

# PS121-15 Brain & Behaviour

**26/27**

**Department**

Psychology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

Friederike Schlaghecken

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

12 weeks

**Assessment**

32% coursework, 68% exam

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module will introduce the biological and methodological basis of current approaches to sensing, responding, and learning.

### Module aims

Taken together, PS121 (Brain and Behaviour), PS120 (Neuropsychology & Psychopathology) and PS122 (Psychology in Context) will provide a general introduction to Psychology designed to support work in the second and third years of the Psychology Honours Degree. The module has two sections. The first section presents a basic introduction to the structure and function of the nervous system. The second section presents an understanding of how organisms detect and respond to stimulation and how learning and goal-directed action are rooted in the brain.

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Section 1 will focus on the biological basis of behaviour. Topics will include, for example, the overall structure of the nervous system, the forebrain and neurons (structure and intracellular

signal transmission), chemical synapses (signal transmission, neurotransmitters, pathways and neuro-plasticity), brain development (learning and memory), and injury and rehabilitation. Section 2 will focus on perception, action and learning. Topics will include, for example, sensing and responding (stimulus-elicited behaviour, complexity of reflex action) and behaviour change and learning (habituation and sensitization, pavlovian learning and conditioning, process and mechanism in pavlovian learning).

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Describe in general terms the anatomical and functional organisation of the nervous system.
- Describe in general terms how neurochemical processes provide the basis of nervous system function.
- Understand in general terms the brain as a continually adapting system at the macro- (developmental) and the micro-level (learning, memory, rehabilitation).
- Understand in general terms how learning, memory, language, emotion, and goal-directed action are rooted in the structure and function of the brain.
- Understand how memory can be lost and learning can be undone.
- Understand how organisms detect and respond to stimulation, how their responses are changed by experience, and the neural processes and circuits that underly these capacities.
- Understand in general terms the links between reflexive, conditioned, habitual, and voluntary (goal-directed) behaviour.

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

## Subject specific skills

Describe in general terms the anatomical and functional organisation of the nervous system.  
Describe in general terms how neurochemical processes provide the basis of nervous system function.

Understand in general terms the brain as a continually adapting system at the macro- (developmental) and the micro-level (learning, memory, rehabilitation).

Understand in general terms how learning, memory, language, emotion, and goal-directed action are rooted in the structure and function of the brain.

Understand how organisms detect and respond to stimulation, how their responses are changed by experience, and the neural processes and circuits that underlie these capacities.

Understand in general terms the links between reflexive, conditioned, habitual, and voluntary (goal-directed) behaviour.

## Transferable skills

Apply a biologically informed perspective to theory and research in psychology.

Apply a biologically informed perspective to study skills.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	34 sessions of 1 hour (23%)
Private study	116 hours (77%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

116 hours guided private study and preparation for assessment

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group D2

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Test 1 MCQ test covering all material from lectures 1-9 (week 1-5)	16%		No
Reassessment component is the same			
Test 2	16%		No

## Weighting Study time Eligible for self-certification

MCQ test covering all material from lectures 11-19 (week 6-10)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Centrally-timetabled examination	68%	No
Multiple choice exam		

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- Answers provided on Answer Sheet. No Answerbook required

Reassessment component is the same

## Feedback on assessment

Formative: MCQ feedback (question-by-questions mark, correct answer, explanation); Feedback & Revision lectures.

Summative: MCQ feedback (overall test mark), Tabula overall exam mark & mark break-down for each test and for the exam.

[Past exam papers for PS121](#)

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## Availability

### Post-requisite modules

If you pass this module, you can take:

- PS351-15 Psychology and the Law
- PS381-15 Brains: The final frontier
- PS120-15 Neuropsychology & Psychopathology
- PS383-15 Cognitive Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation

## Courses

This module is Core for:

- UPHA-L1CA Undergraduate Economics, Psychology and Philosophy

- Year 1 of L1CA Economics, Psychology and Philosophy
- Year 1 of L1CC Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Behavioural Economics Pathway)
- Year 1 of L1CD Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Economics with Philosophy Pathway)
- Year 1 of L1CE Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Philosophy and Psychology Pathway)
- Year 1 of L1CF Economics, Psychology and Philosophy (Tripartite Pathway)
- UPSA-C800 Undergraduate Psychology
  - Year 1 of C800 Psychology
  - Year 1 of C800 Psychology
  - Year 1 of C800 Psychology
- Year 1 of UPSA-C801 Undergraduate Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 1 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies
- UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics
  - Year 1 of C802 Psychology with Linguistics
  - Year 1 of C802 Psychology with Linguistics

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 1 of UIPA-C8L8 Undergraduate Psychology and Global Sustainable Development