MSc Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics, and Creativity

Programme specification

1. Programme details

Item	Information
a) Programme name (incl. pathways):	MSc Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics, and Creativity (PANC)
b) Programme code(s)	100497 Psychology
c) Programme credit value(s)	180 CATS 90 ECTS
d) Programme author(s)	Stacey Humphries and Rebecca Chamberlain
e) Entry requirements	Entry requirements will normally be a good degree (2:2 or above) in Psychology or a related subject (Cognitive Science, Neuroscience) with a research component. Candidates with a non-Psychology background (e.g., Arts, Business, Philosophy, etc.) are expected to acquire introductory knowledge and/or experience of psychology, neuroscience, and/or statistical data analysis prior to joining the programme (demonstrated in the personal statement). Candidates should make clear in the personal statement that they understand the programme is fundamentally scientific in its approach and rooted in empirical (primarily quantitative) research methods. Applications from overseas students are welcome and encouraged. Students whose first language is not English will be asked to provide evidence of their English language skills. The College norm of an IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent will be applied. We particularly invite applicants from the following backgrounds: Students with a degree in Psychology or a related subject (Cognitive Science, Neuroscience) who wish to specialise in the psychology of art, neuroaesthetics or creativity. Students with arts backgrounds who wish to move into psychology/neuroscience, or want to enrich their artistic or professional practice (e.g., in arts administration, curation, research, creative industries, etc) with knowledge from psychology, neuroscience and neuroaesthetics. Students with a background in the creative industries, marketing or business who wish to acquire knowledge in scientific methods,

	cognitive neuroscience and experimental psychology in relation to the arts, aesthetics and creativity to support their career. A preparatory statistics workshop is offered to all students who have been accepted on PG Psychology programmes. The course runs online/asynchronously, and students gain access to the materials as soon as they have completed enrollment and gained access to the VLE. It covers basic descriptive (measures of centrality and variance) and inferential (T-tests and univariate analysis of variance) statistics. It is offered at no additional cost. Completion of the preparatory stats course is not required for all students but should be considered a prerequisite for those with little prior knowledge in statistics.
f) Academic year effective from	2026-27

2. Programme Aims & Overview

Aims

PANC aims to integrate knowledge from aesthetic and creative practice with scientific methodology and thinking to provide students from both backgrounds with the knowledge and skills to work in interdisciplinary contexts in the creative industries, arts organisations, academia or as artists. Specific aims include:

Prepare students who wish to pursue a PhD in an emerging field of academic research (neuroaesthetics/creativity).

Prepare students for employment at the intersection of the arts and the sciences.

Provide education in experimental, statistical and neuroscientific methods to students with diverse backgrounds.

Encourage students to critically engage with diverse perspectives from neuroscience, the humanities and creative practice.

Develop strong professional, written and oral communication skills that allow for effective communication in interdisciplinary contexts.

Encourage and scaffold independent study and critical thinking.

Overview

The MSc Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics and Creativity (PANC) is a unique postgraduate programme for the scientific study of aesthetics and creativity. With a strong interdisciplinary focus at the intersection of the arts and the sciences, the programme provides an in-depth introduction to the scientific and psychological study of aesthetic experiences, art engagement, and creativity.

Why do humans value and appreciate art (and design, architecture, music, dance, etc.)? How do we come up with creative ideas and solutions? Is art a uniquely human capacity? Aesthetic and creative decisions are relevant in the visual the performing arts and in many applied and commercial contexts (e.g., marketing, design, curation, user experience, creative strategy, etc.). Based in the School of Mind, Body and Society, and in collaboration with the School of Computing, School of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies and School of Creative Management, the course builds critical knowledge and research skills across the arts and the sciences. At its heart, the course is centred around two key topics: the psychological and brain mechanisms of making (Creativity) and appreciating (Neuroaesthetics) the arts.

The scientific study of creativity covers topics ranging from experiments in creative problem solving to visual art production and musical improvisation. Neuroaesthetics covers the psychological and brain mechanisms underlying human preference and affect in relation to the visual and the performing arts, architecture and design, food, and even other people. Critically, the programme provides in depth knowledge of experimental design, statistics and neuroscientific methods, providing the necessary research skills for an empirical investigation of these topics in a dissertation research project and beyond.

To challenge and complement the scientific perspective, the course includes an interdisciplinary invited speaker series and allows students to personalise their degree through optional modules in, for example, creative computing, marketing and consumer behaviour, museum and gallery studies, or perspectives on aesthetics from the humanities. The course is aimed at students with backgrounds in the sciences and the arts, paving the way for a research career in aesthetic or creative science, working in the creative industries, arts organisations, or to enrich their artistic practice.

Students will choose between one of two pathways. Both pathways include a shared set of modules comprising 150 credits. They differ in modules comprising the remaining 30 credits:

1) Interdisciplinary pathway: Students on the Interdisciplinary Pathway will make a 30-credit option module selection from a pre-approved list. Options available to PANC come from the School of Mind, Body and Society, the School of Computing, School of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies and School of Creative Management,
2) Creative Coding pathway: Students on the Creative Coding Pathway will not select options will take 30 credits of modules from the School of Computing (‘Programming for Artists and Designers’ and ‘Physical Computing’).

The Interdisciplinary Pathway is appropriate for students looking to tailor their degree towards psychology, marketing, media studies or the creative industries. The Creative Coding pathway is appropriate for students wishing to specialise in computational arts. It is also a particularly useful option for students who wish to pursue a research career in experimental psychology, as the coding skills developed through these modules are extremely relevant in quantitative/experimental research. Please note that the Computing modules on the Creative Coding pathway are not available on the Interdisciplinary Pathway.

3. External reference

Item	Information
a) FHEQ Level of Award:	7
b) UCAS Code(s):	N/A
c) HECoS Code(s):	100497 Psychology
d) QAA Benchmark group:	N/A

4. Awards

Item	Information
g) Awarding institution:	University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' University)
h) Teaching institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
i) Home School:	Mind, Body & Society
j) School(s) also involved in teaching of the programme:	1. Computing 2. Creative Management 3. MCCS **If other, name here:**
k) Entry awards:	☐ CertHE ☐ DipHE ☐ PGCert ☐ PGDip
l) Interim exit awards:	☐ CertHE ☐ DipHE ☒ PGCert ☒ PGDip
m) Final awards:	PGCert in Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics and Creativity PGDip in Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics and Creativity MSc in Psychology of the Arts, Neuroaesthetics and Creativity

5. Delivery

Item	Information		
a) Language of study:	English		
b) Valid intake points in year:	☐ January ☒ Sept/Oct ☐ Other If other, specify: .		
c) Mode of study:	On Campus		
	Total hours directed learning/year	200	
	In-person hours	200	100%
	Online hours	0	0%
d) Pace of study:	☒ Full time ☒ Part time		
e) Duration of programme	Full time: One ☒years ☐months Part time: Two ☒years ☐months		
f) External accreditation:	N/A		

Item	Information
g) Apprenticeship Standard:	N/A

6. Programme Learning Outcomes

Also, see the curriculum map at the end of document.

For UG exit awards, Learning Outcomes must be achieved in the level indicated below:

- CertHE = Level 4
- DipHE = Level 5

Learning outcomes are grouped in categories of:

- **Declarative learning** - knowledge, thinking & facts (D1-3)
- **Functional learning** - application of knowledge, thinking & facts (F1-3)
- **Professional and transferable skills and behaviours** (P1-3)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

Learning Outcome		Level	Graduate Attribute
D1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, methodologies and findings in aesthetics and creativity	7	Responsible agency
D2	Critically evaluate scientific research in aesthetics and creativity	7	Political in the personal
D3	Understand and reflect on the interdisciplinary nature of research in aesthetics and creativity	7	Diversity of perspective
F1	Design, conduct and present scientific research	7	Collaboration
F2	Conduct qualitative and quantitative data analysis	7	Responsible agency
F3	Interpret a variety of sources closely and critically	7	Political in the personal
P1	Communicate complex ideas effectively and across disciplinary boundaries	7	Diversity of perspective
P2	Work effectively with peers to solve problems and communicate knowledge	7	Collaboration
P3	Give effective oral presentations	7	Responsible agency

7. Programme Structure

For Undergraduate programmes (UG), each level must amount to at least **120 CATS** (60 ECTS).

Postgraduate (PGT) programmes must amount to at least 180 CATS (90ECTS), with exception to interim exit awards.

Compulsory modules must be taken by all students.

Option modules – you must choose one or more of the options available to this programme at this level and point. The option modules available from this list may vary from year to year, depending on student numbers and staff availability. Selection takes place during your studies, not before.

Also, see curriculum structure grid.

Academic year 1 (FT)

Module Name	Code	Credit	Level	Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Aesthetic Science	PS71087A	15	7	Compulsory	1	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Creativity	PS71088A	15	7	Compulsory	2	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Multivariate Statistical Methods	PS71020E	15	7	Compulsory	1	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Research Design and Analysis	PS71054D	15	7	Compulsory	1	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Research Skills	PS74011D	15	7	Compulsory	1-2	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Research Project	PS71097B	60	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Foundations of Neuroscience	PS74005D	15	7	Compulsory	1	1	Interdisciplinary Pathway, Creative Coding Pathway
Programming for Artists and Designers	IS71084B	15	7	Compulsory	1	2	Creative Coding Pathway
Physical Computing 1	IS71102B	15	7	Compulsory	1	2	Creative Coding Pathway

Module Name	Code	Credit	Level	Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Embodiment and Experience	MC71051C	30	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway
After Images	MC71230B	30	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway
Cognitive Neuroscience of Music	PS74002C	30	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway
Exploring the Field of Museums and Galleries	IC71108B	30	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway
Psychology of Marketing and Advertising	IM71008B	15	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway
Creating Customer Experiences	IM71015A	15	7	Option - Shared	2	2	Interdisciplinary Pathway

Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Learning & Teaching methods

Teaching will be via a range of formats to be as relevant as possible to the topic and learning outcomes. This may be through workshops, practical labs, lectures and seminars. It may have a mix of in-person and online activities, designed to give you the best learning experience and to make the most out of your time on campus. You are expected to attend all your timetabled learning activities.

Specifically, this programme will be taught in the following ways:

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Assessment modes and approaches

You will be assessed in a range ways throughout your course. These will be both Formative (for feedback and development), and Summative (required to pass and progress to the next level). Summative assessments are compulsory.

Feedback is a crucial part of your learning and development in this programme. You will receive feedback both on your Formative (work in progress) tasks/assessments, and your Summative (graded) assessments. This feedback will help the assessment to be a part of your learning, not just a test. It may be verbal, written or video based. Please engage with this feedback to improve your future work.

Specifically, this programme will be assessed in the following ways:

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Assessment diet (number of assessments for compulsory modules)

Mode	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Total
Coursework	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Exam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	4
Live (presentation, performance etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	4
Portfolio (multi-modal)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Practical / multimedia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Written	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	8
TOTAL:	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**17**	**17**
Of which…	**Individual:**	15	**Group:**	2		

8. Other information

Item	Information
a) Assessment regulations	https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/
b) Placement opportunities	There are no formal placement components to the programme. However, the School has a range of existing links with the private sector and other external organisations, which we use to support students on this programme to develop their career prospects and their employability, in both academic and non-academic routes. Further opportunities for research projects with external partners arise from ongoing research collaborations with, e. g. the Hayward Gallery, Manchester Art Gallery, National Gallery, Siobhan Davies Dance, Sadler's Wells theatre and the Dance Department at Laban Trinity College of Music and Dance. Specific arrangements will be made with external partners depending on their level of involvement and in close collaboration with professional services at Goldsmiths, in particular career support services and collaborative provision
c) Programme-specific requirements	N/A
d) Programme specific costs and resources	N/A
e) Employability and potential career opportunities	The course provides a unique combination of scientific methods and psychological theory on the one hand, and principles of aesthetic and creative practice on the other. It will equip you with a unique skill set that will allow you to bridge the arts and the sciences.

Item	Information
	As a graduate of this course, you will be especially suitable for a career in academic research, marketing (planning and strategy), arts management, user experience design/research. Neuroscientific methods and theories of aesthetic or creative science are not normally taught in other courses on, for example, consumer psychology, arts management, curating or arts-based therapy. Based on the combination of scientific methods with interdisciplinary knowledge in aesthetic and creative practice, you will have a unique advantage in applying for jobs at the intersection of the arts and sciences. Examples include: Doing a PhD in the growing international research field of creative science and (neuro)aesthetics Working in the creative industries – for example, advertising, market research, brand strategy and consulting Arts management and curating, arts education, or even as research-focussed preparation for art-based clinical interventions and therapy

9. Academic support

There is a range of support available to you to give you the best possible chance of success in this programme.

Please see your tutors and student portal/VLE for details of what's available and how to access this support.

10. Curriculum map

Programme Learning Outcomes assessed by each module:

Module name	Code	Type	D1	D2	D3	F1	F2	F3	P1	P2	P3
Aesthetic Science	PS71087A	Compulsory	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐	☒
Creativity	PS71088A	Compulsory	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐	☒
Multivariate Statistical Methods	PS71020E	Compulsory	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐
Research Design and Analysis	PS71054D	Compulsory	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Research Skills	PS74011D	Compulsory	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐
Foundations of Neuroscience	PS74005D	Compulsory	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Research Project	PS71097B	Compulsory	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒