



Module code	BIOP	NQF level	5
Credit value	15	Study duration	9 weeks

# Biological Psychology

## Module description

The biological approach to psychology views our thoughts, feelings and behaviours as physiological processes. Biological Psychologists assume that everything we call “the mind” is a product of the brain, and they therefore study the links between the structure and function of the brain and human behaviour.

Biological psychology is a methodologically complex area of psychology, and covers multiple biological levels: from the molecular to the cellular to the systems-level. Beside the anatomy and function of the human brain, biological psychology also considers the importance of genetics, hormones and animal models in understanding our mental processes.

### This module aims to:

- Develop students’ understanding of the biology behind thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- Critically evaluate the history and development of the field
- Develop students’ ability to evaluate principle approaches in biological psychology
- Develop students’ knowledge of current breakthroughs, arguments and debates in biological psychology

### Learning outcomes

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

- explain relationships between the structure and function of the nervous system and human thought, emotion and behaviour
- critically analyse the methods used in biological psychology
- evaluate our understanding of the biological correlates of cognitive processes, including memory, consciousness, language, and attention

### Syllabus

- An introduction to the biology of brain and behaviour
- The historical development of the study of the brain and behaviour
- The structure and function of the nervous system
- Research methods in biological psychology

- The biology of consciousness and memory

### Learning and teaching methods

The pedagogical approach for this module is informed through the principles of collaborative enquiry, constructionism and scientific apprenticeship.

Collaborative enquiry is supported through our internet-mediated learning platform that aims to develop a learning community and support dialogue and collaboration between students. This is encouraged through online peer discussion and debate to construct a unique learning experience that enhances students’ subject understanding through social interactions and empowers them to explain their understandings, and receive feedback from tutors and peers.

Learning through scientific apprenticeship will take place through the integration of scientific knowledge, principles and experience into the critical evaluation of biological research in psychology.

Teaching will be delivered through the provision of specified reading materials that will be provided on the University of Essex Online learning platform, and will be supported by specified discussion forums, pre-recorded lecturecasts and biweekly online question and answer sessions (using synchronous communication software and application sharing facility).

Students will be provided with indicative guidance on, and encouraged to look at relevant websites which are appropriate to the learning outcomes, and to identify and share appropriate web-based resources (as learning support references) with their fellow students.

The pre-recorded lecturecasts and the online question and answer sessions will include referenced use of selected case studies which will be drawn from the reading materials and the practice-based and professional/educational contexts and experience of the tutors.

Self-managed learning will supplement lectures and students will be given direction on required and indicative reading.

Description of unit of assessment	Length/Duration	Submission date	Weighting
Collaborative learning question: Post a 500-word response to a tutor posed question. Respond to two of your peer’s posts (300 words per response). Your answers must be evidence based and supported with psychological literature.	1,100 words	Continuous	30%
Essay	2,000 words	End of module	70%