



University of
St Andrews

PS5003: Professional Skills in Psychology

When: The teaching sessions are normally 9:00-11:00 on Wednesday.
Computer sessions run on Wednesday afternoons in weeks 2 and 4.
The miniconference and poster session take place partly outside of these times. Please check the timetable for details.

Credits: 30

Module controller: TBC

Aims

This module introduces students to the various skills and issues that are of importance to academic psychologists irrespective of their particular area of research. The University offers general training courses, but in this module you will learn skills specific to psychology: it is designed to allow you to clarify your career goals, build realistic plans to achieve these goals, and put those plans into practice. The module will also help to prepare you for your masters project. Although this module is focussed on academic research careers, most of the skills that you will learn are transferable to many other domains (e.g. being able to communicate complex ideas effectively to different audiences). In particular, you will learn:

1. to formulate and implement effective bibliographic searches
2. to effectively communicate scientific results to an academic audience, by giving conference presentations and by producing effective academic posters
3. how scientific publishing is conducted, and how to write and review research reports for scientific journals
4. to present your CV and job applications in the most effective way, and how best to succeed in an academic interview
5. the ethical principles that guide proper conduct of research, and how to undergo the process of ethical review of research at St Andrews (UTREC, AWEC), based on UK law and professional codes of conduct (BPS, NHS)
6. the principles of risk management, and how to undergo the process of risk assessment and risk reduction at St Andrews
7. how to prepare a realistic timetable for a research proposal: design, timeline, subject recruitment, analysis, publication
8. how to develop successful applications for research funding, including understanding the process of peer review of grant proposals
9. how to communicate scientific results and concepts effectively to the general public, and how best to explain their relevance to the wider world
10. how to manage an online presence as a researcher through blogs, etc.
11. the process by which research can be commercialised, including the management of intellectual property rights, and the relationship between academic researchers and industrial sponsors, governmental agencies and charitable organisations.

SCHEDULE

The module will consist of a series of interactive teaching sessions to be held on Wednesday mornings (School of Psychology and Neuroscience Seminar Room, room 1.00) as well as two Wednesday afternoon computer sessions (in Butts Wynd Computer Classroom). The miniconference on the mornings of 1st and 3rd November and poster session on the afternoon of 29th November form part of the assessment for the module, so please take care to note these dates. Each session is designed to address a different topic and may involve lecture, small group discussion and practical demonstrations. Attendance at all sessions is recorded and failure to attend will trigger an academic alert. We expect you attend all all sessions and to self-certify if there is any session that you cannot attend. Attending a minimum of six of the Wednesday morning teaching sessions, in addition to the miniconference (week 7) and poster session (week 11) is compulsory for passing the module.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING WEEK (WEEK 6)

There are no teaching sessions scheduled during week 6. Instead, you are expected to dedicate time that week to independently improving your competency in MS Office, using the self-study resources available through the Microsoft IT Academy, to which the University has a subscription (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/itsupport/help/training/itacademy/>). You may choose whichever course(s) you think will be most helpful given your current level of expertise with MS Office.

SUPPORT

Members of staff presenting each workshop are always willing to provide additional help. In addition, if you have any problem with the course, please consult the Module Controller.

PS5003 TEACHING TIMETABLE

Week no.	Date	Lecture 9am – 11am, School of Psychology Seminar Room (Room 1.0) unless stated otherwise	Practical session 2pm-5pm, Butts Wynd unless stated otherwise
SEMESTER 1			
1	19 th Sept	Taught Postgraduate Away Day 9.15am to 3.30pm, Byre theatre	
2	26 th Sept	Planning a career in psychology <i>Dr Maggie Ellis</i> (Note: One-hour session 9-10am)	Practical 1 (2-4pm) Bibliographic search; <i>Hilda McNae</i>
3	3 rd Oct	Preparing and giving conference talks <i>Dr Erin Robbins</i>	
4	10 th Oct	Planning a project <i>Prof Klaus Zuberbuhler</i>	Practical 2 Online presence; <i>Dr Ken Mavor and Dr Akira O'Connor</i>
5	17 th Oct	Communication beyond academia <i>TBC</i>	
6	24 th Oct	Independent Learning Week: Microsoft Office online self-study	
7	<u>31st Oct and</u> <u>2nd Nov</u>	Mini-conference Note: BOTH Wednesday and Friday morning sessions, 9am to 1pm <i>Dr Erin Robbins</i>	
8	7 th Nov	Writing and publishing <i>TBC</i>	
9	14 th Nov	Designing a poster presentation <i>TBC</i>	
10	21 st Nov	Getting funding for your research <i>Prof Julie Harris</i>	
11	28 th Nov	Ethics and risk assessment <i>Dr Eric Bowman</i>	Poster session (seminar room)
SEMESTER 2			
1	30 th Jan	CVs and interviews <i>Prof Stephen Reicher</i>	
2	6 th Feb	Mock interviews <i>Prof Stephen Reicher</i>	
3	13 th Feb	Professional conduct <i>Dr Eric Bowman</i>	
4	20 th Feb	Impact and commercialisation <i>TBC</i>	

ASSESSMENT

The module is assessed by coursework only. There are five assignments, including one formative assessment that does not contribute to the module mark. They have all been designed to provide practical experience and skills and to assist preparation of your Master's research project. The summative components will be marked on the University's 20-point scale; written feedback will be returned within 3 weeks.

Activity	Weight %	Deadline
Miniconference talk (date for submitting slides)	25	Tuesday 29 th October, 5pm
Poster (date for submitting electronic version)	25	Tuesday 26 th November, 5pm
Ethics form and risk assessment	Formative only	For the teaching session on 27 th November
Press release assignment	25	Tuesday 12 th November, 5pm
Research proposal	25	Friday 7 th February, 5pm

All assignments should be submitted via MMS by the due date. This includes the talk (powerpoint slides) and poster. Note that the dates for uploading these files to MMS are *before* the miniconference and poster session respectively. However, it will be the 'real thing' that is assessed, not the electronic version. Uploaded assignments should be Word or PowerPoint files rather than PDFs to allow for automatic plagiarism checks, but note that in the case of the poster you will need to convert this to PDF to send for printing (more detail on this is provided below). The feedback deadline will be three weeks from the assessment dates.

The ethics and risk assessment exercises will be evaluated in the lecture: the assignments will be sent out by e-mail in the previous week.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

The University uses a universal grade point scale of 1-20, with the option of using one decimal point. The criteria that will be used are as follows:

Fail	Marginal Pass	Pass	Merit	Distinction
0 - 6.9	7.0 – 10.4	10.5 – 13.4	13.5 – 16.4	16.5 – 20.0

FEEDBACK

All marked work and the accompanying feedback will be returned within 3 weeks. If you find that any feedback you receive is unclear, DO contact the marker (whose initials should be on the feedback for just this purpose). They will explain their comments and will be happy to give you extra guidance.

DETAILED REQUIREMENTS OF ASSESSMENTS

Note that in some cases extra information about these assignments will be given during lectures; and you can always ask if anything is unclear.

Mini-conference presentation (Dr Erin Robbins)

You will each be presenting an empirical project you completed before coming to St Andrews as part of a conference with the other students as audience. Please note that everyone's attendance is **COMPULSORY** throughout the series of presentations (in week 7). We will have 10 min for each talk with an additional 5 min for questions and discussion. Full details of how to prepare a talk in general and for our conference will be given in the lecture (3rd October). Moreover, the marking sheet for this exercise will be provided on MMS for you to see what the markers will be looking for. The talks will be videotaped and your video file will be available in the days following the conference and erased afterwards. The intention is that you can watch yourself how you have performed (please let us know in case you do not like to be taped).

Poster presentation (TBC)

Use the poster to present a display about your *planned* research project: you should be able to explain *why* the area is interesting, *what* topic you are going to investigate, give details of your planned methods of data collection and analysis, and finally *why* the results might be of potential importance. Poster printing cost will be covered by the school. The printing service

on the Scores will expect you (by name!) to provide your poster, in PDF format, for them to print. It can be taken in person or emailed to: printanddesign@st-andrews.ac.uk. In order for your poster to be printed on time, you should provide the PDF file for printing by 10am on Monday 26th November. You will not be charged for printing.

The day of the poster assessment and display is Wednesday 28th November. Your posters, which should be A1 size, must put up before 2pm in the display area of the Seminar Room (the room will be available from 1pm).

Press release (TBC)

Class material will be posted on moodle the week before the class. These examples should give you a good idea of how the press-release process works: have a look at this before the lecture. We will also look at social media as a tool for science communication.

There are three original papers, and for each there is a zip file that includes the press release - sometimes the original draft press release before the University publicity department changed it - and press articles that stemmed from the work. Have a look at least two of these tracing through the changes from the original findings to press output - note what is preserved, what is lost, what is invented. Think about how you could have done better, with 20:20 hindsight!

Your own assignment on press releases should include:

- a) A 300 word summary evaluating the success of an official University press release from 2017: pick something that interests you, anything you like. The assessment should evaluate both whether the press release was an accurate and effective account of the original research, and to what extent it was successful in capturing favourable press attention and ensuring accurate reporting (check as many subsequent articles in the press as possible).
- b) Up to one A4 page (a maximum not a goal) press release for your own past research, this can be any project - something that you did, or even something that you had planned to do. You can then base your 'findings' on either 1. what you really got, or 2. those you imagine that it would have been nice to get. That is, if you want to invent some more exciting results for the press release: for once, such deception is fine! This press release should include a tweet that summarises your research and findings in 140 characters (images may be included).

All work to be submitted in Times Roman 12 font, and as a word or equivalent text document (no pdfs please).

Ethics and Risk (formative assessments, Dr Eric Bowman)

The session given by Dr Eric Bowman will help you to understand how research project proposals are evaluated for ethical concerns and safety risks. During the workshop, the procedures and principles for ethical approval and risk assessment will be presented. In the final part of the workshop, you will be presented with various research scenarios, you will be asked to identify the main ethical and safety issues that might arise from the work, and to suggest a way of minimizing these issues. Prior to the session you should become familiar with the British Psychological Society's [Code of Human Research Ethics \(2014\)](#) and [Guidelines for Psychologists Working with Animals \(2012\)](#). Additionally, you should familiarize yourself with the School of Psychology and Neuroscience's web page for ethics (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/psychology/ethics/>) or the School of Medicine's web page on ethics (<http://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/ethics/>), as appropriate for your intended research project. You should familiarize yourself with the University's web page for ethics of human research (UTREC; <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/>) or for the ethics of animal research (AWEC; <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/research/ethics/animalsinresearch/>), as appropriate for your research project. Finally, you should familiarize yourself with the University's web page on health and safety that includes links to risk assessment forms (<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/policy/healthandsafety/forms/>).

Research proposal

Many research funding bodies have two-phase application procedures. The process typically includes first submitting a short outline, which captures the key elements of the proposed research. If the funder is interested they will accept the outline and invite the applicant to submit a full proposal with all the details of the planned research. In some ways, the outline is therefore the most important element of a grant application.

Your task is to write an outline research proposal, in which ask for funds to carry out a two-year research project. You can choose your own topic. That could be the topic of your proposed project or another you have worked on, but note that this is to be a study of two

years duration so you need to offer a brief proposal appropriate for that. Your final document should be structured in the following way.

- Title: concise and capture what the project is about.
- Background and research objectives (including a brief description of the importance of the proposed research in relation to the state of the field, and impact beyond academia if applicable)
- Methods: Methods and materials to answer the research question.
- Timetable: Schedule for data collection, analysis, publications and any other kinds of dissemination that might be relevant for some projects (e.g. reports or workshops for practitioners).
- Budget: Approximate costing (travel, equipment, consumables).
- References

The total word count should not exceed 1,000 exclusive of references. The reference list should be kept brief with an advisory number of no more than 10. No appendix is allowed for this short proposal.

PREPARATION FOR THE MODULE

If you wish do do some reading in preparation for the module, then the following books and articles may be of interest.

- Bersoff, D.N. (2003). *Ethical Conflicts in Psychology*. American Psychological Association. ISBN 1591470501.
- Brossard, D., & Scheufele, D. A. (2013). Science, new media, and the public. *Science*, 339(6115), 40-41.
- Chapin, P.G. (2004). *Research Projects and Research Proposals: A Guide for Scientists Seeking Funding*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521537169.
- Gregory, J. & S. Miller (2000). *Science in Public: Communication, Culture and Credibility*. Perseus Books. ISBN 0738203572 (paperback).
- Peoples, B. K., Midway, S. R., Sackett, D., Lynch, A., & Cooney, P. B. (2016). Twitter predicts citation rates of ecological research. *PLoS One*, 11(11), e0166570.
- Robbins-Roth, C. (2005). *Alternative Careers in Science: Leaving the Ivory Tower*. London: Academic Press Inc. Ltd. ISBN 0125893760 (paperback).

Sinderman, C.J. (1982). *Winning the Games Scientists Play*. Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers. ISBN 0306410753.

Wager, E., F. Godlee & T Jefferson (2002). *How to Survive Peer Review*. BMJ Books. ISBN 0727916866.

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