

Module Specification

Module Title Module Code
Credit Value Level Mode of Delivery Semester A

Pre-requisite modules	Co-requisite modules	Overlapping modules
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1) Content Description

Provide a description of the module, as it will appear in the Module Directory and on the Student Information System (approx. 70-80 words).

To survive, breed and successfully raise offspring, animals' behaviour has evolved an overwhelming diversity – from nightingales' intricate songs to the coordination of fish shoals. The science of animal behaviour, by examining examples like these, has provided insights into the fundamental processes of cognition and behaviour. In this module, students will learn to integrate mechanism, development, function and evolution in evaluating one of the fastest moving fields of psychology. Examples of topics in the module include the similarities between bird song and speech development and the application of cognitive studies to address animals' needs and welfare.

2) Module Aims

Specify the aims of the module, i.e. the broad educational purposes for offering this module.

1. To evaluate how different levels of analysis (from mechanism to evolution) may (or may not) be integrated in order to generate a deep understanding of behaviour.
2. To understand how behaviour evolves, and how we can investigate behavioural evolution.
3. To critically evaluate current topics in this exciting area of modern psychology: what do we understand by 'instinct' in the genomic era? How does evolution shape behaviour through cognition? What are the causes and consequences of individual differences in animal behaviour? How does our knowledge of animal cognition help us improve their welfare?
4. To develop students' abilities to assess the strengths and weaknesses of experiments and theories.
5. To learn how to observe and measure animal behaviour. A focus on the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches in the lectures will be combined with a practical assignment involving observation of animal behaviour.

3) Learning Outcomes

Identify the learning outcomes for this module, i.e. knowledge, skills and attributes to be developed through completion of this module. Outcomes should be referenced to the relevant [QAA benchmark statements](#) and the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland \(2008\)](#). The [SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Further and Higher Education 2003](#) and [Queen Mary Statement of Graduate Attributes](#) should also be used as a guiding framework for curriculum design.

Academic Content:

A1	A critical understanding of behaviour and cognition in a comparative context.
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A2	A critical understanding of the ways in which cognitive abilities of different species can be compared.
A3	Synthesizing knowledge of cognition to meet animals' welfare needs.

Disciplinary skills - able to:	
B1	Design and implement observational studies of animal behaviour
B2	Critically assess primary research literature in animal behaviour
B3	Integrate, contrast, and critically evaluate different approaches to a broad psychological question: different levels of analyses, cognitive, functional approaches etc.

Attributes:	
C1	The ability to clearly report research findings from their own and other studies.
C2	The ability to manage learning including by researching the primary literature.
C3	The ability to challenge received literature and mount a coherent debate on complex conceptual topics.

4) Reading List

Provide an indicative reading list for the module. This should include key texts and/or journals but **should not** be an exhaustive list of materials.

Shettleworth, S.J. 2009 Cognition, Evolution and Behaviour, OUP, 720pp.
This text will serve as a primer only, and will not be sufficient to pass the module. Central to the course will be an ability to read and review primary research articles and specialist reviews. For example:
Bateson, P. & Laland, K.N. 2013 Tinbergen's four questions: an appreciation and an update. TREE 28: 712-8
Nagy, M., Ákos, Z., Biro, D., Vicsek, T. 2010 Hierarchical group dynamics in pigeon flocks. Nature 460: 890-3.
van Heijningen, C. et al. 2009 Simple rules can explain discrimination of putative recursive syntactic structures by a songbird species.

5) Teaching and Learning Profile

Provide details of the method of delivery (lectures, seminars, fieldwork, practical classes, etc.) used to enable the achievement of learning outcomes and an indicative number of hours for each activity to give an overall picture of the workload a student taking the module would be expected to undertake. This information will form the Key Information Set for each undergraduate programme and will be used to populate the KIS widget found on the QMUL programme information pages. More information can be found [online](#) about KIS. You may also wish to refer to the [QAA guidance on contact hours](#) when completing this section.

Activity Type	KIS Category	Time Spent (in hours)
Lecture	Scheduled	22
Practical Classes and Workshops	Scheduled	6
Guided Independent Study	Independent	122
Total		150

Specify the total module notional study hours. This should be a total of the hours given for each activity. The notional study hours for each academic credit point is 10. A 15 credit point module therefore represents 150 notional study hours.

Activity Type	Total Time Spent (in hours)	Percentage of Time Spent
Scheduled learning and teaching	28	19
Placement	0	0
Independent Study	122	81
Total	150	100

Use the information provided in the box above to specify the total time spent and the percentage time spent in each category of teaching and learning activity.

6) Assessment Profile

Provide details of the assessment methods used to assess the achievement of learning outcomes.

Description of Assessment	Assessment Type	KIS Category	Duration/Length	Percentage Weighting	Final element of assessment	Qualifying Mark
Final exam – essay, choice 3 of 6	Written Exam	Written	2 Hours	75	Yes	
1 x Practical report	Report	Coursework	2000 words	25	No	

Final element of assessment: The assessment that takes place last. **There should normally be only one element of assessment marked as final unless two assessment or submission dates occur on the same day.**

Qualifying mark: A specified minimum mark that must be obtained in one or more elements of assessment in order to pass a module. **This is in addition to, and distinct from, the requirement to achieve a pass in the module mark to pass the module.**

Reassessment

Provide details of the reassessment methods used, specifying whether reassessment is either standard reassessment or synoptic reassessment.

- Standard Reassessment
 Synoptic Reassessment

Synoptic reassessment details (if you have indicated synoptic reassessment above, please give details)		
Brief Description of Assessment	Assessment Type	Duration/Length of Examination/ Coursework
Exam (Essay questions, choice 3 of 6)	Written Exam	2 Hours