

Experimental Psychology

Syllabus Guide
For Ages 16 – 18



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Programme Overview

Are you curious about how the processes and functions of the brain influence human behaviour? Do you want to find out how cutting edge psychological research can help society?

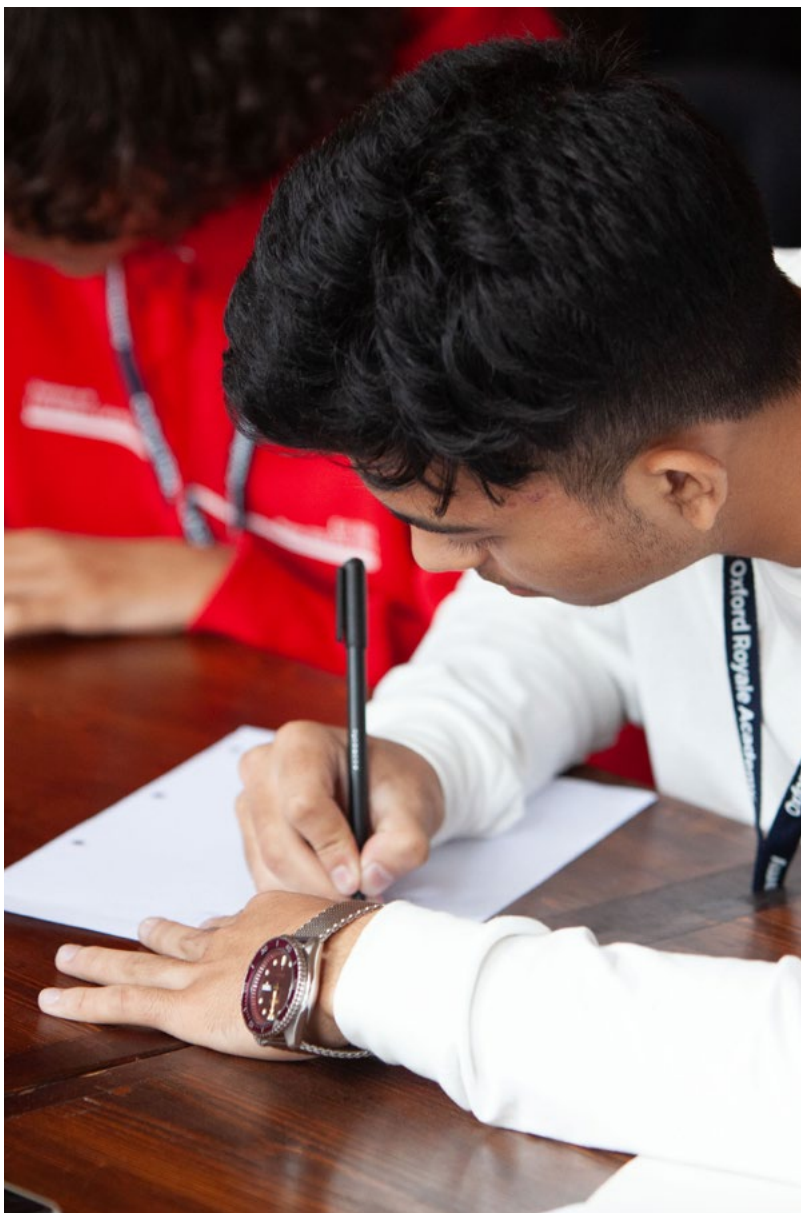
This programme will introduce you to some of the most important and exciting topics in modern experimental psychology, including developmental, cognitive, and social psychology, as well as the psychology of intelligence and personality, and neuropsychology.

You'll learn about research methodologies and simple data analysis, gaining a deep understanding of the ethics of collecting data from human subjects. Furthermore, you'll learn about the many applications of a degree in experimental psychology in research, therapy, healthcare, and beyond.

Who It's For

Assuming no prior knowledge of psychology, this programme is ideal for curious and ambitious students aged 16-18 who are considering pursuing a degree in Psychology or a related field, such as Sociology or Medicine.

Students may benefit from previous study of research methods and/or data analysis, but this is not a requirement. We will expect you to believe that human behaviour can be understood from an objective, scientific approach.

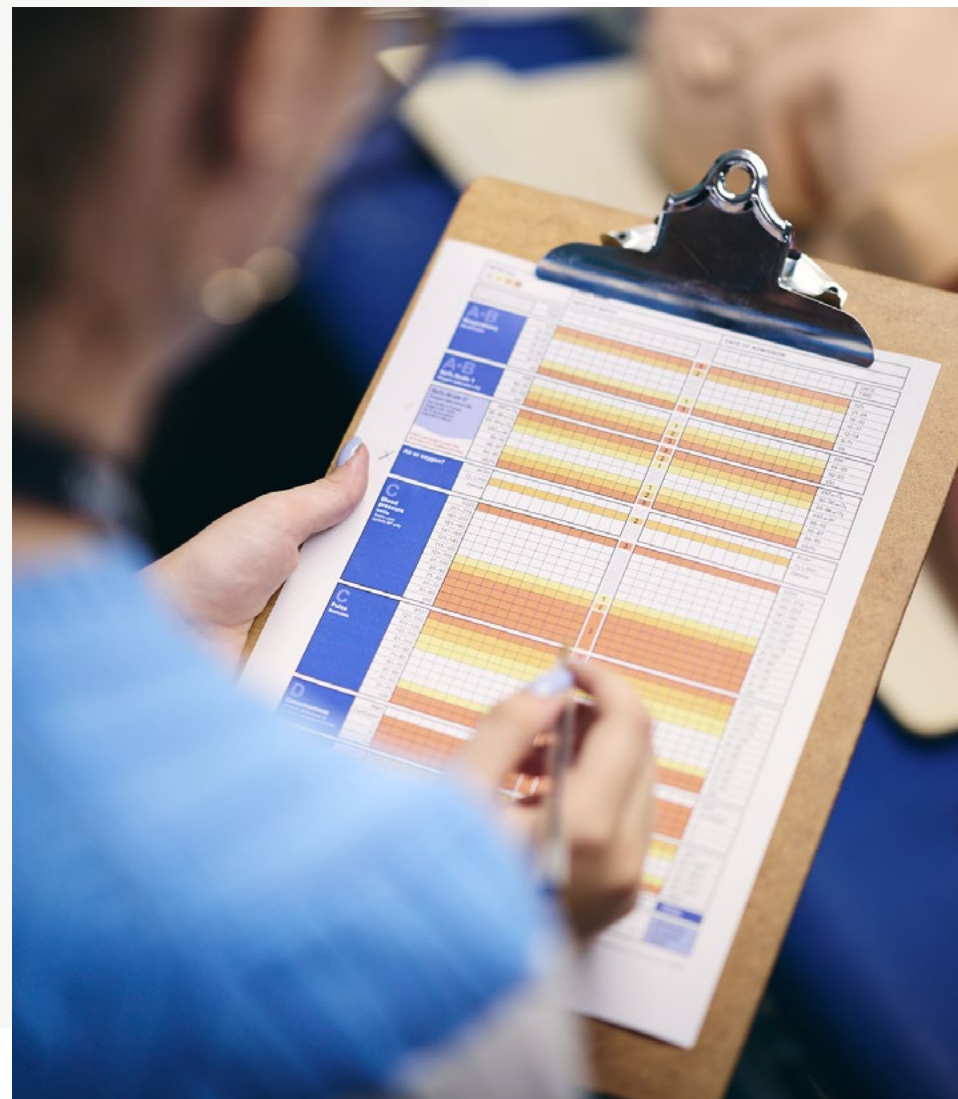


*Upon completion of this programme
at Oxford Royale, you will:*

1. Describe the fundamental concepts of experimental psychology.
2. Describe the multifaceted, dynamic nature of the discipline and outline some of the major issues and debates in experimental psychology.
3. Describe and evaluate experimental studies.
4. Outline basic brain areas, functions and processes, and describe some effects of brain damage.
5. Define key terms in experimental design and explain the difference between correlation and causation and how experimental psychologists attempt to infer causation.
6. Understand and be able to describe key psychological experiments.
7. Identify key transferable skills learned by studying experimental psychology and outline some career options for psychology graduates.
8. Describe key ethical principles in experimental research.
9. Develop skills such as gathering and analysing data, writing research reports, and presenting a hypothesis.
10. Describe the scope of cognitive, developmental, and social psychology and examine some key studies in these areas.

During the programme you will also develop a number of core skills:

- 1. Collaborate with international peers:**
Work with global peers and hone your communication and teamwork skills through workshops and group projects.
- 2. Develop problem-solving skills:**
Enhance your critical thinking and problem-solving abilities with daily lessons and workshops.
- 3. Build confidence:**
Thrive in a supportive environment, think creatively, share ideas, and discover your strengths.
- 4. Showcase your success:**
Showcase achievements, explore peer projects, and engage in critical discourse during subject challenges and Exhibition Days.
- 5. Gain a taste of independence:**
Manage your assignments and schedule while exploring a new location with new friends and staff support.





How You'll Learn

Our Experimental Psychology programme transcends traditional classroom learning, offering a blend of seminars, short lectures, case-based learning, demonstrations, and videos, amongst other methods you would encounter on an undergraduate psychology degree programme.

You will develop skills in reading and evaluating older and current research as well as applying your knowledge to present day problems.



Teaching methods include:

1. Academic workshops.
2. Examination of case studies.
3. Graded practical and written assignments.
4. Independent and group research.
5. Lessons, seminars, and lectures from esteemed academics and practitioners.



Module 1:

Experimental Psychology

The course commences with an introduction to the field of experimental psychology, considering the scientific method and how it is applied in psychology, as well as the transferable skills and career pathways stemming from the study of psychology at degree level. Moving on to experimental research design, you'll gain an overview of how psychological research is structured and conducted, critiquing examples of famous experiments and considering ethical issues that arise in research. You'll then delve into experimental research design, with a view to designing and conducting your own experiment as an assessed component of the course.



Module 2:

Cognitive Psychology

In this module, you'll study the different areas of interest in cognitive psychology, the study of how the brain processes information. You'll learn the difference between top-down and bottom-up processing, and evaluate the research design of various cognitive psychology experiments evaluating memory and perception. Then, you'll delve into language and psycholinguistics, identifying the process involved in speech and auditory processing. You'll continue to explore short-term, long-term, and working memory, participating in some experiments to test these as you work towards your own memory research question/hypothesis based on your findings. Finally, you'll dive into the fascinating world of cognitive neuropsychology.



Module 3:

Biological Psychology and the Brain

For this module, you will review the brain's structure and functions, beginning by dispelling popular myths about the brain such as the right-versus-left dichotomy. You'll learn about what different areas of the brain and other parts of the nervous system are able to do, identifying key neurotransmitters and their functions. Furthermore, you'll review what happens on a biological level when the brain learns, encodes, and recalls a memory, or experiences an emotion. Finally, you'll proceed to examine sleep patterns, biological rhythms and states of awareness, before moving on to review how the body and mind respond to pain using the cold pressor test (CPT).



Module 4:

Developmental Psychology

This module will introduce you to the field of developmental psychology, the field of psychology that focuses on mental development over the course of the human lifespan. You'll begin by reviewing the history and key principles of attachment theory, which accounts for the development of the emotional bonds and core relationships between people in early childhood and adolescence, as well as how these early relationships affect lifetime attachment style. You'll gain an overview of the work of John Bowlby, the founder of attachment theory, before delving into more recent research into adolescence and emerging adulthood, taking a critical lens to the formation of individual identities and what it means to come of age as a member of Gen-Z.



Module 5:

Social Psychology

Social psychology examines human behaviour in groups, seeking to understand how individual and collective thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by interpersonal relationships and interactions. This module explores how experimental social psychology differs from critical social psychology in its approach to acquiring knowledge about the human condition, examining the results of some experiments related to interpersonal perception and judgement formation. You'll then learn about, and critically evaluate, some of the most famous experiments in experimental social psychology which assessed obedience to immoral or illegal orders, including Milgram's obedience experiments and the Stanford prison experiment.



Module 6:

Mental health, and psychological and developmental disorders

In this module, you'll dive into the psychology of mental health and disorder, evaluating what constitutes good and poor mental health. You'll learn about different paradigms for understanding and treating psychological disorders - including the medical model, the psychoanalytical approach, the behaviourist approach, the biopsychosocial model, and the cognitive approach - before moving on to explore how these disorders are defined by different classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). You'll proceed to study developmental disorders, exploring autism and theories and research regarding its aetiology in depth. Finally, you'll explore treatments and therapies for psychological disorders, reviewing the history of treatment for mental illnesses and differing modes of contemporary treatment including talking therapies and medication.



Module 7:

Individual Differences

The concept of individual differences seeks to explain varying psychological characteristics between individuals, and how these differences cause people to behave and react differently in the same situations. You'll begin this module by examining attempts to define personality via different theoretical approaches, before looking into means of assessing individual psychological traits. Then, you'll explore different forms of intelligence, alternative views of intelligence and their evolution throughout history, scrutinising different means of testing intelligence (such as IQ tests) and their reliability.



Module 8:

Applied Psychology

Applied psychology focuses on the real-world implementation of psychology to provide practical solutions to communities. This module focuses on two areas of applied psychology: clinical and educational (school) psychology. You'll begin by learning about the work of an educational psychologist, considering the types of problems children may present with and the types of implementations and strategies that can be used to help them. You'll contemplate the effects of the pandemic on children's mental health, and what strategies can and have been used to help them. Progressing to clinical psychology, you'll learn about the work and training of clinical psychologists, defining the difference between a psychiatrist and a counselling psychologist, and the respective treatments they are licensed to deliver. You'll gain a deep understanding of the therapeutic process, ultimately constructing an experiment to examine the effectiveness of drugs versus cognitive behavioural therapy on patients.



Module 9:

Bringing It All Together

To conclude the course, you will consider issues in the contemporary practice in experimental psychology, as well as its real-life applications in the modern world. You'll begin by critically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the experimental approach, examining how the 'replication crisis' - i.e., the widespread concern about the credibility of psychological studies - is impacting the field. You'll contrast the experimental approach with the qualitative approach, a viable alternative to finding out about the human mind and behaviour. Then, you'll review how different sub-disciplines of experimental psychology would address real-world problems such as internet trolling and popular perceptions of climate change. You'll consider recent examples of research, using the knowledge you've acquired throughout the course to evaluate and discuss new developments.



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All information correct at the time of publication.