Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Programme Syllabus

Reg.no. HS 2023/1253

Master of Science Programme in Psychology

Programme Code:	VAPSY
Programme Title:	Master of Science Programme in Psychology Psykologprogrammet
Credits:	300
Programme Approval:	The programme syllabus was approved by the Faculty Board of Arts and Social Sciences on 7 December 2023 and is in effect as of the autumn semester of 2024.
Language of Instruction:	Swedish. Some components may be held in English.
Education Cycle:	Second (Master's)
Degree Type:	Professional
Entry Requirements:	General entry requirements, plus Mathematics 2a/2b/2c and Social Studies 1b or 1a1 + 1a2.

Introduction

The Master of Science Programme in Psychology is a five-year degree programme and leads to a Master of Science in Psychology. To become a licenced psychologist, graduates are required to complete clinical training upon completing the degree, in accordance with the regulations of the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen). The clinical training, or internship for psychologists (PTP), can be placed with a public or private employer.

The role of the psychologist has become much broader in recent years, as has the opportunities to create modern and innovative ways of responding to new needs of society. The Master of Science in Psychology at Karlstad University provides generalist training and education that correspond to these requirements, as well as the more traditional requirements in the healthcare sector. The degree programme is characterised by the following key concepts

- health, quality of life and sustainability
- evidence-based methods and approaches

– leadership and collaboration

This provides a broad foundation of knowledge and prepares students for further development and specialisation in the field. The programme offers specialised study 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. The ability to critically review and question issues such as gender equality and intersectionality is applied and practised throughout the programme.

Programme outcomes
For programme completion, students must meet the national requirements for a Master of Science in Psychology. For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology the student shall demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to work autonomously as a psychologist and to complete the mandatory placement (PTP) required for registration as a psychologist.

National Outcomes
Knowledge and understanding
For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology the student 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 towards women and violence in close relationships, and
– demonstrate knowledge of the relevant statutory provisions.

Competence and skills
For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology the student 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 autonomously 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 autonomously 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
For a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology the student 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 his or her 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 his or her skills.

Independent project (degree project)
A requirement for the award of a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology is completion by the student of an independent project (degree project) for at least 30 credits.

Programme structure
The programme requires full-time studies and the courses are taught in the order specified in the programme syllabus, unless there are special grounds for changes. Normal study pace does not allow students to take several courses within the programme at the same time. The structure and approach of the programme train students in how to actively search for knowledge, conduct critical evaluations as well as problem solving. All this provides a solid foundation for the student's future professional role. The students' personal and professional development and communicative skills (written and oral) are developed during six of the ten semesters through the course component professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (problem-based learning in groups).

Sustainability aspects are addressed throughout the programme in order for the students to develop skills and expertise that promote good health and well-being for everyone at all ages (Goal 3 of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals).

In addition to lectures, group discussions, group exercises and seminars, the pedagogical structure of programme also includes problem-based learning (PBL) in groups. The purpose of PBL groups is to discuss and analyse problems, as well as promoting professional and personal development. Work in the PBL groups is guided and interchangeably led by a supervisor and the students themselves. Laboratory work and clinical proficiency are in focus right from the start of the programme. Students are trained from the beginning to independently search for relevant academic literature, carry out smaller development and research projects, as well as being involved in ongoing research projects at the departments involved in the programme.

Practical placement (VFU) is part of the programme and takes place during semester six. The placement period is based on practical work as a psychologist and aims to deepen the students' understanding of the diversity and complexity involved in the role of a psychologist. Clinical training also means that the students practise their ability to integrate theory and practice in order to develop a sustainable and evidence-based approach. The idea is for the placement to be as broad as possible in scope, based on the conditions of the workplace in question, in order for the student to gain experience from different aspects and areas of professional psychology. As far as possible, the majority of the stages of the psychologist's work, such as assessment, action, intervention, evaluation and reporting, will be covered and practised during the placement period. The placement also includes that the student, under supervision, is allowed to collect, process and in an adequate and ethically correct manner document and report back information that is relevant to the professional activities of a psychologist.

In addition, the clinical training includes developing insights about one's personal prerequisites for a future professional role as a psychologist as well as about one's own professional development, the psychologist's role when working in a team and cooperation with other professional groups - all with the help of a supervisor, who is a licensed psychologist.

The Master of Science in Psychology at Karlstad University have agreements with municipalities and regions in relation to placements. The placement may incur extra costs for the student.

Programme curriculum
The programme is divided into six blocks that are based on different subject areas within psychology and related areas. For an overview of the study route, see Appendix 1. Note that titles and order of programme courses may be different compared to the list below.

Block 1: Foundations of psychology, health and prevention, 69 credits
The block starts with an introduction to psychology as science, to the profession as a psychologist and information about the degree programme. This is followed by individual psychological development in a lifecycle perspective. Further, the block includes the biological foundations of psychology - the brain, nervous system and evolutionary psychology. Students are also introduced to classic learning theories, behaviourism, cognitivism and sociocultural and social constructivist perspectives on learning. This knowledge is deepened and placed in an educational context that includes teaching and learning processes, the role of motivation in learning and the concept of intelligence.

The block comprises six modules:

Semester 1 Introduction to the psychology profession and studying psychology	2	credits
Semester 1 Development psychology in a life span perspective	20	credits
Semester 2 Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology I	12	credits
Semester 3 Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology II	20	credits
Semester 3 Pedagogical psychology	8	credits
Semester 4 Prevention and health	7	credits

Block 2: Individuals in groups, workplaces, organisations and communities, 30 credits
The block begins with a component on sociology and social psychology with a focus on sociological perspectives on the individual, groups and communities as well as organisational theories and emotion research. This is followed by three components that look at psychological aspects of groups, workplaces, leadership, organisations and the psychologist's profession/role in society.

The block comprises four modules:

Semester 1 Sociology and social psychology	10	credits
Semester 4 Individual, work and organisation I	8	credits
Semester 8 Individual, work and organisation II	6	credits
Semester 9 Individual, work and organisation III	6	credits

Block 3: Clinical psychology, 89.5 credits
The block starts off with personality theories and individual assessment. The students are also introduced to the fundamental theories in positive psychology and its applications. This is followed by a general introduction to various psychological treatment methods, including various 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. The block also includes an introduction to, and deepening of, the perspectives of psychopathology and diagnosis through psychotherapy research, addiction issues and psycho-pharmaceutical drugs. Finally, students take an elective course to further deepen their knowledge of clinical psychology.

The block contains eleven modules:

Semester 4 Personality and differential psychology	9	credits
Semester 4 Positive psychology	4	credits
Semester 5 Jurisprudence and ethics for psychologists	4	credits

Semester 5 Counselling and intercultural communication	4	credits
Semester 5 Evaluation methods	12.5	credits
Semester 5 Clinical psychology I	7.5	credits
Semester 6 Psychological therapy methods and principles	6	credits
Semester 6 Practical placement (VFU)	20	credits
Semester 6 Theoretical perspectives on practical placement	2	credits
Semester 8 Clinical psychology II	13	credits
Semester 8 Elective course (specialisation)	7.5	Credits

Block 4: Evidence-based psychotherapy, 48.5 credits

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. Established 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 taken into account. The block includes individual client therapy under supervision of a licenced psychotherapist.

The block comprises three modules:

Semester 7 Evidence-based psychotherapy I	17	credits
Semester 8 Evidence-based psychotherapy II	16.5	credits
Semester 9 Evidence-based psychotherapy III	15	credits

Block 5: Theory of science and methods, as well as independent project, 51 credits

The block focuses on 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. It also looks at the evidence perspective and basic psychometrics, which inform the programme from the first module on Theory of science and methods I. The component Theory of science and methods III provides in-depth knowledge of research design as well as qualitative and quantitative methods.

Theory of science is integrated in the programme and students also develop skills in scientific communication through scientific papers, participating in development and research projects and through the components professional competencies, communication and self-reflection. Students are encouraged to write their projects in a format suitable for scientific publication.

The block comprises four modules:

Semester 1 Theory of science and methods I	6	credits
Semester 2 Theory of science and methods II	6	credits
Semester 9 Theory of science and methods III	9	credits
Semester 10 Independent project	30	credits

Block 6: Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection, 12 credits

In order to strengthen the student's personal and professional development as well as communicative abilities (written as well as oral), courses in professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (problem-based learning, PBL) are included in six of the ten semesters of the programme. The purpose of PBL groups is to discuss and analyse problems, as well as promoting professional and personal development. Work in the PBL groups is guided and interchangeably led by a supervisor and the students themselves, and is divided into components of 2 credits each semester.

Title of qualification
Upon successful completion of the degree programme, the student is awarded a Degree of Master of Science in Psychology.

Transfer of credits
According to the Higher Education Ordinance, Chap. 6, Sect. 6–8, students have the right to transfer credits and have prior learning recognised upon approval.

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

Attendance is mandatory for some programme components, as stipulated in the course syllabi. Each syllabus also specifies the eligibility requirements for each semester.

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

Previous versions of the programme syllabus have been approved:
11 December 2014, Reg.no HS 2014/484, effective from the autumn semester of 2015
8 December 2016, Reg.no HS 2016/708, effective from the autumn semester of 2017
24 January 2018, Reg.no HS 2018/146, effective from the autumn semester of 2018

Overview of study route

Semester 1 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 1	Introduction to the psychology profession and studying psychology (2 credits)
Block 1	Development psychology in a life span perspective (20 credits)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods I (6 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)

Semester 2 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 1	Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology I (12 credits)
Block 2	Sociology and social psychology (10 credits)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods II (6 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)

Semester 3 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 1	Cognitive, neuro- and biological psychology II (20 credits)
Block 1	Pedagogical psychology (8 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)

Semester 4 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 3	Positive psychology (4 credits)
Block 1	Prevention and health (7 credits)
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation I (8 credits)
Block 3	Personality and differential psychology (9 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)

Semester 5 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 3	Jurisprudence and ethics for psychologists (4 credits)
Block 3	Clinical psychology I (7.5 credits)
Block 3	Evaluation methods (12.5 credits)
Block 3	Counselling and intercultural communication (4 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)

Overview continues on the next page.

Semester 6 - Undergraduate level, 30 credits	
Block 3	Psychological therapy methods and principles (6 credits)
Block 3	Practical placement (VFU) (20 credits)
Block 3	Theoretical perspectives on practical placement (2 credits)
Block 6	Professional competencies, communication and self-reflection (2 credits)
Semester 7 – Master's level, 30 credits	
Block 3	Clinical psychology II (13 credits)
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy I (17 credits)
Semester 8 – Master's level, 30 credits	
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy II (16.5 credits)
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation II (6 credits)
Block 3	Elective course (specialisation) (7.5 credits)

Semester 9 – Master's level, 30 credits	
Block 2	Individual, work and organisation III (6 credits)
Block 5	Theory of science and methods III (9 credits)
Block 4	Evidence-based psychotherapy III (15 credits)
Semester 10 – Master's level, 30 credits	
Block 5	Independent project (degree project) (30 credits)