

# APPLYING TO THE DECPSY PROGRAMME AT UCL - ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

Each year, there is strong competition for places on the DECPSy Programme. The following advice is offered to assist you in improving your chances of securing a place. Please read it carefully as unfortunately we are unable to provide individual advice to applicants, due to the large volume of applications we receive. Good luck!

## Contents

Essential Shortlisting Requirements .....	1
Desirable Shortlisting Criteria .....	2
Relevant Work Experience .....	3
Application Process – UK Candidates.....	4
Application Process – EU and Overseas Candidates .....	4
Our Selection Process .....	4
Diversity, Access and Equalities .....	5
Prior to Admission.....	6

## Essential Shortlisting Requirements

### ***1. Good honours degree in Psychology that confers Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society.***

A first degree in psychology at 2:1 (or equivalent) or above is required to demonstrate that applicants possess the academic competencies required for doctoral level study.

For undergraduate degrees give the class (first, upper second etc.) and the year awarded. If this information is missing your application will not be considered.

For postgraduate qualifications give information about awards with merit or distinction where applicable and the year awarded, or tbc where not yet complete.

The title of the qualification that confers Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership must be accurately entered in the first part of this section, as applications will be rejected if there is no exact match with approved programmes listed on the [BPS website](#).

If you have an overseas qualification that has been approved by the BPS as conferring Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership please provide supporting details (e.g. BPS membership number) as evidence.

### ***2. Experience of work with children in education, child care or community settings:***

**A minimum of one year's full-time equivalent (37 hours per week; 148 hours per month) work experience is required, 1 year of which must have been completed by the closing date for applications.** You need to give the month and year in which any period of work started and

finished and state how many full week equivalents were completed in the period, e.g. full time for 3 months would be 12 weeks, half-time for 3 months would be 6 weeks. You should give a clear description of what the work entailed and what your responsibilities were. **See page 3 for further, detailed, guidance on work experience.**

### **3. A good command of written and spoken English**

This is essential and is assessed both at initial application and (in detail) through activities undertaken in the interview process. Applicants **whose first language is not English** must submit with their application recent evidence that their spoken and written command of English is of the required standard. **The only acceptable English qualification for this programme is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Academic. An overall grade of at least 7.0, with a minimum of 6.5 in each of the sub tests, is required.**

### **Desirable Shortlisting Criteria**

Different applicants may be more or less successful in learning from similar work opportunities and in communicating the relevance of their experience in a convincing manner. **It is important that ALL applicants present clear arguments in their 6,000 character maximum personal statement for the appropriateness and relevance of their experience. We suggest that you specifically address each of the following points so they directly link to our shortlisting criteria:**

1) **Knowledge of psychological theory and research on children's development and learning and the ability to apply it to school and other practice contexts.** It is better to focus on one or two clear and reflective examples where you have information from a specific recent research article and can describe convincingly how you applied it in your work, than to make vague references, e.g. to 'using behaviourist principles' or 'drawing on Piaget's work'.

2) **Detailed understanding of the role of Educational Psychologists, the different levels at which they work and changing contexts of practice.** You need to show that you have detailed knowledge about the range of work educational psychologists do, obtained from a variety of credible sources, and that your commitment to the profession is sufficiently strong that you can be relied upon to invest the effort needed to complete a challenging and intensive 3 year training programme.

In addition to reading relevant publications from the BPS and other sources, applicants often contact Educational Psychology Services in the area in which they live to seek opportunities to talk to an educational psychologist. Due to the volume of such requests many services are unable to offer opportunities to 'Work Shadow' an Educational Psychologist although some services provide open afternoons or evenings where EPs are available to talk with prospective applicants. Local Authority Open Days are occasionally advertised on our website at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/decpsy.html> Recent examples include Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Kent although these are not exhaustive.

In some cases EP services may be more amenable to an offer to undertake voluntary work for the service for a one week period or more. Requests to services to meet with an EP, work shadow or undertake voluntary work should be made by letter or email and should contain

information which demonstrates that you have the right qualifications, have already done substantial research on the role of an EP and are a serious applicant for professional training.

**3) Ability to identify skills/ knowledge especially relevant to training as an educational psychologist, and to explain their relevance.** These may have been developed through professional, voluntary or personal experience but you need to be able to provide a clear description of the skills involved and a logical explanation of their relevance to training as an educational psychologist. These may include multi-agency/team working skills in working with peers and colleagues, ability to speak a community language, knowledge of communities under-represented in the profession, and so on.

**4) Clear, concise and coherent written communication skills.** This will be judged from your personal statement and will include consideration of spelling, grammar and punctuation as well as clarity of expression and coherence of argument.

### **Relevant Work Experience**

Relevant work experience may be gained in a wide range of roles – some examples are listed below but these are not exhaustive. Some work experience or combinations of work experience allow applicants better opportunities to acquire the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills.

• Educational Psychology Assistant • Teacher • Portage Worker • Learning Support Assistant • Speech and Language Therapist • Care Worker • School or Children's Nurse • Assistant Clinical Psychologist working with children • Connexions Advisor • Social Worker • Family Worker • Play/Art Therapist • Educational Social Worker • Child Psychotherapist • Lecturer in Further Education (16-19 years) • Assistant Occupational Therapist • Assistant Physiotherapist • Counsellor • Children's Centre Worker • Youth Worker • Research Work • Learning Mentor

Working as an Assistant in an Educational Psychology Service is an example of work experience that is likely to allow applicants good opportunities to gain a realistic appreciation of the role of an EP, through working alongside a number of EPs over a period of time. Work as an Assistant is undertaken with clients in contexts where the EPs in their service also work, and requires a high level of professionalism and competence.

Work experience will be more valuable where it has:

- brought applicants into significant contact with the work of educational psychologists.
- involved contexts and client groups frequently encountered by educational psychologists.
- required application of psychological theory and research or further acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to training as an EP.
- required the demonstration of a level of professional responsibility and autonomy.

These aspects are often more difficult to evidence through work experience which is exclusively part-time, short term or voluntary, or which occupies only a small number of hours per week. This is because requirements for commitment, perseverance and responsibility may

be less clear and more difficult to demonstrate than in the case of sustained periods of paid employment occupying a substantial proportion of the working week.

There is no specific date restriction on the validity of work experience, but it should be recent enough that you are able to demonstrate up to date knowledge of the work involved as an EP.

### **Application Process – UK Candidates**

All UK applications (both for government funded and self-funded places on the programme) are made via the AEP training website - please visit <http://www.aep.org.uk/training/> for further information

**Applications can be made between September and December for entry the following September.** Application for September 2018 entry opened on the 2 October 2017 and will close on 6 December 2017.

If you are interested in applying for September 2018 entry onto the programme please read our application website thoroughly. You can also [download the AEP's Educational Psychology Training Entry Handbook \(2018\) here](#).

### **Application Process – EU and Overseas Candidates**

Application for September 2018 entry onto the programme will open in Autumn, with an estimated closing date of April 2018.

Applications can be made directly to the department. [Click here to access a DECPsy overseas application form](#)

Please note that interviews can be arranged in person or via Skype for overseas/EU applicants. Information about placement arrangements and fees for overseas/EU students can be found on our [programme website](#).

### **Our Selection Process**

We aim to make our selection process as transparent and stress-free as possible. At all stages applicants are assessed in relation to explicit criteria which are shared with you. All application forms are carefully assessed by course tutors who are also qualified Educational Psychologists. Moderation of the selection of applicants for interview is carried out by Principal Educational Psychologists working in London and the South East of England.

If you are invited to interview you will receive information about the further criteria which will be assessed, so you know what we are looking for and can prepare accordingly. The following selection activities will be used:

- A small panel interview
- A short group problem based learning simulation activity with a tutor
- A written task based on analysis of a video sequence

All members of interview teams are qualified Educational Psychologists and teams always include representative Principal Educational Psychologists. The half day which each interviewee will spend at UCL will also allow discussion with staff and open access to the opinions of a current group of our trainee educational psychologists. We want you to be able to hear from them about their training experience.

**Our interview dates for UK applications for September 2018 entry are Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.** Interview slots will be either morning or afternoon and applicants must be able to commit to whichever of these dates they are allocated to in the event that they are shortlisted to attend.

### **Diversity, Access and Equalities**

The UCL Educational Psychology Group is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunity. UCL's Equalities and Diversity Policy and Strategy underlies every aspect of our student selection process.

#### **Widening access**

UCL's Access Agreement outlines our commitment to widening participation at UCL. [Click here](#) for further information.

#### **Equalities and Diversity Policy**

UCL's Equalities and Diversity Policy in respect of student recruitment and admissions is as follows:

- UCL is committed to provide a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying;
- This policy means that all students of UCL have the right to study in an environment free from discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment or bullying;
- The above policy is adhered to in all matters concerning student recruitment and admissions. UCL is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this and other equalities policies are implemented and monitored at an organisational and individual level. Each department has a Departmental Equal Opportunities Liaison Officer who disseminates information on good practice and training. In addition, as a member of a minority ethnic group (African Caribbean) with extensive experience of work with people with a range of needs, UCL Tutor [Beverley Graham](#) would like you to know that she is more than happy to be consulted by prospective applicants from minority groups.
- In the recruitment and selection of students our only consideration is that the individual meets, or is likely to meet, the requirements of the programme or course. Factors such as sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, ethnic origin, race, religion, colour, nationality, political beliefs, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, disability and age are not be taken into account for the purposes of students' application to and acceptance on to a programme of study, and assessment of academic performance. Selection for the programme is made solely on merit.

The building in which we are based is wheelchair accessible and full information about the services we provide to facilitate inclusive study for students with a disability can be found at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/disability/>

Helpful relevant information is also contained in the Health and Care Professions Council publication: [Health, Disability and Becoming a Health and Care Professional](#)

## **Prior to Admission**

Please note that, in accordance with the UCL Child Protection Policy, admission to the DECPsy programme will be dependent on:

**1. An enhanced child workforce Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and/or clearance from the relevant overseas authorities.** All applicants in receipt of provisional offers after interview – *including those who are employed in a post which has previously required a DBS check* – will be required to meet with the UCL Criminal Records Office during an induction session at UCL in early July, in order to initiate a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or clearance from the relevant overseas authorities. Applicants will be unable to begin practical placements in mid-September until a disclosure has been received.

Where a criminal conviction is disclosed consultation will take place with the Faculty Tutor (Brain Sciences) and placement provider representatives on the Programme Stakeholder Advisory Committee in considering whether or not the conviction has implications for the applicant's ability to meet the [Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics](#).

At the July induction session each applicant is also given a Pre-Employment/Placement Health Questionnaire, to be returned to UCL Occupational Health Department within 2 weeks. Occasionally follow-up information may be sought or an appointment offered. The purpose of this is to ensure that applicants are physically and psychologically capable of meeting the standards required to work as an Educational Psychologist, and that they do not present a risk to the vulnerable children and young people with whom they will be working. In addition, a separate form is provided for applicants with medical conditions who can meet the requirements of the programme with reasonable adjustments, so details of the support needed can be supplied.

**2. All offers are subject to the UCL General Conditions for Entry.** Full details can be found at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c1/relationship/#7.2>.