papers, case examples ...), and you are advised to consult the APA Publication Manual for these.

6. CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE – DISSERTATION OR PROJECT SUPERVISION/TUITION FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS

The University's TQA Manual sets out the Code of Good Practice for Dissertations and covers

1. Responsibilities of Dissertation Supervisors/Tutors
2. Responsibilities of Students
3. Responsibilities of the School

The Code can be found at:

<http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/admin/staff/qualityassuranceandmonitoring/tqamannual/>

Appendix 1 Research proposal presentation: template (see ELE for powerpoint template)

Introduction

Title here

Your name here

PYCM001 Research (or Service Evaluation) proposal presentation

Date here

Background

Briefly summarise

- The clinical context relevant to your question
- the previous research and
- The relevant theory that leads you to your research question

The background should be concise and should take less than 5 minutes (1/3rd) of the presentation.

Research aim/questions/hypotheses

Include any or all as appropriate

Be clear and specific

Method

Include:

- Study design (e.g. Delphi method; interviews; case series, scoping etc)
- Proposed participants, inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Materials (interview schedule, assessment questionnaires, validity, reliability, scoring, etc)
- Methodology (participant recruitment, data collection – what, how, and when - , ethics considerations specific to your study, user involvement considerations)
- Analytic Plan (detail and justify the proposed analysis strategy)

Be as detailed as possible. This section should form the main part of your presentation. Use several slides for it.

Critique

- How will you ensure the results are 'trustworthy' and reliable?
- Credibility checks: eg. an independent audit- can a colleague understand the fit between the data and researchers interpretations; participant checks
- Reflexivity: Owning your own perspective (theoretical orientation, values, biases, sociocultural positioning)
- Usefulness: How will your study to useful? To whom?
- How will you disseminate your findings?

Issues/questions

Any particular issues or questions you would like some help with at this stage?

Appendix 2. Research Proposal Guidelines
University of Exeter
School of Psychology

Research Proposal Outline (max 2250 words)

PROVISIONAL TITLE

TRAINEE NAME

SUPERVISORS (if known)

TARGET JOURNAL

LAY SUMMARY

PROPOSED RESEARCH SETTING

INTRODUCTION

(A rationale and brief theoretical and empirical background to aims and hypotheses/research questions, including theoretical and professional importance)

AIMS, HYPOTHESES and/or RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PLANNED APPROACH (METHOD)

- 1) Participants (recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria and numbers)
- 2) Design (how are you going to carry out the study)
- 3) Method of data collection (describe how you will collect your data; list any measures to be used and their rationale)
- 4) Data analysis (eg. type of analysis)
- 5) Timing of different stages of research
 - a) Data collection completed by:
 - b) Analysis completed by:
 - c) Presentation of first draft completed by:
 - d) Submission date:
- 6) Significance/contribution to knowledge: Why is this study important?

- 7) Plan for dissemination of results/findings
- 8) Ethical considerations including the procedures to be adopted.

SIGNATURES

Trainee:

Supervisor:

Date:

APPENDICES (include your interview schedule; other forms can be worked on once the proposal is agreed)

Interview schedule

Participant information sheet

Consent form (if no consent form included, please explain how participants' informed consent will be obtained) and all forms,

Questionnaires, scales that participants will be asked to complete

Extract of one page from research diary / reflections diary

Table/s of themes and subthemes

Transcript example

Debrief sheet

Ethics approval decision

Appendix 3. Research Supervisory Contract Form

Exeter University - Supervision Contract – Research

Supervision Agreement between:

..... (Trainee) &

..... (University Supervisor)

Practicalities

- **Frequency:** Monthly, initially – frequency may increase at certain key points
- **How long:** One hour as a guide – if trainee has focused questions, this may be shorter
- **Who initiates the supervision meeting:** Trainees to approach supervisor for meetings (Fridays are the University teaching days). Supervisor will arrange a meeting via video conferencing or in person
- **Cancellation/absentee arrangements –** Trainee or supervisor to email the other person. Preferably 48 hours' notice so that another meeting can be arranged.

Aims of Supervision

The aims of research supervision are for the supervisor and supervisee to co-create a relationship of trust and respect to enable the supervisee's research dissertation to progress.

Role of the supervisee

The role of the supervisee is to present their work, ideas, dilemma's and writing for discussion.

To jointly agree timeframes for the completion of work (see below), ensuring that written work is given to the supervisor at least 2-3 weeks before feedback is due.

Role of the supervisor

The role of the supervisor is to provide regular advice, support and direction as well as a reflective space.

The supervisor will read one draft of each chapter of the dissertation and review the dissertation once before it is handed in.

Both the supervision and research will adhere **AFT Code of Standards and Ethics.**

Goals for University supervision:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Agreed timescales (milestones) for the research dissertation

Task	Date	Completed
Ethics approval		
Write chapter 1: Introduction & Literature Review		
Collect data (Interviews, focus groups)		
Write chapter 2: Methodology		
Analyse Data		
Write up Chapter 3: Findings & Interpretation		
Validity checks (audit trail etc)		
Feedback to participants		
Write up Chapter 4: Discussion & recommendations		
Review whole dissertation		
Hand-in dissertation		

Steps in the event of a breakdown in the arrangements for supervision:

In the event of upsetting or inappropriate behaviour by the trainee or supervisor, this should be discussed together initially. If this is not satisfactorily resolved, then either party can discuss the matter with and/or ask for a 3-Way meeting with a senior member of the MSc team.

In the unlikely event that the relationship between the supervisee and supervisor deteriorates, each person is responsible for attempting to work together to resolve the problem.

Agreements about Journal articles arising from the research

If the supervisee is interested in publishing their dissertation, the supervisor and supervisee may agree to prepare their dissertation for publication in the appropriate Journal. It is common practice for the supervisee and supervisor to co-author the paper: The supervisee is typically the main author, re-writing their dissertation for the Journal and supervisor a second author. Other methods of dissemination should also be considered.

Changes to this agreement and timescale:

Changes to this agreement can be negotiated at any time.
This agreement covers the period October 2023 – July 2024.

Signed _____ University Research Supervisor _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Trainee Supervisee _____ Date _____

Please email a copy this agreement to the MSc Course administrator and keep your own copy.

Appendix 4. Research Supervision Log

MSc Systemic Therapy: Supervision Log

Student name:

Dissertation title:

Session number:	Date:
Supervisor's name:	
Matters discussed:	
Agreed actions:	
Supervisor's notes:	
Supervisor's sign off (please initial here after reviewing the notes):	

Appendix 5. Form for submission of dissertation



FORM OF APPLICATION FOR EXAMINATION OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED BY A CANDIDATE FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE

To be completed by the Candidate

1 I, _____ (name in full),
wish to submit my dissertation towards the degree of (programme title)

Title of Dissertation _____

2. I enclose an electronic version of the dissertation, which shall become the property of the University.

3 I certify that the dissertation submitted does not include any material previously submitted and approved for a degree and all material which is not my own is identified (i.e. correctly referenced)

Signed _____

Date _____

THIS FORM AFTER COMPLETION BY THE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL, TOGETHER WITH THE TWO COPIES OF THE DISSERTATION.

For CEDAR students a single copy should be submitted Electronically.

Appendix 6. Dissertation Marking criteria and mark sheet

Module PYCM001 Research dissertation (100% of module mark)

Programme Member	Delete as appropriate	Mark	Turnitin score
	Distinction/Merit/Pass/Fail		
Overall Comments:			

Use of literature and development of research aims and questions (25% weighting)*	Fail (49% & below)	Pass (50-59%)	Merit (60-69%)	Distinction (70%+)
<p>Introduction and Literature review: Review of the systemic literature and relevant concepts and theories. The review shows sensitivity to contemporary issues. Demonstrates relevance of the literature to the aims of the research and research question. Research aims and question challenge current thinking and show innovation. Develop an argument, show clarity of your idea and/or hypotheses</p>				
<p>Methodology (20% weighting)* <i>How did you carry out the study and what did you find?</i> Methodology is appropriate for the research goals. The methodology is grounded in theory demonstrating a critical understanding. Recruitment strategy, data collection and ethics are well considered and appropriate.</p>				
<p>Findings/results and Analysis (25% weighting)* The presentation of results provides an excellent summary of the data. Credibility (trustworthiness) of the data is demonstrated. The analysis is rigorous; it is clear how data is selected for presentation and data supports the findings. Involvement of participants in the research is discussed – as relevant to the study (that is, if this was part of the research plan).</p>				
<p>Critical, coherent discussion showing reflexive awareness (25% weighting)* <i>What is your understanding of the results and how do you make sense of them? How have you as researcher influenced the process?</i> A critical approach is taken to the data, discussing pro's and con's of the research arguments. (Limitations; validity, trustworthiness).</p>				

<p>Reflexivity is demonstrated throughout the dissertation, giving attention to the impact of power and social diversity.</p> <p>Highly sophisticated consideration is given to the relationship between participants and the researcher and the impact of this on the findings</p> <p>A critical understanding of moral and ethical issues is demonstrated.</p> <p>Highly relevant and innovative implications for future research, training and clinical practice are discussed.</p> <p>The research demonstrates an exceptional degree of usefulness to the systemic and/or broader therapeutic community.</p> <p>The conclusion provides a concise summary of salient points about the uniqueness and relevance of this study.</p>				
<p>Presentation and referencing (5%)</p> <p>Standard of presentation; highly logical and organised structure. Academic and reflexive writing style.</p> <p>References are well-chosen, correct and consistent. Sources of information are always cited, where necessary.</p> <p>Use of grammatically correct language.</p> <p>No or few typographical errors</p>				

* Please note: failure to pass these specific criteria will result in an overall failure of the assignment

If you have specific queries about the feedback you have received and would like to arrange a meeting to clarify any learning points please contact your tutor or academic lead.

Appendix 7. Research references and resources (see ELE Research folder for updates and links to the library)

General introductions to Qualitative Analysis

Dallos, R and Vetere, A. (2005). *Researching psychotherapy and Counselling*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Morse, J.M. & Richards, L (2002). *Readme First for a User's Guide to Qualitative methods*. London: Sage.

Carberry, K. & Brooks-Gordon, B. (2020), "Black Therapists – White Families, Therapists' Perceptions of Cultural Competence in Clinical Practice", in R. Majors, K. Carberry & T.S. Ransaw (Eds.) *The International Handbook of Black Community Mental Health*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 379-404. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83909-964-920201025>

Simon, G. and Chard, A. (eds.) (2014) *Systemic inquiry: Innovations in Reflexive practice research*. United Kingdom: Everything is Connected Press.

Yon, K., Malik, R., Mandin, P. and Midgley, N. (2018), [Challenging core cultural beliefs and maintaining the therapeutic alliance: a qualitative study](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6427.12158). *Journal of Family Therapy*, 40: 180–200. doi:10.1111/1467-6427.12158

Thematic Analysis

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001), Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research* 1/3: 385-405.

Bazeley, P. (2009), Analysing Qualitative Data: More Than 'Identifying Themes'. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research*, 2, 6-22

Bhugun, D. (2017). Parenting advice for intercultural couples: A systemic perspective: Intercultural parenting. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 39(3), 454–477.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Herring, N. (2021) Young people, living in care and adopted, talk about their experiences of receiving an NHS therapeutic intervention. Qualitative research analysed using **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 43: 426– 444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6427.12364>

Smith, J.A., Larkin, M. and Flowers, P.(eds) (2009) *Interpretative phenomenological analysis : theory, method and research*. London: Sage.

Discursive Analysis

Tseliou, E., Burck, C., Forbat, L., Strong, T., & O'Reilly, M. (n.d.). The Discursive Performance of Change Process in Systemic and Constructionist Therapies: A Systematic Meta-Synthesis Review of In-Session Therapy Discourse. *Family Process*, n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12560>

Wallis, J. and Singh, R. (2014) Constructions and enactments of whiteness: a discursive analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 36: 39–64. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6427.2012.00602.x

Narrative analysis

Burck, C. (2005) Comparing qualitative research methodologies for systemic research: the use of grounded theory, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 27: 238-263.

Jones, A., & Vetere, A. (2016) 'You just deal with it. You have to when you've got a child: A narrative analysis of mothers' accounts of how they coped, both during an abusive relationship and after leaving. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1359104515624131>

NB _ Vetere, A. and Dallos, R. (2017) Interacting Stories: Narrative Research and Systemic Therapy. In G. Sammut, J. Foster, S. Salvatore and R. Ruggieri, *Methods of Psychological Intervention. Yearbook of Idiographic Science*. Infoage Publishing.

Action research and participatory approaches

Bradbury, H., Glenzer, K., Apgar, M., Embury, D. C., Friedman, V., Kjellström, S., ... Devecha, S. (2020). Action Research Journal's seven quality choicepoints for action oriented research for transformations. *Action Research*, 18(1), 3-6. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750320904562>

Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. (2000) Participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Focus groups

Deslypere, E. and Rober, P. (2020), Family Secrecy in Family Therapy Practice: An Explorative Focus Group Study. *Family Process*, 59: 52-65. doi:[10.1111/famp.12409](https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12409)

Kahan, J. P. (2001). Focus groups as a tool for policy analysis. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 1(1), 129-146.

Katainen, A., & Heikkilä, R. (2019). Analysing the ways of participating in interview settings: young people's identity performances and social class in focus groups. *Qualitative Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119891634>

Other methods:

Gambrel, L. E. and Butler VI, J. L. (2013). Mixed methods research in marriage and family therapy: A **content analysis**. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 39: 163–181. doi: 10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00260.x

Christenson, J.D. & Gutierrez, D.M. (2016) Using Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Research to Promote Family Therapy with Adolescents in Residential Settings. *Contemporary Family Therapy* 38: 52-61. doi:10.1007/s10591-016-9374-x

Wallis J. M., Burns, J., & Capdevila, R. (2009). **Q methodology and a Delphi Poll**: a useful approach to research a narrative approach to therapy. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 6 (3), 173-190.

MODULE TITLE	Psychological Therapies Research Project				CREDIT VALUE	60
MODULE CODE	PYCM001		MODULE CONVENER		Dr Jennifer Wallis	
DURATION	TERM	1	2	3	Number Students Taking Module (anticipated)	20
	WEEKS	10	10	10		

DESCRIPTION – summary of the module content

This module provides you with an opportunity to study in detail a topic of your own choice, related to systemic psychotherapy, psychological therapies and mental health. It will allow you to explore, in some detail, your understanding of the subject matter through the production of a piece of original research on a particular issue. You will be allocated a project supervisor after formulating your research plan. The work will comprise independent research, supervised in monthly tutorials, and there will also be some group tutorials and research teaching/consultancy. To improve access to the module, the delivery of supervision over the telephone or via internet based software application will be available. The outcome will be a research project written up as a research paper of 8000 words maximum (plus an appendix).

MODULE AIMS – intentions of the module

This module aims to:

- Provide you with practical experience, under supervision, of all or most of the stages of a research project including analysis of data, and of writing a substantial research report on some aspect of systemic psychotherapy, psychological therapies and mental health.
- Facilitate your ability to formulate, design, carry out, and communicate the results of research that is relevant to the concerns of service users, providers and commissioners of psychological therapies services.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs) (see assessment section below for how ILOs will be assessed) On successful completion of this module *you should be able to:*

Module Specific Skills and Knowledge:

- 1 Describe in detail a particular research design/methodology
- 2 Apply many of the general research and analysis skills covered in the taught part of the programme through managing a relatively substantial research project (i.e., conceptualise, design, carry out, and communicate the results of research that is relevant to the concerns of the patients, providers and commissioners of health services)
- 3 Demonstrate a reflective, ethical and professional framework in your research work

Discipline Specific Skills and Knowledge:

- 4 Use research to solve complex problems
- 5 Use systemic theory and skills to design interview protocols and analyse data

Personal and Key Transferable/ Employment Skills and Knowledge:

- 5 Work innovatively, persistently, independently and confidently and exercise personal responsibility and autonomous initiative
- 6 Work and communicate effectively with others

SYLLABUS PLAN – summary of the structure and academic content of the module

You must submit a preliminary research plan of 2500 words maximum (topic, short description of project, locale, methodology). This should be the Research Proposal you submitted previously, but may include amendments to the plan. A research supervision contract must be signed by you and your supervisor(s) before the project proper begins.

The research project can be written up as a research paper in a format suitable for publication in a specified journal. This may be supplemented by appendices detailing pilot work, ethics details, analysis tables/diagrams etc, for which the journal format allows insufficient space.

You will be allocated a supervisor from within the portfolio of the Systemic psychotherapy and training programmes available within CEDAR. Where necessary you will be allocated a co-supervisor from other departments of the university, or other relevant organisations. The research project will normally be developed in consultation with the research tutors or potential supervisor prior to the research being carried out. In the early stages of the research project this will need to be worked up further as you obtain ethical approval, collect the data, analyse them and write the research report. If you take on research as part of a larger on-going project, you must nevertheless familiarise yourself with decisions taken, and the rationale for them, at every stage of the project, and there must be a data set resulting which you can analyse yourself and write up for your research report. Further details and advice are supplied in the Handbook each year.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS (given in hours of study time)

Scheduled Learning and Teaching activities	40	Guided independent study	560	Placement/study abroad	0
--	----	--------------------------	-----	------------------------	---

DETAILS OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS

Category	Hours of study time	Description
Scheduled Learning and Teaching	30	Supervision and tutorials
Scheduled Learning and Teaching	10	Seminars/discussions within the whole group
Guided Independent Study	560	Design, recruit, prepare and submit ethics application, pilot, conduct data collection, analyse data, write up and disseminate (the amount of time devoted to each aspect will vary with the type of research undertaken and supervisors will advise appropriately)

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT - for feedback and development purposes; does not count towards module grade

Form of Assessment	Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length	ILOs assessed	Feedback method
Preliminary research plan	2500 words	1, 4	Written

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT (% of credit)

Coursework	100	Written exams	0	Practical exams	0
------------	-----	---------------	---	-----------------	---

DETAILS OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Form of Assessment	% of credit	Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length	ILOs assessed	Feedback method
Research project (this assessment must be passed; failure in this assessment will lead to failure in the module and the programme)	100	8000 words maximum plus Appendix.	1-6	Written

DETAILS OF RE-ASSESSMENT (where required by referral or deferral)

Original form of assessment	Form of re-assessment	ILOs re-assessed	Time scale for re-assessment
Research project	Research project	1-6	12 weeks from the date that feedback was provided

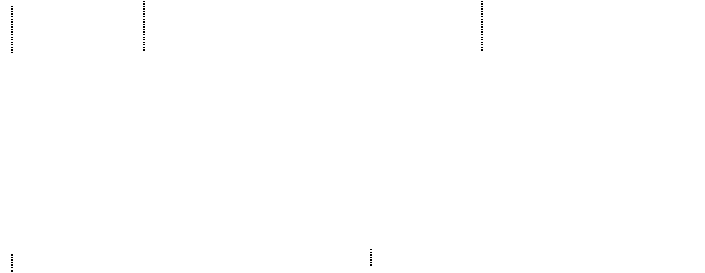
RE-ASSESSMENT NOTES

One assessment is required for this module. In all cases re-assessment will be the same as the original assessment. Where you have been referred/deferred for any form of assessment detailed above you will have the opportunity to retake as specified above.

If you pass re-assessments taken as a result of deferral, your re-assessment will be treated as it would be if it were your first attempt at the assessment and the overall module mark will not be capped.

If you pass re-assessments taken as a result of referral (i.e. following initial failure in the assessment), the overall module mark will be capped at 50%.

If you fail re-assessments taken as a result of referral (i.e. following initial failure in the assessment), you will be failed in the module and as a consequence you will be failed in the programme and your registration as a student of the University will be terminated.



RESOURCES

INDICATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES - The following list is offered as an indication of the type and level of information that you are expected to consult. Further guidance will be provided by the Module Convener.

Core reading:

- ❏ American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual*. (6th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- ❏ Bergin, A. E. and Garfield, S. L. (2003). *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*. (5th ed.) New York: Wiley.
- ❏ Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❏ Harper, D. and Thompson, A.R. (eds) (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. Chichester: Wiley.
- ❏ Kazdin, A. E. (2003). *Methodological Issues and Strategies in Clinical Research* (3rd ed.) Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- ❏ Parry, G. and Watts, F. N. (1996). *Behavioural and Mental Health Research: A Handbook of Skills and Methods* (2nd ed.) Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Press.
- ❏ Roth, A. and Fonagy, P. (2005). *What Works for Whom: A Critical Review of Psychotherapy Research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- ❏ Sternberg, R.J. (1993). *The Psychologist's Companion: A Guide to Scientific Writing for Students and Researchers* (3rd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❏ Sternberg, R.J. (2000). *Guide to Publishing in Psychology Journals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❏ Wampold, B. E. (2007). *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

A specific systemic reference list is provided on ELE.

All resources will be made available on ELE.

CREDIT VALUE	60	ECTS VALUE	30
PRE-REQUISITE MODULES	None		
CO-REQUISITE MODULES	None		
NQF LEVEL (FHEQ)	7	AVAILABLE AS DISTANCE LEARNING	No
ORIGIN DATE	01/06/2012	LAST REVISION DATE	06/10/2022
KEY WORDS SEARCH	Psychological therapies, systemic psychotherapy, psychology, mental health, masters, dissertation, research, project		