Dissertation in Psychology

Module title			
Dissertation in Psychology			
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	**Module number / reference**	**ECTS Value**	**Duration**
8		20	24 weeks
Parent programme(s). Principal programme title, and embedded(s) if relevant		**Stage of parent programme**	**Semester No.**
BA (Honours) in Psychology		3	1 & 2

Teaching and Learning modes	**Proportion** (% of Total Directed Learning)
Classroom / Face to Face	**9.6%**
Workplace	
Online	
Other (Identify)	**90.4% (Directed and Self-directed Learning)**
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	
Successful completion of Stage 2 of the programme or equivalent is required for entry onto Stage 3.	
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	40
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week	1.25
Pre-requisite module title(s) (if any)	
Co-requisite module title(s) (if any)	
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	Yes
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	
Lecture hall, Library, IT Resources	

Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.

Role e.g. Tutor, Mentor etc.	Qualifications & experience required:	# of Staff with this profile (WTEs)
Lecturer	Minimum level 9 qualification in Psychology with teaching and/or research competence in the area	100%

Analysis of required learning effort										
						Hours of Learner effort				
Classroom and demonstrations		**Mentoring and small-group tutoring**		**Other (specify)**		**Directed e-learning**	**Independent learning**	**Other (specify)**	**Work-based learning**	**Total effort**
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner					

24	1:10	24	1:6			452			500

Allocation of Marks					
	Continuous Assessment	Supervised Project	Proctored Practical Exam.	Proctored Written Exam	Total
Percentage Contribution	30%	70%			**100%**

Rationale for Inclusion of the Module in the Programme and its Contribution to the Overall IPLOs	Learners, directed by their Dissertation Supervisors, will be allowed a high degree of autonomy in which to develop, design, conduct, present and write-up a significant piece of research. The dissertation topic links with other modules a learner has gained knowledge and cognate skills in throughout the programme. The modules *Research Methods and Ethics in Psychology 1 and 2*, *Introduction to Statistics in Psychology, Intermediate Statistics in Psychology*, and *Research Methods for Dissertation* have set the necessary groundwork and foundational knowledge for research methods and statistics at stages 1 and stage 2 of the programme and have helped to inform thinking around appropriate research methodologies for the learner's dissertation at Stage 3. Throughout those modules, learners have had hands-on experience of working with data in psychology labs and engaging with both quantitative and qualitative computer packages for statistical analysis (SPSS and NVivo), which they have the option of utilizing for their dissertation. This knowledge is supplemented by one-to-one meetings with dissertation supervisors in Stage 3. This linkage across the levels along with the higher credit weighting reflects the position of the dissertation as a keystone module on the BA (Hons) Psychology degree. The nature of a dissertation will vary between learners, and there will be variances in the theoretical and methodological approach(es). There is consistency in the structure and what is expected in the dissertation layout and chapter formats. Lectures, one-to-one supervision, library and online sources will assist learners in their research approach, practice and write-up. Alongside conducting a research project, learners will also present their research and findings to their peers and academic faculty. This will assist in honing communication skills for future study and employment.
Module Aims and Objectives	This is a core and integrative culminating module. Learners will engage in independent research, showcasing the skills and knowledge they have acquired across their programme of study. They will be supported and supervised in the completion of an

	independent piece of research, providing them with the opportunity to demonstrate the attainment of graduate attributes.
Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to: 1. Locate and synthesise theoretical and empirical sources to develop an appropriate research question. (MIPLO 1, 2, 3, 4) 2. Identify and apply appropriate research methods. (MIPLO 2, 3, 4, 5) 3. Analyse, interpret and evaluate findings. (MIPLO 3, 4) 4. Examine critically, strategically and in depth, a topic of interest arising from the degree programme. (MIPLO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8) 5. Synthesise findings and present a coherent verbal and written account of the entire research. (MIPLO 4, 6, 7) 6. Identify the limitations of the extant research in addition to the limitations of their own research. (MIPLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8)
Information Provided to Learners about the Module	College Prospectus specifies module name, stage and ECTS. College website and programme handbook to contain (in addition to above) short description of module content, module learning outcomes, prerequisite modules, and assessment mechanisms. Module Moodle Page to contain (in addition to above) schedule of classes and topics, detailed assessment information with titles and submission dates, full bibliography and list of learning resources.
Module Content, Organisation and Structure	Building on knowledge and cognate skills at Stages 1, 2 and 3, learners are now introduced to this specialised dissertation module. They are provided with information about selecting potential topic areas and they are expected to identify an area for investigation. This module specifically aims to assist learners in the development, documentation, delivery, verbal presentation and write-up of the dissertation. Weeks 1-12 draw upon learners' previous knowledge of core research methods and support them to choose the best design and methodology for their particular thesis. Over the course of these classes learners will evaluate and choose from a variety of methods for data collection, interpretation and presentation. The emphasis in these classes is on providing a useful toolkit of research methods and set of exemplars. Upon completion of these lectures, learners will submit a literature review and research methodology report, which is worth 10% of their overall grade. The dissertation requires substantial self-directed learning and research, but each learner has a supervisor to provide guidance.
Module Teaching and Learning (including formative assessment) Strategy	Lectures and workshops will provide specific support around the module assessments, research methodologies, the use of literature, research ethics, data analysis, writing up etc. The face-to-face support by supervisors provides formative assessment and will be supplemented with online support resources through Moodle, including recommended readings and primary sources (where relevant). Academic supervisors will work alongside learners throughout the

	module to support the development, analysis and evaluation of the academic and professional skills.
	The aim of the teaching and learning strategy is to ensure that learners are equipped to complete the continuous assessment report, the presentation and writing of the dissertation. The summative assessment aspect of the literature/research methodology report will ensure learners are following a pathway towards completion of the 7,500-10,000 word final project.
	Online support resources through Moodle, including recommended readings and primary sources (where relevant).
Work-Based Learning and Practice-Placement	N/A
E-Learning	N/A
Specifications for Module Staffing Requirements	Each learner undertaking a dissertation will require one supervisor in their chosen subject area. Additional staff will be required where the maximum number of learners exceed the resources available.
Module Summative Assessment Strategy	Learners will receive feedback on their research proposal at Stage 2 as part of their Advanced Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology module.
	During semester 1, Stage 3, upon completion of the lectures, learners will write up a literature review/methodology report demonstrating how they will develop/improve their research focus, engage with literature and primary sources and discuss their secondary literature and propose a methodology. The award for this component is 10% and learners will receive feedback directly from their supervisor at a face-to-face meeting. Learners will be assessed for this as they would for all essays at Stage 3 (MIMLO 2, 4, 5)
	Learners will receive feedback on their performance in the following ways throughout the academic year: Learners develop their research and write their dissertation in consultation with a supervisor. The one-to-one supervision along with the scheduled workshops will provide learners with regular formative feedback throughout the module.
	Learners will need to submit a completed ethics form to the Research Ethics Advisory Committee as per the *Research Ethics Advisory Policy* .
	While there is no grade awarded for this component it should enable learners to consider the implications of personal research.
	Learners will also create a paper, and can supplement this with visual material, to give a twenty-minute verbal presentation to their peers and a minimum of two lecturers. Formative assessment will be provided in lecturer feedback prior to the presentation. There will also be a ten-minute question and answer component at the end of the presentation. Learners will receive a grade of up to 20% of the total marks awarded for the module for their presentation. Learners will be assessed for this component following the Dissertation Oral Presentation Criteria. (MIMLOs 1-6)

	The remaining 70% will be awarded to the written dissertation (summative). Learners will showcase their theoretical and analytic conclusions arising from the research and will be assessed following the Carlow College Undergraduate Dissertation Assessment Sheet. Upon completion of the seminars and the literature review component, the oral presentation and the Dissertation learners will have met all the learning outcomes of this module. (MIMLOs 1-6). The Dissertation must be passed and cannot be compensated for.
Sample Assessment Materials	Learners on this module select their own dissertation topics.
Reading Lists and Other Information Resources	**Essential Reading:** The essential reading for this module will be dissertation topic specific. Learners will research their own sources and receive guidance from supervisors. **Recommended Reading:** Morling, B. (2017). *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information* (1st ed.). USA: W.W. Norton and Company Terrel, S.R. (2015). W*riting a Proposal for Your Dissertation: Guidelines and Examples* (1st ed.). UK: The Guilford Press Brace. N. (2012). *SPSS for Psychologists* (5th ed.). UK: Routledge Links to www.apa.ie Recommended articles and journals by lecturing staff in line with the research area in question.
Module Physical Resource Requirements	Lecture Hall/Seminar room, library facilities and on-line web/digital resources.