



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Study Plan

Psychology Programme

Programme Code:	VAPSY
Programme Title:	Master of Science in Psychology Programme
ECTS credits:	300
Programme Approval:	The Programme Study Plan was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 24 Jan. 2018 and is effective from the autumn semester of 2018.
Language of Instruction:	Swedish. Some components may be offered in English
Degree Level:	Master's
Degree Type:	Professional
Prerequisites	General admission requirements and Mathematics 2a or 2b or 2c and Civics 1b or 1a1 + 1a2.

General Information

Combined with the prescribed practical service (PTP), the five-year psychology programme meets the requirements specified by the National Board of Health and Welfare for the licence to practise as a psychologist. The PTP follows on the completed programme and can be performed in private or public institutions. Graduates are awarded the second-cycle qualification of Master of Science in Psychology.

The professional role of the psychologist has been diversified in recent years, as have opportunities to set up modern and innovative operations that respond to new social needs. The psychology programme at Karlstad University is a general programme designed to meet these needs as well as the traditional needs of the health care system. The following keywords characterise the programme:

- health, quality of life and sustainability
- evidence-based therapy methods and approaches
- leadership and cooperation
- creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

These words indicate a broad knowledge base for further development and specialisation in the field. The programme offers specialisation in evidence-based psychotherapy.

Graduates in psychology from Karlstad University will be professional individuals with a broad base and readiness to develop and specialise in their chosen career field. Ability to consider and question critically issues such as intersectionality is applied throughout by posing the question “how do I know that this is the best solution and what are the long-term consequences?”

Programme Aims

National objectives

For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology, students have to, according to the Higher Education Ordinance, demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to work independently as a psychologist and to complete the mandatory placement (PTP) required for registration as a psychologist.

Knowledge and understanding

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field and insight into current research and development work as well as the links between research and proven experience and the significance of these links for professional practice,
- demonstrate specialised knowledge of psychological investigation methods and interventions for both individuals, groups and organisations,
- demonstrate specialised knowledge and understanding of social and family circumstances that affect different groups and individuals, including children as well as women and men,
- demonstrate knowledge of men’s violence against women and domestic violence, and
- demonstrate knowledge of the relevant statutory provisions.

Competence and skills

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate specialised skills in undertaking psychological treatment,
- demonstrate the ability to undertake supervised psychotherapy,
- demonstrate specialised skills in planning, managing and undertaking preventive measures independently as well as measures for development and change that focus on individuals, groups, organisations and environments,
- demonstrate specialised skills based on a disciplinary foundation in critically evaluating and developing treatment measures and intervention plans in the field of professional practice,
- demonstrate the capacity for teamwork and cooperation with other professional categories,
- demonstrate the ability to account in speech and writing for investigations, interventions and outcomes with those concerned and to document them in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions, and
- demonstrate the ability to review, assess and use relevant information critically and independently and also to discuss new data, phenomena and issues with different audiences and so contribute to the development of the profession and professional practice.

Judgement and approach

According to the Higher Education Ordinance, for a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate the capacity for continual development of self-awareness and the capacity for empathy,
- demonstrate specialised skills in appraising interventions using a holistic approach to individuals informed by the relevant disciplinary, social and ethical aspects and taking particular account of human rights,
- demonstrate the ability to identify ethical aspects of their own research and development work,
- demonstrate the ability to adopt a professional approach to clients and those close to them, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and undertake ongoing development of their skills.

Independent project (degree project)

A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology is that students complete an independent project (degree project) for at least 30 credits.

Local objectives

In addition to the above, the following requirements must be fulfilled for a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology at Karlstad University.

Health, quality of life and sustainability

For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate knowledge, skills and an approach based on taking a general health perspective on the client's resources and strengths, and, based on a realistic view of the future, be able to identify short-term and long-term consequences of interventions and decisions.

Evidence-based therapy methods and approaches

For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate the ability to continually upgrade their knowledge in line with new research results and integrate this knowledge with their practical experiences to form an evidence-based approach.

Leadership and cooperation

For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate the knowledge, skills and approach required to supervise, lead, cooperate and negotiate with a number of actors in multidisciplinary contexts.

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology students shall

- demonstrate the knowledge, skills and approach required to think unconventionally, generate new ideas and implement them.

These learning outcomes will be integral parts of the contents of different course components as well as of the instruction format. Each syllabus specifies the local outcome/s to be addressed.

Sustainability aspects

Sustainability aspects usually take the form of giving students the opportunity to develop skills in:

- creating and handling future scenarios and prognoses,
- identifying short- and long-term consequences of plans and decisions,
- problematising as well as adopting a solution-oriented approach,
- cooperating and negotiating with different actors using interpersonal competencies and intercultural communication, and

– working thematically and analysing complex systems involving several domains and levels (globally and locally).

Programme Structure

This is a full-time study programme. The courses should be taken in the prescribed order unless there are special circumstances. Students are normally not allowed to take more than one course at a time. The design and forms of instruction are chosen to provide opportunities for students to develop active pursuit of knowledge, critical assessment and problem-solving skills, thus preparing for their future professional role. The students' personal and professional development and communicative skills (written and oral) are developed during eight of the ten semesters through the course component professional competences, communication and self-reflection.

In addition to lectures, group discussions, group exercises and seminars there are also PBL groups for the purpose of problem discussions and analysis, and professional and personal development. The PBL group is supported and alternatingly led by a supervisor and the students. Laboratory sessions and skills development are prominent features of the programme from the start. Students are expected to seek relevant literature independently and carry out minor development and research projects, as well as being involved in current research projects in the programme departments.

Practical placement is included in the sixth semester. It involves practical psychology tasks and aims at enhancing the understanding of the multi-functionality and complexity of the psychology profession. A central aspect is also that students develop skills in integrating theory and practice in order to attain a sustainable and evidence-based approach. The placement is designed as broadly as possible on the basis of the situation of the workplace to give the students experience of several psychology-related tasks and areas of work. As far as possible, several of the stages of therapy, such as assessment, measure, intervention, evaluation and documentation, are treated and practised during the placement period. Under supervision, students also collect, process and in an adequately and professionally correct way document and report information that is relevant to the profession.

The practical placement also includes developing insights into their personal potential for working as a psychologist with the help of the supervisor, an authorised psychologist, and into their own professional development, the role of the psychologist in team work and co-operation with other professional groups.

The Master programme in psychology at Karlstad University collaborates with municipalities and county councils in and beyond the region. Students might incur extra costs in connection with the practical placement.

Programme Curriculum

The programme is divided into six blocks on the basis of different subject areas in psychology and related disciplines. See Annex 1 for the semester overview. Note that courses components may have other titles than those stated below.

■ *Block 1: The foundations of psychology, health and prevention (68 ECTS cr.)*

The block starts with an introduction to psychology as science, to the profession and information about the study programme. Individual psychological development is then treated in a lifecycle perspective. Students are also introduced to the classic learning theories, behaviourism, cognitivist and sociocultural and social constructivist perspectives on learning. In the ensuing components, knowledge is enhanced and placed in an educational context with an emphasis on teaching and learning processes, the role of motivation and the concept of

intelligence. Finally, the biological foundations of psychology are treated: the brain, nervous system and evolutionary psychology. In this block, the local profile of the programme, health, quality of life and sustainability, is especially emphasised, involving the promotion of strengths, wellbeing, health and optimal functioning.

The block comprises eight components:

S1 Introduction to the psychology profession and studying psychology	2 ECTS cr.
S1 Lifecycle perspective on developmental psychology	20 ECTS cr.
S2 Learning and motivation	4 ECTS cr.
S2 Pedagogical psychology	4 ECTS cr.
S2 Cognitive, neuro and biological psychology I	12 ECTS cr.
S3 Cognitive, neuro and biological psychology II	18 ECTS cr.
S3 Prevention and health I	4 ECTS cr.
S4 Prevention and health II	4 ECTS cr.

■ ***Block 2: Individuals in groups, workplaces, organisations and communities, as well as creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (37 ECTS cr.)***

This block connects to and integrates several of the local objectives concerning health, quality of life, sustainability, leadership and cooperation, as well as creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Based on sustainability perspectives on individual, organisational and societal level, students develop their skills in leading and cooperating with various actors in terms of integrated disciplinary perspectives. Through practical exercises in starting a business, writing a business plan, securing starting capital, etc. the students develop skills in thinking innovatively, generating new ideas and putting them into practice. The components are based on research on creative and innovative thinking but also include real examples and experiences of what supports innovation and entrepreneurship for psychologists.

The block commences with two components treating sociology and social psychology with a focus on perspectives on the individual, group and community as well as organisation theories and emotion research. Three components treating the psychological aspects of groups, work, leadership, organisation and the professional role of the psychologist then follow. The block integrates components in creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship for psychologists.

The block comprises seven components:

S3 Sociology and social psychology I	4 ECTS cr.
S4 Sociology and social psychology II	6 ECTS cr.
S4 Individual, work and organisation I	8 ECTS cr.
S8 Individual, work and organisation II	6 ECTS cr.
S8 Creativity and innovation	3 ECTS cr.
S8 Entrepreneurship for psychologists	4 ECTS cr.
S9 Individual, work and organisation III	6 ECTS cr.

■ ***Block 3: Clinical psychology (83 ECTS cr.)***

The block commences with personality theories and individual assessment as well as issues concerning intersectionality. Students are also introduced to so-called positive psychology, i.e. theories of happiness. This is followed by a broad introduction to different psychological treatment

methods including different psychotherapy specialisations.

Prior to the practical placement, students develop counselling skills and intercultural communication as well as the judicial and ethical aspects relevant to the psychology profession. Finally, the perspectives of psychopathology and diagnosis are introduced and enhanced through psychotherapy research, addiction issues and psycho-pharmaceutical drugs.

The block comprises ten components:

S2 Positive psychology, creativity and happiness	4 ECTS cr.
S4 Personality and differential psychology (intersectionality)	10 ECTS cr.
S5 Jurisprudence and ethics for psychologists	4 ECTS cr.
S5 Counselling and intercultural communication	4 ECTS cr.
S5 Evaluation methods	14 ECTS cr.
S5 Clinical psychology I	6 ECTS cr.
S6 Psychological therapy methods and principles	6 ECTS cr.
S6 Practical placement (VFU)	20 ECTS cr.
S6 Theoretical perspectives on practical placement	2 ECTS cr.
S7 Clinical psychology II	13 ECTS cr.

■ **Block 4: Evidence-based psychotherapy (45 ECTS cr.)**

This block comprises in-depth study of evidence-based psychotherapy. The evidence model is defined as an approach of applying the best available scientific evidence as a basis for analysis and treatment, rather than as a psychotherapeutic school. The entire block comprises in-depth study of the theoretical and practical components of the evidence-based model. Accepted evaluations of evidence-based methods according to the three sources of knowledge research-based knowledge, experienced-based knowledge and the client's preferences and values are considered and applied in accordance with the recommendations set by SBU and the National Board of Health and Welfare [1]. The block includes individual client therapy under supervision of an authorised psychotherapist.

The block comprises three components:

S7 Evidence-based psychotherapy I	15 ECTS cr.
S8 Evidence-based psychotherapy II	15 ECTS cr.
S9 Evidence-based psychotherapy III	15 ECTS cr.

[1] The National Board of Health and Welfare and SBU (the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services) use the GRADE approach (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation).

■ **Block 5: Theory of science and methods, as well as independent project (51 ECTS cr.)**

The block treats theory of science and overriding methodology, methods of data collection, data processing and analysis as well as scientific communication and critical review of research studies. Also treated are the evidence perspective and basic psychometrics, which inform the programme from the first module on Theory of science and methods I. Component IV provides in-depth knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Scientific method is integrated in the programme and students also

develop skills in scientific communication through scientific articles, participating in developing and research projects and through the components professional competences, communication and self-reflection. Students are encouraged to write their projects in a format suitable for scientific publication.

The block comprises five components:

S1 Theory of science and methods I	6 ECTS cr.
S2 Theory of science and methods II	4 ECTS cr.
S3 Theory of science and methods III	2 ECTS cr.
S9 Theory of science and methods IV	9 ECTS cr.
S10 Independent project	30 ECTS cr.

■ ***Block 6: Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (16 ECTS cr.)***

This block forms the common core of eight of the programme's ten semesters with 2 ECTS credits per semester.

The following components are treated:

- S1 Self-presentation and self-knowledge
- S2 Conduct and communication
- S3 One's own identity as aspect of the professional role: reflections on gender, age and ethnicity
- S4 Analysing group dynamics as participant and observer
- S5 Being assessed by others – assessing others
- S6 Reflection on and preparing for clinical work
- S7–S8 Further development of professional competences, communication and self-reflection with specialisation in evidence-based therapy. The theme “Understanding and addressing professional strengths and weaknesses” is treated throughout.

Degree Awarded

Master of Science in Psychology

Transfer of Credits

According to the Higher Education Ordinance Ch. 6 Sec. 6–8 students have the right to transfer credits and have prior learning recognised upon approval.

Additional Information

Students who commenced a programme in accordance with the ordinance that came into effect on 1 July 1993 shall complete their studies in accordance with the requirements of earlier admission. Upon completion students may request a degree and course certificates under the ordinance that came into effect on 1 July 2007, if they meet the requirements.

The local regulations for first and second level education at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.

Attendance is mandatory for some programme components, as specified in the course syllabi. The course syllabi also specify admission requirements for each semester.

A student may be required to immediately discontinue the practical placement or equivalent component involving patient contact on the grounds of gravely unprofessional conduct that may put the patient at mental or physical risk.

Previous versions of the programme study plan:

2014-12-11, dnr HS 2014/484, effective from autumn 2015

2016-12-08, dnr HS 2016/708, effective from autumn 2017

Annex 1

Semester Overview

Semester 1: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 1	Introduction to the psychology profession and studying psychology (2 ECTS cr.)
Block 1	Lifecycle perspective on developmental psychology (20 ECTS cr.)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods I (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 2: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 1	Cognitive, neuro and biological psychology I (12 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Positive psychology, creativity and happiness (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 1	Learning and motivation (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 1	Pedagogical psychology (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods II (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 3: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 1	Cognitive, neuro and biological psychology II (18 ECTS cr.)
Block 1	Prevention and health I (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 2	Sociology and social psychology I (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods III (2 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 4: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 1	Prevention and health II (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 2	Sociology and social psychology II (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation I (8 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Personality and differential psychology (intersectionality) (10 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 5: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 3	Jurisprudence and ethics for psychologists (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Clinical psychology I (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Evaluation methods (14 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Counselling and intercultural communication (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 8: Second cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation II (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy II (15 ECTS cr.)
Block 2	Creativity and innovation (3 ECTS cr.)
Block 2	Entrepreneurship for psychologists (4 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (advanced) (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 6: First cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 3	Psychological therapy methods and principles (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Practical placement (20 ECTS cr.)
Block 3	Theoretical perspectives on practical placement (2 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 9: Second cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation III (6 ECTS cr.)
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy III (15 ECTS cr.)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods IV (9 ECTS cr.)

Semester 7: Second cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 3	Clinical psychology II (13 ECTS cr.)
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy I (15 ECTS cr.)
Block 6	Professional competences, communication and self-reflection (advanced) (2 ECTS cr.)

Semester 10: Second cycle, 30 ECTS cr.	
Block 5	Independent project (degree project) (30 ECTS cr.)