

DE200 Investigating Psychology

Introduction

CASES, the Chartered Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, the professional body for sport and exercise sciences in the UK, has developed Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route (SEPAR). This programme ensures that candidates acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience required to be eligible to apply for registration with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Practitioner Psychologist.

For CASES members who currently do not meet the necessary entry requirements in relation to evidencing 'underpinning psychology knowledge', CASES has an arrangement with The Open University to offer one of their 60-credit Psychology modules that will provide the underpinning knowledge required to meet the SEPAR entry criteria.

How is the module organised?

There are 30 weeks of study on DE200, beginning with an introductory week and ending with two revision weeks. The intervening weeks are divided into three approximately equal blocks of study, with two interactive Computer-marked assignments (iCMAs) one in Week 7 of Block 1 and one in Week 20 of Block 2. Although the time study takes to complete will vary, we expect it to take on average 16-18 hours a week. The study timetable for Autumn starts in the first week of October and ends with the submission of the End of Module Assessment (EMA) in early June, and the Spring intake starts in the first week of February and ends with the submission of the End of Module Assessment (EMA) in early September.

What does the module consist of?

DE200 asks and answers everyday questions using psychology. It covers the core psychology elements only and is not applied to any sport context. It gives you an insight into research and theory across four broad areas of psychological inquiry: social, cognitive, biological and developmental. It is integrative in its approach as it encourages debate around how these four areas of investigation can work together, thus crossing the sub-disciplinary boundaries, to answer such everyday questions as 'why don't we like each other?', 'can I do two things at once?' and 'how do we know what is right or wrong?'

Block 1

The first block in the module is sub-titled 'From social to cognitive' psychology. It focuses mainly on classic social psychological topics such as social influence, personal relationships and attitudes, and concludes by considering work on social cognition. Some of the questions covered in this block are:

- Why do good people do bad things?
- Why don't we like one another?
- Why do we help one another?
- How do we make sense of the world?

This block starts by reviewing the research methods you will use and then moves on to develop these conceptually. By the end of Block 1, you will have learned a number of tests of difference and how to use SPSS, a purpose-designed statistical software program, to analyse your data. This block runs from Week 2 to Week 10 and includes an iCMA (Week 6) and a Tutor-marked assignment (TMA01) (Week 10).

Block 2

The second block will focus on topics from cognitive to biological psychology. It covers some core topics in the field of cognitive psychology, including attention, visual perception, and learning, before moving on to some related biological and neurological factors such as the effects of drugs on behaviour and recovery following brain injury. Some of the questions addressed in this block are:

- Can I do two things at once?
- Is seeing believing?
- Why do I feel this way?
- How does my brain work?

Methodologically, this block develops your knowledge of more complex tests of difference and takes you through to tests of association. Again, here DE200 develops learning in correlation to cover questionnaire design as well as ways of analysing the data collected through surveys research. Block 2 runs from Week 12 to Week 19 and includes TMA02 (Week 15), a mini project, and iCMA 42 (Week 19).

Block 3

The final block of this module takes you from biological psychology to a look at developmental questions. The first week takes an integrative look at how we develop the ability to understand and appreciate music. Each week expands the discussion of key topics in developmental psychology such as early cognitive, emotional and moral development of children, gender development and stability and change across the lifespan. The questions asked in this block include:

- Do you hear what I hear?
- What is the point of childhood?
- How do we know what is right and wrong?
- Can people really change?

The methodological focus in this last block is on qualitative approaches to empirical enquiry. Together the three blocks will prepare you for independent. This last block runs from Week 20 to Week 28 and includes TMA03 (Week 23) and TMA04 (Week 27) – an essay and a mini project respectively.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF DE200

Study planner

The study planner on the Home page of the DE200 website shows information and resources for your study on a week-by-week basis. Once the module starts you will find that the current week of study is always highlighted, as are your assessment cut-off and tutorial dates.

SPSS material

SPSS is a computer program that enables researchers to analyse numerical data and is an invaluable resource. You will receive the program as part of this module, and you will also receive interactive tutorials that will teach you how to use it and support your learning in research methods.

Study guide

The study guide on the module website is your main source of information about the different tasks to be completed each week. It will tell you what reading you need to complete, as well as guide you through the activities.

Methods portfolio

Each week you will be able to download a PDF of the Methods and skills teaching and compile these to create your Methods portfolio. This portfolio will provide a virtual methods textbook that you can keep and refer to, to support your learning throughout the qualification.

Books

There are three hard-copy textbooks for DE200 which correspond to the three blocks on the module. Each chapter asks an everyday question and then presents the psychological research and theories that address that question.

Activities

Each week you will be asked to complete two activities related to the topic you read about in the chapter. These activities range from participating in experiments to answering simple text-based questions, or watching videos and taking notes. Each week you will also complete methods and skills related activities, which can include answering quiz questions or participating in new research.

Audio and video material

Throughout the module you will encounter a range of audio visual material on the module website. This includes audio introductions from chapter authors, video interviews with psychologists, created specifically for the module, and replications of famous studies, to name a few.

Assessment material

All the information relevant to the DE200 assessment, including the guidance and questions, can be accessed via the module website. This consists of:

- The module-specific Assessment Guidance, created for students studying DE200.
- The generic guide, Social Sciences Assessment Information.
- Individual assignment guidance specific to each particular assignment which can be found in the relevant study week and on the Assessment page of the module site.

Forums and Tutorials

A few weeks before the module starts you will have access to a Welcome forum where you can meet other students and get advice from the module team. Once the module begins you will have a Cluster forum where groups of students and tutors can discuss the materials for each study week. This is the place to ask your tutor questions about topic related materials and assessment, as well as an area to discuss concepts and research with your fellow students. The module also has a Methods discussion forum led by specialist tutors to support your learning. In addition, a further set of Methods resources are available via the Psychology and Counselling subject website, which can be found via your StudentHome page.

Tutorials are organised centrally and you should receive advice on these separately. You will be in a group with other CASES pre-SEPAR entry students. More information will be available via the module website once your registration has been processed. In addition to your tutor, Education Advisors are available for questions and support relating to the study of DE200. They can be contacted at psychology-advice@open.ac.uk.

For queries about SEPAR more generally, please contact CASES in the first instance – education@cases.org.uk

Learning outline

A recorded version of each tutorial topic is made available which means that students are able to access these if they are not able to attend the 'live' session. Tutorial dates and times are set early in a module to assist with planning. The study planner is arranged week by week but can be accessed at any time which gives students flexibility to either follow the teaching in line with the study planner or to get ahead in their own time, according to their personal circumstances. It is worth noting that assessments do have set deadlines which are designed to support students using tutor feedback to build on their learning at each part of the module. Assessments are a required component of the module as they provide the necessary evidence that the Learning Outcomes have been achieved. Successful completion of all module assessments is compulsory, none are optional.

They may find this link to our website helpful in outlining how study at the OU works: <https://www.open.ac.uk/courses/what-is-distance-learning/study>

(Information updated September 2026)