

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed by three written exam papers at the end of the two-year course. Questions vary in style from multiple-choice to short answer questions and those requiring extended writing in the form of full essay responses. Some questions require application of knowledge to novel scenarios.

What skills will I need and develop on this course?

Psychology is not usually available at GCSE, but the GCSE subjects that are closest to the ways in which you will need to work are Combined Science or Biology (where there are technical terms and theories to learn) and History (where there is an emphasis on essay writing and thinking critically). You need to enjoy getting to grips with ideas and issues through reading, and you need to be good at organising ideas on paper in extended writing. You also need to be comfortable with scientific and mathematical approaches. The course develops your skills in analysis, evaluation, research and the analysis of data.

What can the course lead to in terms of Higher Education and Careers?

To study Psychology at most universities, you would need to have a substantial scientific component within your A Level programme. This need not be A Level Psychology itself, though in many cases A Level Psychology would in fact provide enough science within your A Level programme to meet this criterion. It would also indicate a commitment to the subject, provide a sound foundation for university work and enable you to get to grips with what is involved in the scientific study of the subject. However, the more science-orientated degrees in Psychology at some of the more competitive universities would require a more strongly science-orientated programme at A Level, including another science (for example Biology) and/or Mathematics.

Psychology can be studied as a single or joint honours degree. To work as a professional, accredited psychologist you will need a higher degree (MSc). Professional psychologists work in a range of fields, including forensic psychology, health psychology, counselling psychology and educational psychology. However, A Level Psychology is not just for those thinking of taking a Psychology degree and going on to work as psychologists. Any career that involves dealing with people will be enhanced by studying Psychology at A Level. This includes teaching, the police, nursing, social work and work in human resources.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

In addition to the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need to achieve a minimum of a grade 4 in GCSE Maths and GCSE English Language, and ideally a grade 5 in GCSE Combined Science or GCSE Biology.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department offers subject tutorials enabling students to access 1:1 support from their teacher, and revision sessions to support students in strengthening their understanding of the course content. We offer a practical application of Psychology in our '16-19 Counselling Skills' course. This is a nationally recognised qualification for young people wishing to improve their skills as peer supporters. In the College's Wider Skills Week we offer a number of trips to museums and to the zoo, as well as a taster of the Counselling Skills course. We also offer a course in Psychology (including looking at the presence of psychological ideas in film) as part of the College's Complementary Studies programme

Subject combination advice:

Psychology combines well with many other subjects. Many students combine it with another science subject such as Biology or Mathematics. Others combine it with Social Sciences and Humanities subjects, such as Sociology, History or Economics. Our experience is that taking it in combination with purely creative subjects works less well unless you have GCSE results significantly above the minimum entry requirements in Science, Maths and English. If you wish to study Psychology at university it is regarded as a science, and degree level Psychology has a heavy biological and statistical emphasis.

What is the difference between Psychology and Sociology?

Both subjects are interested in human behaviour, but ask different questions from a different perspective. For example, in thinking about aggressive behaviour, Psychology might ask what makes individuals aggressive while Sociology might ask why violence has increased in society as a whole. Psychology is a science and you will study explanations of behaviour based in Biology. A Level Psychology also has a strong emphasis on scientific research methods and statistical analysis of data.

physical education

A Level

Head of department: Alan Reed

Email: areed@esher.ac.uk

Exam board: OCR



What is this subject about?

Have you ever wondered why some people can run faster than others? Or how your personality affects your performance? Or even how you could become an elite sports performer? Through studying Physical Education you could find the answers to these questions. The main focus of the subject is on participation and performance in physical activity and sport. The subject involves an academic study of physical activity and its practical performance. The A Level PE course is the ideal platform to start building the foundations to a career in the sports industry e.g. Sport Scientist, Sports Psychologist, Sports Coaching and Sports Development.

What will I study over the two years?

During the first year you will study: the applied anatomical and physiological factors that underpin performance; how we acquire and develop skills; the role of sport in society throughout history and how exercise physiology can be used to improve performance.

In the second year you will learn contemporary issues in sport, such as doping, the role of sport psychology in athlete development, and how biomechanics can enhance technique whilst reducing the risk of injury.

Throughout the two years you must be regularly participating in one competitive practical activity, in which you will be assessed. Additional to this, you must understand how to analyse and improve performance in one sport in order to complete an extended interview.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment in the theoretical unit is through three written exam papers which make up 70% of the qualification. The non-examined unit (30%) includes a

practical performance assessment (worth 15%) and an extended interview (worth 15%) which make up the qualification. This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

You will need to develop an ability to acquire knowledge from a range of theoretical areas and apply this to practical sporting situations. Additionally, you will be expected to write in depth about the theoretical components through extended writing tasks.

You must develop your range and quality of skills and tactics in one chosen sport through regular competitive participation. You also need to improve the physical attributes required for effective performance in your activity. Additionally, you will be expected to acquire the analytical skills needed to evaluate performance in your chosen sport while understanding how a coach can improve performance.