



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

# Frequently Asked Questions

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# Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology (DECAP)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Before you start your Application

Please carefully read the **DECAP Guide for Applicants for September 2024 entry**. This can be found on the DECAP website, along with the **online application form**.

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/Study/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/DECAP/>

There are several other documents available on the website to assist you: an example application form, guidance on work experience and an overview from the 2023 shortlisting process.

### How do I apply? The Online Application Form

The online application form needs to be completed during one sitting. You cannot save the application as you go along. Therefore it would be useful to look at the example application form, to get an idea of the questions you will be asked. You may find it useful to prepare any longer responses in Word in advance (e.g. the personal statement). You could then paste this into the application form.

In addition to the online application, you will be required to send supplementary documents by email to [decap@qub.ac.uk](mailto:decap@qub.ac.uk). These documents include:

- academic transcripts and certificates for qualifications (from degree onwards)
- birth certificate, and marriage certificate, where applicable
- confirmation of GBC (if your Psychology degree was completed outside the UK or is unusual in any way)
- confirmation of proficiency of English Language (where applicable)

### What is the Closing Date for Applications for September 2024 entry?

The closing date is **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 4.00 pm**.

### Do I need to have completed my Psychology degree before applying?

Yes, applicants must have at least a 2.1 Psychology degree or the equivalent *at the time of application*.

### If I got a 2.2 in my Psychology degree but have completed further study since, would my application be considered?

Candidates who have not obtained a 2.1 in their Psychology degree may apply if they can show evidence of a postgraduate degree relevant to educational psychology (e.g. Master's or PhD). In the case of a Master's degree, the percentage mark should be given and/or academic qualifications (conversion) transcript.

### References - Do I need to send them at the time of application?

No, you don't need to send references. The application form asks you to *name three referees and provide contact details for each*. Please make sure to include their email addresses. These should normally include someone familiar with your first degree in Psychology or higher degree where this is recent, and someone who has known you in a work setting. ***In accordance with Safeguarding procedures, one of the three referees must be from the last place of employment (or voluntary work)***

*in which you worked with children or young people.* Where possible, you should name psychologists or others familiar with the demands of educational psychology training. Your referees will only be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview. Please see the *Guide for Applicants* for further information.

**References - are they scored and will this affect my overall score at interview stage?**

No, references are not scored. They inform selectors regarding a candidate's suitability.

**Personal Statement - What should I ideally include here?**

Selectors will make a judgement on how well the applicant has been able to reflect on his or her personal qualities, as expressed in the personal statement, and how they have been developed by means of training, employment and voluntary or other experiences. In this section of the application form you should demonstrate evidence of your capacity to reflect on your motivation to undertake educational training as an educational psychologist, the experiences and values which have shaped that decision, as well as the personal qualities you would bring to this career. You may wish to include information about your personal and/or professional interests. You should indicate how you relate your experiences, skills and competencies to the training programme for educational psychology.

**Work Experience - What is considered to be the best type of previous experience?**

Please see the DECAP website for an outline of relevant work experience. Applicants are expected to have appropriate experience working with children, young people and young adults for **at least two years full-time equivalent (FTE) by the application closing date (or a minimum of 2,000 hours)**. This can be cumulative or continuous and may be remunerated employment or work undertaken in a voluntary capacity. Experience acquired during university placement of less than 10 months will not be counted. Whatever kind of work has been undertaken, applicants **should reflect** on what they have learnt from their experiences and its relevance to the work of an educational psychologist, and, how they have been able to apply the knowledge of psychology from their studies. The 'quality' of experience in work experience is as important as the quantity of experience gained. Breadth and variety of experience will be favourably considered.

**Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC) - is eligibility required at the time of application?**

Yes, eligibility for GBC with the British Psychological Society (BPS), or The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), is required at the time of application.

**Proof of English Language Proficiency for overseas students - is this required at the time of application?**

Overseas candidates should provide evidence of proficiency in written and spoken English, **unless you obtained your degree through English**. Candidates must be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System (with no element below 6.5) or in an equivalent English Language test acceptable to the university - see <http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs>

Usually this must be forwarded as part of your application.

**Brexit - Will NI/UK applicants be favoured?**

A Memorandum of Understanding between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (not yet formally signed) is expected to continue to provide students from the Republic of Ireland with the same terms as students from Northern Ireland. International students who require a work permit/visa

cannot usually be considered, due to the terms and conditions of the training award contract (i.e. to study for three years, followed by a minimum of three years' work in the Education Authority in Northern Ireland).

### **Driving Licence - Do I need to have a full driving licence at the time of application?**

Preferably yes, applicants should have a full driving licence at the time of application unless they are unable to for health or disability reasons. Those applicants with only a provisional driving licence would need to have a full driving licence before commencing studies.

## **Shortlisting**

### **Shortlisting - what is the process?**

A shortlisting panel of tutors and practitioner psychologists scrutinise all valid applications. The applications are first judged on whether a candidate meets the minimum entry requirements. Those who do not will not be shortlisted. The candidates are then rated by individual panel members on Readiness for Training and Personal Qualities. On the basis of the combined panel scores, a shortlist of candidates for interview is drawn up.

### **Shortlisting decisions - when will I know if I have been shortlisted?**

You should hear within four weeks of the application closing date.

## **Interviews**

### **Interviews - when will they take place?**

Interviews are planned for the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

### **Interviews - Will they be online or face-to-face?**

Interviews will again be in person this year. There will be two separate interviews, one with an Academic-Research panel and the other with a Professional-Personal panel, both on the same day. Interview marks from both panels are equally weighted. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. for disability or health reasons, or if an interview candidate is living overseas at the time of the interviews, it may be possible for the interviews to take place online.

### **Interview Panels - what is the composition of each panel?**

Each interview panel comprises three members of staff from the DECAP tutor team/School of Psychology, and one senior practitioner psychologist.

### **Interview marks - will my shortlisting score be used to calculate a final mark?**

No, shortlisting scores are not used at interview stage. Following interview, marks are awarded to each candidate for three components (Academic Ability, Personal Qualities, and Readiness for Training). Those candidates with the highest overall ratings in the three components, and who have reached a satisfactory standard in each, are offered places on the course.

### **What is the best way to prepare for the interviews?**

You can prepare by reading lots of journal articles and reflecting on research you have been involved with.

## DECAP Offers - Terms and Conditions

### If I am offered a place on the programme, will I be asked to sign a contract?

Any offer of a place on the DECAP programme is made in conjunction with a bursary offer/contract. Funding for the programme is provided by the Department of Education. The bursary contract must be signed and returned within a 2–3-week period. This contract is legally binding and ties you in for three years of study/training, followed by a minimum of three years' work as an Educational Psychologist in the Education Authority in Northern Ireland post-qualification, subject to the availability of jobs.

## DECAP Timetable

### Timetabling - Can you provide an outline of the Year 1 timetable?

#### **Semester 1: September-December**

The majority of the first semester is spent at university for a teaching block. Typically, classes are scheduled over four days and one day is set aside for study (where possible).

There are two short 5-day placements in Semester 1.

#### **Semester 2: January-March**

You will complete a 20-day placement in January (Placement 3). Placements 1-3 are spent in the same Education Authority (EA) office. You will be back at QUB for a short teaching block at the beginning of February, before Placement 4 commences. This is a block placement initially. Typically, you are on placement Monday-Thursday and Friday is often a study day.

#### **Semester 3: Easter to end of semester**

After Easter, you will continue Placement 4 two days a week only, and the rest of the week will be teaching days at QUB or study. The final placement in Year 1 (Placement 5) is an elective placement and this takes place during the month of June.

### Classes - Can you provide an outline of the topics covered?

The DECAP curriculum is a graduated, spiral curriculum that allows for the incremental development of skills and knowledge throughout the progression of the course. All elements of the curriculum are introduced (or at least prefaced) in Year 1 through five modules:

Year 1	Teaching, Tutorials, Seminars and Placement Activity	
<b>PSY9042</b>  <b>Learning and Development</b>  <b>20 CATS</b>	Inclusion and SEN Observation Skills and Placement 1, 2 Reading Skills Language Development Maths Development	Bilingualism Intelligence & Intelligence testing ICT in Schools Introduction to Neuropsychology
<b>PSY9043</b>  <b>Barriers to Learning/ Vulnerable Groups</b>	Counselling Skills 1, 2, 3 ADHD Anxiety based School Refusal Introduction to EMDR Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties Developmental Language Disorder	SEWB 1-4 Loss & Change Attachment Reading difficulties Severe Learning Difficulty ASD

<b>40 CATS</b>	Developmental Coordination Disorder Exceptionally mobile populations: MoD	Sensory Impairment Maths Difficulties
<b>PSY9044</b> <b>Assessment &amp; Intervention</b> <b>40 CATS</b>	<u>Assessment</u> Interactive Factors Framework Understanding Formulation Cognitive assessment: WISC IV/V, WIAT, BAS, WPPSI TEACCH  <u>Intervention</u> Video Enhanced Reflective Practice Introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Introduction to Motivational Interviewing	Consultation Skills Pre-School Assessment Dynamic Assessment Assessment and Formulation  Bullying Prevention & Intervention Dynamic Assessment Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
<b>PSY9045</b> <b>Research</b> <b>40 CATS</b>	Qualitative Research Methods and Data Analysis Quantitative Research Methods and Data Analysis Research Design & Professional Skills	Research Panel 1 Research Seminars <i>Tutorials</i>
<b>PSY9046</b> <b>Professional Issues</b> <b>40 CATS</b>	Personal Safety and Wellbeing at Work AEP & BPS Membership Children's Rights The Role of the EP School based Management of SEN Safeguarding	Legislative framework, inc Children Order, Chn & Families Act, SEND, MCA, CoP etc Supervision Skills Report Writing Codes of Conduct and Ethics (HCPC, BPS) Elective Placement

## DECAP Placements

### Placements - can I be placed somewhere close to home?

Placement offices are currently located across Northern Ireland. While some consideration would be given to your home address and the distance to travel to placement offices, particularly for longer placements, you will be expected to travel on occasion. It would not be possible to place you in the most convenient office for all of the placement days. If your placement venue is a long distance from your home (e.g. one hour's drive or longer), you will be offered the opportunity to stay at accommodation close to your placement office. Placement accommodation is organised by DECAP, in conjunction with the university travel company, and is funded by the DECAP programme.

### Placements - how much time will be devoted to placement?

300 days are spent on placement over the three years of training. The current **Year 1 placement schedule** is outlined below. Please note that this is subject to change but will give you an idea of what to expect. Placements 1-3 are typically spent in the same EA office with the same supervisor(s). Placement 4 is in a different EA office, and Placement 5 (Elective) is organised by the student, in conjunction with the personal tutor/year tutor. All of our fieldwork supervisors complete mandatory supervision training prior to supervising a student.

## Placement Overview - DECAP Year 1

Placement	Location	Nature of Placement	Number of Days	Dates
1 & 2	EA	Observation Week	5	During Semester 1
	EA	Observational assessment	5	During Semester 1
3	EA	EPS casework	20	Semester 2 - January N.B. Fridays are QUB/Study Days
4	EA	EPS casework and therapeutic intervention	42	<i>(6-week block 30 days), plus 12 days (two days per week)</i> Semester 2 - End of February to Easter holidays (block 30 days) - N.B. Fridays are QUB/Study Days Semester 3 - After Easter - end of May (12 days - two per week)
5	Elective	Trainee choice	18	Semester 3: June
<b>TOTAL DAYS</b>			90	