

Overview

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| Programme Code | 36589 |
| Programme Title | Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology |
| Awarding Institution | Liverpool John Moores University |
| Programme Type | Masters |
| Programme Leader | |
| Link Tutor(s) | David McIlroy |

| Partner Name | Partnership Type |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| The Alef Trust CIC | Validated |

Awards

| Award Type | Award Description | Award Learning Outcomes |
|------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Alternative Exit | Postgraduate Certificate - PC | Engage with advanced discussion of theoretical positions and models in relation to the study of consciousness, and psychological perspectives on spirituality. Demonstrate an understanding of integral practice from first-person experience and the relevant research literature, and critically reflect on processes of psycho-social and psychosomatic transformation. Demonstrate in writing and through oral presentation appropriate levels of critical analysis, reflection and contextual awareness in focused areas of study. |
| Target Award | Master of Science - MS | See Learning Outcomes Below |
| Alternative Exit | Postgraduate Diploma - PD | Engage with advanced discussion of theoretical positions and models in relation to the study of consciousness, and psychological perspectives on spirituality. Demonstrate an understanding of integral practice from first-person experience and the relevant research literature, and critically reflect on processes of psycho-social and psychosomatic transformation. Demonstrate in writing and through oral presentation the skills of critical analysis, informed reflection and contextual awareness in relation to complex issues and contemporary debates in transpersonal psychology and allied areas. Identify research methodologies that would be appropriate for specific research questions arising in transpersonal psychology and allied areas. |

| Alternate Award Names |
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External Benchmarks

| Subject Benchmark Statement |
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Programme Offering(s)

| Mode of Study, Mode of Delivery | Intake Month | Teaching Institution | Programme Length |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Part-Time, Face to Face | September | The Alef Trust CIC | 2 Years |

Aims and Outcomes

Educational Aims of the Programme

In naming the programme MSc in Consciousness, Spirituality, and Transpersonal Psychology (CSTP) the team responsible for designing the programme is recognising that no one sub-discipline of psychology fully encapsulates the aims of the programme. Transpersonal psychology has the aim of understanding those states of consciousness in which the individual experiences an expansion of self that seems to incorporate a broader, more holistic sense of the world. Often, but not always, such states of expanded awareness have distinct spiritual connotations. Some research into consciousness acknowledges these connotations and the transformational aspect that may accompany them, which is also a major topic of study for transpersonal psychology. However, many advances in consciousness research exclude such transpersonal dimensions from their approach. Finally, considerable recent research into the psychology of spiritual practices and the states they can engender evades connections with the approach of transpersonal psychology. The three topics expressed in the title are thus cognate, whilst not being fully overlapping. The fundamental aim of the programme is to critically explore each of the three topics, focusing on the importance of studying them from a psychological perspective, and emphasising their common ground as well as their points of distinctiveness. In working with current students in the design of this programme, it became evident that they strongly valued the sense of pursuing a transformational learning journey over their period of study. In recognition of this input, another overarching aim is to facilitate appropriate forms of practice and application, and to allow space for structured reflection on students' progress not only academically but in terms of this transformational journey which may find expression in the students' personal and professional lives. Specific programme aims

- To provide an academically rigorous framework through which learners can appreciate the specifically psychological input into our understanding of consciousness, spirituality and transpersonal issues.
- To foster an intellectual environment in which learners can become aware of current issues in the above topic areas, drawing on skills of critical analysis, complex evaluation, and creative problem solving.
- To encourage a critical approach, both through embodied practice and research, to contemporary and traditional practices of a psycho-spiritual nature which purport to bring about some degree of beneficial transformation within the individual.
- To encourage learners to interrelate their understanding of consciousness, spirituality, and transpersonal issues drawn from academic study with that gained through experience in their own life, especially in applied and professional contexts.
- To enable the above to be achieved whilst learners are distant from any institutional location, by using online systems (including a collaborative learning environment, CLE, and webinar software) to cultivate an integrative learning community.

Learning Outcomes

| Code | Description |
|------|--|
| PLO1 | Contextualise research into consciousness, contemporary issues in the psychology of spirituality, and the challenges addressed by transpersonal psychology in relation to the history of psychology and cultural trends more broadly |
| PLO2 | Plan, conduct and report on a programme of original, empirical research, with due regard to issues of ethics and the conventions applying to research in academic psychology |
| PLO3 | Reflect on, and make use of, feedback to evaluate their knowledge base, performance and skills, and use this information to monitor progress and plan for future academic and professional development |
| PLO4 | Demonstrate insight in engagement with personal development practices, as well as competence in the critical evaluation of such practices, considering impact and efficacy. |
| PLO5 | Employ skills of self-reflection, as well as alternative modes of knowing typically utilised in transpersonal studies (e.g. intuition, embodied awareness and contemplative knowing) |
| PLO6 | Retrieve and organise information effectively |
| PLO7 | Organise self-management of learning, utilising time-management skills and effective planning strategies |

| Code | Description |
|-------------|---|
| PLO8 | Develop cultural awareness, empathy, and collaboration skills in working with others |
| PLO9 | Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills |
| PLO10 | Integrate personal experience (and work-based experience, where relevant) with theories and models developed through research and scholarship. |
| PLO11 | Critically evaluate theoretical positions and models developed in the above topic areas in terms both of the quality of research underpinning them and also of their efficacy in contexts of applied professional practice and individual psycho-spiritual growth |
| PLO12 | Demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between psychology and other relevant disciplines (e.g., philosophy, anthropology, comparative religion, applied arts) in addressing the topics of interest on this programme |
| PLO13 | Synthesise knowledge from diverse sources in order to express well-formulated and informed arguments on specific issues |
| PLO14 | Synthesise knowledge in order to construct a research question that is fully contextualised in the chosen field and operationalised in ways that facilitate effective execution of the research |
| PLO15 | Understand and apply the principles of data collection and data analysis as typically employed in transpersonal research methods |
| PLO16 | Demonstrate skills of critical reasoning and deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively |
| PLO17 | Demonstrate skills of targeted literature searching, and searching for sources on the internet using informed discrimination |
| PLO18 | Creatively appraise and integrate information from a variety of sources |

Programme Structure

Programme Structure Description

To exit the programme with a Postgraduate Certificate, the students must complete and pass any 60 credits (not including 7500ALEFTP Dissertation). To exit the programme with a Postgraduate Diploma, the students must complete and pass 120 credits (not including 7500ALEFTP Dissertation).

Module Sequencing: Year 1: 7501ALEFTP Approaches to consciousness 7503ALEFTP Learning through integrative practice (year-long module) 7506ALEFTP Research design (year-long module) 7502ALEFTP Spiritual psychology Year 2 7504ALEFTP Transpersonal psychology 7505ALEFTP Applied transformative psychology 7500ALEFTP Research dissertation

| Programme Structure - 180 credit points | |
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| Level 7 - 180 credit points | |
| Level 7 Core - 180 credit points | CORE |
| [MODULE] 7500ALEFTP Research Dissertation Approved 2022.01 - 60 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7501ALEFTP Approaches to Consciousness Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7502ALEFTP Spiritual Psychology Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7503ALEFTP Learning Through Integrative Practice Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7504ALEFTP Transpersonal Psychology Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7505ALEFTP Applied Transformative Psychology Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| [MODULE] 7506ALEFTP Research Design Approved 2022.01 - 20 credit points | |
| Level 7 Optional - No credit points | OPTIONAL |

Module specifications may be accessed at <https://proformas.ljmu.ac.uk/Default.aspx>

Approved variance from Academic Framework Regulations

Variance

May 2021: the Education Committee approved variances to the Academic Framework regulations as follows: Modules 7501ALEFTP Approaches to Consciousness and 7504ALEFTP Transpersonal Psychology run for 18 weeks. Modules 7503ALEFTP Learning through Integrative Practice and 7506ALEFTP Research Design both run for 31 weeks throughout two semesters.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The CLE is employed to provide a range of formats through which learners are introduced to key areas of knowledge. This range includes core content written by module leaders, lecture videos, pod casts, live webinars, and key readings available as resources on the CLE. Key readings (book chapters, review articles, and primary research papers) are presented as 'core' or 'in-depth' for a given topic. Students are expected to further their in-depth understanding of key areas of knowledge through literature searches. Discussion, through which critical analysis, self-reflection, and wider reading is fostered, takes place both in asynchronous forums and in webinars designed to penetrate more deeply into issues aired in the forums. The two formats are employed to encourage both peer-to-peer, and student-to-tutor, dialogue. Students are placed in learning groups which run throughout the programme. In brief, year one learning groups focus on academic skills, and they support the teaching modules; in year two the groups similarly support teaching, but additionally take a more whole-person perspective, facilitating reflection on transpersonal goals. (See programme document for more details.) Learning groups will meet approximately once per month, although the frequency may vary according to assessment and other demands. Learning groups will meet live on the webinar platform; they will be scheduled taking student time zones into account and they will be led by personal tutors. Students' progress in devising, and conducting, a programme of integrative practice is monitored through group supervision, reinforced by one-to-one supervision where required. Students are further offered experiential practice sessions that explore a broad range of embodied practices (e.g. mindfulness, movement and active imagination). Research skills will be taught and practiced through the student's engagement in a group research project, involving individual and group work. These skills will be further honed through one-to-one supervision targeted at the student's own research question for the research dissertation. Contact across year groups is fostered through extra-curricular community-wide events. These will include occasional guest online lectures given by leading researchers in relevant areas, and regular sessions in which practitioners applying whole-person, or transpersonal, skills in their specific professional field will run webinars.

Assessment The assessment strategy aims to foster in-depth and active learning to achieve the stated learning outcomes, and has been designed to achieve an appropriate match between teaching and learning methods and assessment tasks. It includes the provision of summative and formative feedback, an appropriate balance of assessment tasks over the programme, and inclusivity of a range of student approaches to learning. A variety of assessment methods is therefore utilised across the programme. Forums and webinars provide opportunities for formative feedback from both peers and tutors. Specific sessions of the learning groups will be devoted to upcoming assessment tasks, enabling students to receive directed formative feedback. Each module will include one or more assessment forum, in which module leaders and/or their assistants will provide advice and guidance during the preparation of assignments. Coursework assessment is used to provide timely and detailed summative assessment. Most items of coursework are assessed by module leaders and/or their assistants. Assessment methods include essays, reports, reflective portfolios, posters, individual and group webinar presentations, research proposal, a blog post and dissertation.

Opportunities for work related learning

There is no formal work-based learning during this MSc, although students may conduct the research for their dissertation in a professional setting. In the past, a number of students have conducted research in contexts related to their professional activities. These have proved highly successful, both in terms of the research quality and also for the student's advancement in their profession. Further, in this programme students may choose to explore applications of learning in work contexts in two modules: In 7503ALEFTP Learning through integrative practice students can opt to place a component of their integrative practice in a work context, beginning to explore what it means to apply transpersonal ideas within this specific context, e.g. in collaboration with colleagues or clients. In 7502ALEFTP Applied transformative psychology students are equally encouraged to engage practically with two approaches to psycho-spiritual transformation, beginning to apply one of the approaches in a professional or community context relevant to the student. From our past experience, these forms of experiential and applied learning are highly effective in facilitating the students' lived engagement with theory, thereby expanding discernment, ethical maturity and critical thinking skills.

Entry Requirements

| Type | Description |
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| A levels | In order to gain admission to the two-year MSc programme a student is required to have an undergraduate degree in psychology, or a cognate science subject, at class 2.1 honours or above in the case of UK awards or an equivalent level if a non-UK degree. Candidates will also be required to have basic technology skills, IT equipment and internet access of the required capacity, and the capacity for self-directed learning to ensure successful participation in the online programmes. |
| Other international requirements | English Proficiency: For all applicants whose first language is not English, proficiency in English is required up to the following tested standards: IELTS 6.5, with no less than 5 in any single component. TOEFL: PBT 580, CBT 233, IBT 90-91 Or Completed an degree that was taught in English in the UK or from a majority English speaking country. |