

**Bachelor of Social Science Honours in Psychology**  
**[BPsych Equivalent Programme]**  
**Module Descriptors**

**Research Methodology (NQF 8, 20 credits)**

This module explores various research methodologies frequently employed in studies within the social sciences. It further introduces the student to the philosophical assumptions that underpin research, as well as the paradigms embedded in one's choice and approach to research in a particular study. It explores the rationale behind adopting a quantitative or qualitative approach to research, relative to answering the research question/s. This module disseminates knowledge on the selection of a research design, sampling technique, data collection procedure, as well as the analysis of data and places emphasis on the importance of ethical principles that guide ethical research practices.

**Theory and Practice of Psychopathology (NQF 8, 18 credits)**

This module engages the student in the critical discussion and evaluation of, the various factors and complexities involved in the assessment processes, and interpretation of mental health illnesses. This module provides the student with an understanding of the classification of mental illness using the DSM-5. It further introduces the student to the changing landscape of assessment and diagnosis, by discussing the current developments in the field of assessment and diagnosis of mental disorders. Traditional and contemporary perspectives surrounding abnormal behaviour and psychopathology will also be explored. The content for this module has been formulated around two documents; the findings of the first large population-based mental health epidemiological survey in South Africa (the South African Stress and Health study), carried out as part of the World Health Organization World Mental Health (WMH) Survey Initiative, and the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan 2013 – 2020, by the South African Department of Health. As a result, while this module looks at the theory and practice of psychopathology in western society, it also places emphasis on mental health disorders prevalent in South Africa.

**Multiculturalism and Diversity: Challenges for the Registered Counsellor (NQF 8, 12 credits)**

This module is designed to critically engage diversity as a central issue in the work of the Registered Counsellor. The complex nature of political and social facets which have shaped diversity in South African communities, families, and individuals is explored through an evaluation of relevant, contextualised, and contemporary psychological research conducted over the last decade. Diversity as a multidimensional combination of culture, worldview and identity, oppression, power, privilege, gender and sexuality, inequality, poverty and unemployment, ageism and disability are addressed. The challenges, implications,

and the usefulness of multicultural counselling and competencies for the Registered Counsellor working with diverse populations in South Africa is explored. Throughout the module, the importance of fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion in which all individuals are supported is integrated for the purpose of students being able to apply their knowledge in conceptualising effective change strategies within the South African context.

### **Ethics in Practice (NQF 8, 12 credits)**

The focus of this module is to provide the student with a thorough input on ethical codes and principles that inform good practice in health care. Ethical decision making models are explored and the impact of social, cultural and personal values and beliefs are discussed. Knowledge of the code of professional ethics that guides the conduct of all aspects of psychological practice and research in accordance with guidelines for professional practice of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) will be attained. Relevant ethical rules, regulations, guidelines and policies are considered within the scope of practice of the Registered Counsellor in South Africa. Throughout the module, the student is exposed to current thinking regarding ethical practice in psychology in South Africa. Various ethical dilemmas are examined and the complexities of these in the application of psychological principles are considered.

### **Psychotherapeutic Models of Intervention (NQF 8, 18 credits)**

This module engages the student in the application of various psychotherapeutic models of intervention in counselling contexts. Through case studies, the theory, techniques, therapeutic goals and processes of different psychotherapeutic approaches will be explored. This will be done to illustrate the principles of change and significant contributions of the various models. Students will engage in the process of selecting and applying effective treatment modalities for various types of cases. Central to this module is the critical evaluation of evidence-based practices and the development of a solid ethical framework for practice. This will be based on a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of psychotherapeutic models of intervention and counselling practice in the South African context.

### **Research Thesis (NQF 8, 30 credits)**

This module provides an opportunity for the student to engage in the research process and to conduct a research study on a researchable topic. This module holds a dual focus whereby students will conceptualize the research, write the proposal and collect the data as a group project, and then analyse, write up and report on the findings in their individual capacity. Furthermore, this module enrolls the student in areas that are key to the research process. These areas consist of: i) the conceptualisation of the topic guided by the assigned supervisor, ii) an extensive literature search, iii) constructing relevant research questions, objectives and/or hypotheses, iv) detailing the methodology underlying the study, v) analysing the data, as well as, vi) the presentation of the results. Ethical procedures specific to the research process will be explored, with strong impetus on the adherence of sound ethical practice in research and the dissemination of research findings. The research thesis module comprises of: i) the research proposal, ii) the research mini-thesis, and iii) the research day poster presentation, and is run over two academic terms.

### **Psychometric Assessment for the Registered Counsellor (NQF 8, 18 credits)**

In accordance with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and the Scope of Practice of the Registered Counsellor (Form 258), this module will train students in the selection, use, administration,

scoring and interpretation of psychological tests, certified for use by a Registered Counsellor. Students will be familiarised with the restrictions placed on the test use specific to the Registered Counsellor. Moreover, students will gain a broad understanding of the test classification categories, i.e. intelligence, ability, aptitude, learning potential, personality, interest, study habits and scholastic, as defined by the scope of practice of different health professionals enacted by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The module establishes the connection between classical theoretical frameworks and how they underpin specific psychometric tools. Underlying theories will be explored to assist students in understanding the theoretical rationale of various tests.

### **Psychometric Practice (NQF 8, Non-credit bearing = 120 notional hours)**

This module follows on from *Psychometric Assessment for the Registered Counsellor* and has a particular focus on the practical elements associated with psychometric assessments specific to the Registered Counsellor. This module aims to equip students with the necessary skills in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of psychological measures. This module aims to produce competent and efficient practitioners that will feel equipped to enter the workplace with practical knowledge and skills.

### **Practicum (NQF 8, Non-credit bearing = 720 hours)**

The Practicum is a 6-month full-time module that provides an opportunity for professional students to engage with the community under supervision, at a partner site registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The student will undertake practical training in accordance with the scope of practice for Registered Counsellors, legislated by the HPCSA as per Form 258. The focus for the practicum is to provide student Registered Counsellors with the opportunity to render psychological services that are focused on primary prevention and intervention for psychological difficulties in diverse community contexts as well as the promotion of psychosocial well-being and community-based care. The Practicum provides an opportunity for the student to work alongside other interdisciplinary professional teams to render effective mental health services, thereby protecting and promoting the well-being of the general public in South Africa. This is a full-time 6-month module that is conducted over the course of two academic terms at the end of the learning programme.