



## Applying to the Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology

### Frequently asked questions

Answers to many DECPsy applicant queries we have received are below. You can also find extensive information about the programme and application process on our website:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/>

#### **I'm in my final year of a psychology degree. Can I apply to the course now, or do I have to wait until I've graduated?**

You cannot apply until you have obtained your undergraduate psychology degree results, which needs to be recognised by the British Psychological Society - <http://beta.bps.org.uk/> - as conferring Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). You will also need to have gained work experience prior to applying (at least 1 year full-time equivalent by the application deadline).

#### **How much work experience with children is enough to give my application a good chance of success?**

12 months' full-time experience working with children in an educational, child care or community setting is a recommended minimum. 1 year full-time equivalent (e.g. 24 months' half time) must have been completed by the application deadline. This can be cumulative or continuous and voluntary experience of various kinds may also assist applicants in demonstrating a breadth of relevant experience. Whatever kind of work has been done, we are primarily interested in what applicants have learnt from their experiences that is relevant to work as an educational psychologist, and how they have been able to apply the knowledge of psychology gained through their first degree. 'Quality' of work experience in terms of relevance to contexts and client groups encountered in an EP role is equally important to 'quantity'. Please see the Relevant Work Experience section on our application page at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/apply.html> for more details.

#### **Do I need to have GBC before applying to the course?**

You will need to be eligible for Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership, but you do not need to have acquired this before applying. Please contact the BPS if you would like confirmation as to whether or not you will be eligible. You would need to have acquired this status by the time the DECPsy course has started in September.

#### **Do I need a Masters to apply for the course?**

If you have achieved a 2:1 undergraduate degree in Psychology then a Masters is not needed. A Masters is only required if you achieved a 2:2 in your Psychology degree, and you must then achieve a Merit or Distinction in your Masters. The Masters course must be accredited by the BPS, if you are unsure on this please check with the BPS directly.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/>

**My undergraduate degree may not have sufficient psychology modules for GBC to be conferred, or, my undergraduate degree was not in Psychology - what should I do to be able to apply to the course?**

If your degree does not have sufficient psychology modules then you should contact the British Psychological Society - <http://beta.bps.org.uk/> - who will let you have details of conversion courses available to you. There is no 'preferred' conversion course as long as it is accredited by the BPS. Please note that we do not offer a conversion course.

**Does holding a teaching qualification (PGCE) give you a better likelihood of being accepted on the course?**

No, it is not essential that you complete a PGCE before applying and you should only do so if you feel you have a desire to teach.

**Is there any option to qualify as an Educational Psychologist after studying a 1 year Masters in Educational Psychology now, either at UCL or elsewhere, or is my only option the 3 year Doctorate?**

No, in 2009 the Health and Care Professions Council set the threshold level of qualification for entry to the register for Educational Psychologists at 'Professional Doctorate or Equivalent'.

**Could you clarify the differences between the two Educational Psychology Doctorate programmes following the merger between UCL and the IoE?**

The recent merger will not affect the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology Programme at UCL and the two programmes are still run separately. We can only give information about our own doctorate programme. If you require assistance in regards to the Institute of Education Doctorate programme, please contact them directly at 020 7612 6591 or visit their website: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/research/degrees/educational-psychology-professional-educational-child-adolescent-psychology-dedpsy>

**How many places are offered on the course each year and how many are funded versus self-funded?**

We are able to offer 14 funded places. There will also be two self-funded places offered to UK applicants and some availability for EU/overseas applicants.

**Do you offer any equivalent part-time or distance study alternatives?**

No, the full-time study route is the only one available given the breadth and level of subject matter covered and its focus on practical placement learning. Please note that the course is very academically and practically demanding, ruling out any option of part-time work to assist with funding.

**Would it be possible to substitute some of the credits for my existing qualification for part of the Doctorate - for example the first term of study?**

No, this is never an option, course members must successfully complete the entire 3 years to qualify. On this integrated Doctoral-level programme there are no elements to which accreditation of prior (experiential) learning processes are applicable.

**I applied to the course last year and did not get a place. I was told that this was in part due to the large number of applications and this should not stop me from applying again - is there any limit to the number of times candidates can re-apply?**

Not at all - the course is extremely competitive and sadly the number of places available is small. Applying in successive years has proved successful for a number of current students who are now on their way to becoming qualified EPs.

**What are my obligations upon completing the programme if I had a funded place?**

A funded place on the programme should be viewed as a 5 year commitment. It is necessary to work as an EP in England for two years after graduating from the programme, however there is flexibility regarding this. If your circumstances should change for instance, the EP work can be done on a part time basis (providing that the period worked equates to two years of full time employment in total) or after a maternity leave is taken. A contract of terms of employment will be given to each candidate prior to the start of the course.

**Can you clarify the funding that is available to UK applicants? I understand that I can obtain a bursary from the government if I secure a funded place on the course, but is this intended to cover course fees, living costs or both?**

Applicants who secure a funded place will have their fees for all 3 years paid in addition to the bursary of £16,390 in Year 1. For years 2 and 3 applicants obtain a placement bursary as a trainee educational psychologist with a Local Authority Educational Psychology Service.

**If I get a place on the course, will I need to organise my own placements in Years 1-3?**

Currently, Year 1 placements are organised for you in one of our placement Local Authorities around London. In years 2 and 3, trainee EP placement bursary placements for UK trainees will be allocated to Services in London and the South East by a placement panel of Principal Educational Psychologists, taking account of your address and other relevant factors.

Year 2 and 3 placement arrangements are different for students from overseas and the EU, who are required to provide written confirmation that a placement of 260 days (approximately 3 days per week) has been organised in their home country for Years 2 and 3 when applying for a place on the course or to indicate that they wish to take up the UK placement option (subject to a fee supplement for EU students) in which an unpaid placement is supervised by one of the UCL tutors. If a placement is to be undertaken in the applicant's home country it will need to be arranged with a supervisor who is eligible for Chartered Educational Psychology status with the British Psychological Society (or equivalent with the Psychological Society of your home country). There are different fee levels for these 2 placement options. See the placements section of the DECPSy website for full details: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/index.html>.

**What can I expect to earn on my bursaried placement in years 2 and 3?**

Each UK trainee undertaking a bursaried placement in years 2 and 3 will receive a bursary of £17,000 per annum, which includes a contribution towards travel/books, usually of £500, but with some additional funds being available to support trainees who incur particular travel costs associated with home to placement travel. For further information regarding year 2 and 3 placement allocations and expectations please visit our year 2 and 3 bursary placements page at: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/bursary\\_placements\\_2017.html](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/bursary_placements_2017.html).

**What are the term dates for the first year of the course, and in Year 1 is university study 5 days a week?**

The course syllabus contains both practice (placement) and professional development (academic/taught, in-house) elements. In Year 1, taught sessions are held at UCL 2 days per week, primary, secondary and special school placements comprise 1 day a week and the other 2 days a week are reserved for research/study. Term dates obviously differ slightly from year to year but will be similar to the current academic year's which are available on our website:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/index.html>

Please note that the course always starts on the first week of September in Year 1.

### **Is a reading list available to interested applicants?**

Yes, this is available for download at:

[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/resources/decpsy\\_reading\\_list.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/resources/decpsy_reading_list.pdf)

### **Will I be offered help arranging accommodation? What are the living costs likely to be?**

Most students live in the region and do not have to move to attend the course. If you are applying from overseas or currently live further afield the following website gives details on eligibility for UCL student residences:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/application/eligibility>.

The UCL accommodation website - <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/> - also provides a great deal of helpful information, including estimated living costs for students living in London and a link to the University of London Housing Services website for those seeking private lodgings or flats.

### **I am an overseas applicant, where can I find out more about living in London?**

In addition to the accommodation information above, some useful information can be found on the living in London international students webpage:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international/before-you-arrive/living-in-london>

We also put overseas applicants in touch with existing overseas students on the programme, once a formal offer of a place has been accepted, so that information and advice can be sought if required.

### **Do you hold open days regarding the Doctorate in Educational & Child Psychology programme, or can I meet with a tutor from the course?**

We do not offer open days or individual visits to discuss the DECPsy course. Sometimes Local Authority Open Days are advertised on our website, along with all the key information you will need about the course:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy/index.html>

### **Do you offer work experience or internships?**

We are unable to offer work experience or internships within the Educational Psychology Group.

### **What's the age range on the course? I suppose what I am trying to ask is, as a 'mature' applicant, am I 'too old' to apply?**

Our course members are a range of ages and this is utterly irrelevant to our selection process - what counts are your skills and knowledge, not your age.

### **What is the typical background of a UCL doctorate trainee?**

The DECPsy applicants accepted on to the programme are a diverse group with varying backgrounds, both academically and in terms of experience.

### **Is the programme very competitive?**

Assessments are marked in a way which would make competition difficult to establish. In most cases work is marked on a pass/fail basis, with corrections and advice from tutors tailored to each individual. Staff and trainees strive to create a supportive and non-judgemental environment.

### **Is the workload difficult to manage?**

Undertaking the doctorate is an intense commitment. The programme requires full time dedication and a willingness to work hard. If you manage your time well and meet deadlines set you will find the programme easier to manage.

### **Does the programme focus on cognitive assessments?**

During your time on the programme you will learn the varying ways of assessing the learning and development of children. Occasionally this will focus on cognitive assessments however other types of assessment are covered, e.g. dynamic assessment of children.

### **What formal assessments are there throughout the programme?**

Across the three years you will complete two exams, four case studies, three portfolios (one each year) a service related research report and a thesis followed by a viva.

### **Is the main responsibility of the EP to deliver cognitive assessments?**

The work of an EP is rewarding and varied. The primary responsibility is to help students learn and thrive through observing, interviewing and assessing children as well as working closely with teachers and parents. Although some practising EPs will deliver cognitive assessments, this is only one aspect of the varied occupation.