



2026 for 2027 Application Booklet

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for considering a Master of Arts (MA) in the Department of Psychology at Wits.

The Department of Psychology offers three research-related MA degrees:

1. MA in Psychology by Research (Dissertation)
2. MA in the field of Psychology by Coursework and Research Report
3. MA in the field of Social and Psychological Research by Coursework and Research Report

This booklet provides information on as well application procedures for a challenging yet rewarding programme in the Wits School of Human and Community Development.

Our degrees offer a good fit for people who:

- Are curious about the people and the social world
- Love reading, critical thinking and problem solving
- Want to contribute to the development of new knowledge and deepening understanding
- Question the way the world is and are committed to working for social justice
- Want a flexible career, involving opportunities for travel and participation in global academic communities

A career in research offers a wide array of employment opportunities in the academic, public and private sectors. With a focus on teaching advanced research skills as well as content, graduates are well equipped to pursue a research career. However, please note that only one of our degrees (MA in the field of Social and Psychological Research by Coursework and Research Report) leads to registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a Research Psychologist.

Please note the application closing dates below:

1. **MA in Psychology by Dissertation (2 Intakes):**
 - **29th May 2026 (July 2026 Intake)**
 - **14th August 2026 (January 2027 Intake)**
2. **MA in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report.**
 - **14th August 2026 (January 2027 Intake only)**
3. **MA in Social and Psychological Research by Coursework and Research Report.**
 - **14th August 2026 (January 2027 Intake only)**

MA in Psychology by Research (Dissertation)

The MA by dissertation only is the most flexible form of advanced study as it enables students to focus entirely on completing a research dissertation, under the supervision of a staff member in the Department, on a topic of interest to the student and staff member. This degree is thus usually selected by students who enjoy working independently and wish to pursue their interest in a particular topic. The MA by Dissertation is also an excellent route to follow for students who wish to continue on to PhD studies, offering a possible fast-track to a PhD by upgrade for exceptional quality MA projects. While this route may also lead to work in organisations or in



the public sector, it is particularly appropriate for those wishing to pursue an academic career or specialist research work in a particular field.

The MA by Dissertation may be done either as a full-time or part-time degree. Students are expected to complete the degree within one year full-time, or two years part-time.

Requirements:

An Honours degree (or equivalent) in Psychology, achieved with a minimum pass of 70%
Demonstrated potential to succeed in the programme, based on responses to questions on the application form and favourable performance on the concept paper

Favourable referee reports

Equity considerations

The availability of a member of staff able to supervise in the area of interest-please note this is an important step of the application process. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to a potential supervisor *

Staff Research Interests

All members of staff in the Department of Psychology can potentially serve as research supervisors for students in the above programmes, subject to their availability in any given year. Descriptions of staff members' research interests are available [Click Here](#) to download.

MA in the field of Psychology by Coursework and Research Report

This degree focuses on developing advanced conceptual and research expertise in the field of Cognitive Neuroscience. This programme is a one-year full-time or two year part-time and does NOT lead to HPCSA registration as a research psychologist or neuropsychologist. This programme has a strong focus on cognitive neuroscience/neuropsychology research.

This degree enables students to develop advanced theoretical knowledge and generate independent research in a particular field of interest. This is a good base for future work in the NGO or government sectors, CSI programmes in the corporate world, academia, and research institutes.

Students are required to complete three coursework modules and a research report. Students are expected to complete the degree in one year if registered full-time, and in two years if doing the course part-time.

Please note; the coursework modules are run during the day, there are no evening classes.

Requirements:

An Honours degree in Psychology achieved with a minimum average mark of 65%

Demonstrated potential to succeed in the programme, based on responses to questions on the application form and favourable performance in a selection interview.

Favourable referee reports

Equity considerations

Coursework modules:

Three coursework modules must be completed (together accounting for 50% of the total credit for the degree, with the Research Report accounting for the remaining 50%). The available modules are listed below under the cognitive science stream on offer:

Cognitive Science

Cognitive Science is a growing field of study with roots in many different disciplines that explore the relationships between mind, brain and behaviour. Disciplines such as neurology, neuropsychology and neurophysiology focus on the anatomy of brain structures and their influence on behaviour, whereas disciplines such as cognitive and developmental psychology, linguistics and philosophy focus on the functions of the brain and the mind. Recent advances in



brain imaging techniques have prompted much research into the structures and functions of the brain and their effects on behaviour so that these are now being studied in a more integrated manner by Cognitive Scientists. Within this cluster, selected areas of human behaviour will be studied from an integrated perspective that unites several disciplines and methods.

The available modules in this cluster are:

PSYC7055A – Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience (Prof. Kate Cockcroft)

PSYC7054A – Language and Thought (Ms Winnie Nkoana)

The above modules are compulsory and students need to choose the third module from one of the following methods modules from the MA in Social and Psychological Research programme:

PSYC7025A – Multivariate Research Design and Analysis

PSYC7027A – Qualitative Research Methods

Descriptions of the modules:

Cognitive Science

PSYC7055A – Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience

Lecturer: Prof. Kate Cockcroft

Cognitive Neuroscience has its roots in many different disciplines that study various aspects of the structure and functioning of the brain and the nervous system. Disciplines such as neurology, neuropsychology and neurophysiology focus on the anatomy of brain structures and their influence on behaviour, while disciplines such as cognitive psychology, cognitive neuropsychology, and cognitive science focus on the functions of the brain and the mind. Other associated disciplines include philosophy, linguistics, computer science, mathematics, evolutionary psychology, and behavioural genetics. Recent advances in brain imaging techniques have contributed greatly to the development of the field in terms of providing an empirical understanding of the structures and functions of the brain, their effects on behaviour, as well as serving to validate or modify existing theories of cognition.

In this course, selected areas of human behaviour will be studied from an integrated cognitive neuroscience perspective.

PSYC7054A –Language and Thought

Lecturers: Ms Winnie Nkoana

This course aims to understand human cognition through language, and uncover the relationship between language and thought, as well as the role language plays on thought, when and how language modulates perception, reasoning, learning and other cognitive functions. For instance, how bilingualism influences positive outcomes in cognitive functions such as executive functioning (EF). Further, it will look at research that looks at differences in the development of cognitive and language abilities for monolingual and bilingual children, and the postponement of symptoms of dementia in bilingual older adults, in other words look at cognitive reserve and bilingual experience. In addition, explore the critical role of language in transforming cognition, enabling both the development and intergenerational transmission of human culture and imaginative thought and creative agentic action.

MA in the field of Social and Psychological Research by Coursework and Research Report

This degree focuses on developing practical research expertise in quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and applied research methods. The degree prepares students to be multi-skilled social science researchers, equipped to work in a range of research environments including science councils, government and policy research units, NGOs and advocacy organisations, independent research consulting, and market research or other corporate environments. The degree can also serve as a basis for future PhD studies leading to a career in academia. This programme is a two-year degree



and does lead to HPCSA registration as a research psychologist. However, the degree is also suitable for students from related social science disciplines who wish to pursue research careers but are not eligible for registration with the HPCSA.

Students who wish to register as Research Psychologists with the HPCSA will undertake an internship as part of their degree. They will only be able to graduate after completion of this internship. Students who take this path will only graduate on successful completion of both the academic component of the degree – coursework and research report (M1) AND the internship (M2). In other words, the first year (M1) comprises the academic component of the degree. The second year (M2) comprises the internship (Wits Work integrated learning). Students who take this path would therefore take 2 years to graduate, or longer if it takes them longer to secure an internship or the internship is delayed.

While the department will do everything in our power to assist students taking the degree to find an internship, it is up to you, the student, to secure your own internship. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee any student an intern post.

Requirements:

An Honours degree in Psychology (or a related discipline), achieved with a minimum average mark of 65%

Demonstrated potential to succeed in the programme, based on responses to questions on the application form and favourable performance in a selection interview.

Favourable referee reports

Equity considerations

Coursework Modules:

Three coursework modules must be completed (together accounting for 50% of the total credit for the degree, with the Research Report accounting for the remaining 50%). There are no elective modules for this programme, with all students being required to complete all of the following four modules:

Descriptions of the modules:

PSYC7025A/PSYC7065A – Multivariate Research Design and Analysis

The module consists of two components. The first component takes place in lectures and involves the critical evaluation of research articles. The aim of this component of the module is to give students the ability to dissect a typical article published in their domain of social research and determine what useful knowledge can be gleaned from it. This is a critical skill; both as regards the academic requirements of other courses as well as for evaluating the relevance of articles to potential future areas of employment. This component of the module will examine key areas of research theory, e.g. Research Design, Psychometrics and Statistical Analysis, in the context of research articles. As much as this theory is important, the emphasis is on the application of the broad principles in common sense ways to applied research. Ultimately students need to be able to assess the value of an article by considering all of its elements. The second component of the module aims to provide a practical hands-on introduction to common difficulties arising from data analysis. As such, the module does not focus on statistical procedures but on the processes, which are necessary to make data analysis possible. This component is taught as a combination of lectures and tutorials using R software.

PSYC7027A/PSYC7065A – Qualitative Research Methods

This module aims to introduce students to qualitative methodology by 1) addressing some of the major epistemological and conceptual issues within qualitative (and, by implication, quantitative) research within the social sciences, and 2) providing an overview of a range of qualitative methods and some practical application in gathering and analysing data. Students will collect various forms of qualitative data under a theme that is agreed by the group as of general



interest, which is an appropriate topic to be addressed qualitatively, and for which data will be readily obtainable from available media and an easily accessible research population e.g. everyday life on campus; family relationships; social identities. The data that students have collected will then be subjected to in-class analysis using a range of techniques, which will serve as a basis for students' completion of an exam-equivalent final paper.

PSYC7032A/PSYC7065A – Research in Context

The aim of this module is to provide students with skills and techniques used in social science research. The course will be directed towards providing students with an understanding of how to approach research in the role of a research consultant. The module is taught in the form of discussion-based lectures by lecturers involved in applied social science research. However, the main feature of the course is students' interaction as research consultants with an actual client, who will provide a brief for the research they wish to be conducted during one of the opening sessions of the course. Students will then be required to respond to the client's request for proposals, and to produce a research paper in accordance with the proposal they present to the client and the client's feedback on the proposal.

PSYC7055A – Psychological Assessment and Basic Counselling

This module equips students with a dual foundation in interpersonal counselling skills and psychometric literacy. As part of this module, students engage in role plays, case studies, and structured discussions to develop active listening, empathy, containment, debriefing, and reflective practice. The focus is on building person centred skills that ensure research interactions are safe, respectful, and ethically sound. Alongside this, students gain a solid introduction to psychological assessment, covering test development, reliability, validity, intelligence, personality, and career testing, with strong emphasis on multicultural and South African applications. The module combines experiential learning with theoretical grounding, encouraging critical evaluation of counselling approaches and exploration of ethical and cultural dimensions of psychometrics. On completion, students will be able to integrate counselling awareness with psychometric practice in different work contexts.

Staff Research Interests

All members of staff in the Department of Psychology can potentially serve as research supervisors for students in the above programmes, subject to their availability in any given year. Descriptions of staff members' research interests are available on a downloadable document on the website: <https://www.wits.ac.za/shcd/psychology/academic-programmes/masters/research-related-ma-programmes/>

Application Process

Further information and links to application forms are available at the course website:

<https://www.wits.ac.za/shcd/psychology/academic-programmes/masters/research-related-ma-programmes/>

In order to apply, the following must be submitted by the closing dates stipulated below:

- University postgraduate application form to be completed online, (URL Below)
<https://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications/>
- Completed departmental application form: <https://redcap.link/n85f1x71>
- An Online Equity Questionnaire: <https://redcap.link/witsequityquestionnaire2026>
- Official academic transcripts (e-mail to lauryne.lokothwayo@wits.ac.za and also upload on the online applicant profile)



- A copy of your Honours research project or a similar piece of extended academic writing at the Honours level (e-mail to lauryne.lokothwayo@wits.ac.za and also upload on the online applicant profile)
- Two referee reports: <https://forms.office.com/r/Qx8kGG1rJM>

The requested transcript & honours project must be submitted electronically on your online portal and also via e-mail to Ms Lauryne Lokoithwayo lauryne.lokothwayo@wits.ac.za

For inquiries contact:

Ms Lauryne Lokoithwayo

Telephone number: 011 717 4541

Email: Lauryne.Lokoithwayo@wits.ac.za

Closing Dates:

4. **MA in Psychology by Dissertation (2 Intakes):**
 - **29th May 2026 (July 2026 Intake)**
 - **14th August 2026 (January 2027 Intake)**
5. **MA in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report.**
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 - **14th August 2026 (January 2027 Intake only)**

PLEASE NOTE that applicants who have obtained their previous degrees from a non-South African university need to apply to SAQA for accreditation **before** submitting an application using the link: <https://www.saqa.org.za/> .



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can I apply for more than one of the research-related degrees?**
Yes. You are strongly encouraged to apply for multiple programmes if you believe you would be a suitable candidate for more than one.
- **What are the chances of me getting in?**
It depends on the strength of the applicant pool – typically anywhere from 20% to 50% of applicants are offered places. The minimum requirement for entry is an average of 65% for Honours but competition for places is high. We also take equity criteria into consideration.
- **Can I apply for these programmes even if I do not have an Honours degree in psychology?**
Yes, an Honours degree is required and you cannot begin your MA studies without an Honours degree but it does not have to be in psychology. Students who have an honours degree in another social science or arts discipline (e.g. politics, literary studies, sociology, anthropology, performing arts, media studies, linguistics, philosophy) are invited to apply. Please also note that if your Honours degree is not in psychology, you may have a restricted choice of courses in that some courses may be closer to your interests and knowledge-base than others. You may also be required to do some background psychology reading.
- **Can I do these degrees part-time?**
Yes, this means that you will take two years rather than one year to complete the degree. In such cases all the coursework modules should be completed in the first year and the research report in the second year. Please note that all seminars for the coursework modules are offered during office hours (NOT in the evenings) and attendance is compulsory.
- **Can I work while studying full time?**
Yes, but as a guideline, you should not work more than approximately six hours per week.
- **I hate statistics, how much stats are you required to these degrees?**
For the MA in Social and Psychological Research (SPR), stats are an important part of the course but a number of other methodological and theoretical approaches are also included. The other programmes do not require statistics but if you love statistics, you could use quantitative methods in your research project.
- **How much contact time is required for the modules?**
Approximately 3-4 hours per module each week.
- **This sounds like a light amount of work?**
While contact time is relatively low (compared to other professional psychology programmes), there is a lot of preparatory reading work (at least 10 hours per week for each module) as well as the independent research report for which there are several tight submission deadlines and presentations during the year and which therefore entails a consistent programme of work and many, many hours of independent reading and writing every week.
- **How do I find out about internship sites?**
Organisations usually send calls for applications from August onwards; we also facilitate presentations for students by potential internship sites/employers.
- **Can I register with the HPCSA by studying through any of the three programmes?**
No, only the SPR programme potentially leads to HPCSA registration as a Research Psychologist. Please also note that students wishing to register with the HPCSA MUST have an Honours degree in psychology
- **Do I need to register with the HPCSA to find employment?** No, although there are a few organisations that give preference to registered psychologists, most employers are interested in your knowledge and skills, and your ability to apply them to their research questions.
- **If I want to register with the HPCSA, do I have to do an internship at an accredited site?**



No, you can design your own “tailored” internship as long as it is supervised by a registered Research Psychologist.

- **Is there funding available for these programmes?**

Yes, but you must apply for funding independently and in parallel your academic application, as the deadlines occur prior to completion of our selection process, so you cannot wait to hear whether you have been selected before applying for funding! Successful applicants are likely to qualify for the **Postgraduate Merit Award (PMA)**. Details of this and other sources of funding, along with information about how to apply for funding are available from the: [Wits Financial Aid and Scholarships Office Web Site](#) **(be sure to check the deadlines!)**.

- **What support will I receive as a student in one of these programmes?**

You will get to work with leading scholars who have excellent national and international networks so you can begin to participate in interesting, advanced research forums. The student cohorts work very closely together and the seminars provide space for active debate and collaborative learning.

If you cannot find the answer to your question here, you may email the programme coordinators:

Ms Winnie Nkoana (MA in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report & MA by Dissertation): winnie.nkoana@wits.ac.za

Dr Tasneem Hassem (MA in Social and Psychological Research): tasneem.hassem@wits.ac.za

Before sending an email query, please make sure that you have carefully read all information provided here first!