

MSc Cognition and Aesthetics



Programme Overview

How do we resonate with art? Why does our connection with nature reduce cognitive overload? Can we design sustainable environments that improve well-being? Can art be a vehicle for social change? How does cutting-edge technology help us address these questions?

If you are interested in real-world issues, the MSc Cognition and Aesthetics in the School of Psychology, in collaboration with colleagues from the arts and digital sciences, is your opportunity to learn how to tackle contemporary and future challenges with a multidisciplinary approach using evidence-based practice.

Forging a connection between Science and Art, this course offers an advanced study of the cognitive processes implicated in our responses to human artefacts, such as art and design, new technologies and the natural environment. The course will provide an opportunity to develop a range of skills and design interventions that are relevant to professional paths in psychology as well as to the cultural, and creative sectors, environmental organisations, and marketing agencies.

The teaching on the course uses lecture, seminar, and workshop formats. Progress is measured through a mix of essay, technical report, portfolio of activities, grant bid and presentation assessment.

Unique features of the course are:

1. Interdisciplinary collaborations across Faculties.
2. Project management in collaboration with stakeholders and grant writing.
3. Advanced research methods which boost your employability profile.
4. Skillset highly transferable across sectors.

Key Information

Award: MSc Cognition and Aesthetics

Study Mode: Full-time or Part-time

Duration: Students are welcome to study full-time or part-time. For full-time study will take 12 months (e.g., October 2024 – October 2025) and part-time 2 years and 1 term (e.g., October 2024 - January 2027).

Intake: October

Entry Criteria: A minimum of a Second-Class Honours degree in Psychology or a related subject with a research component awarded by a UK university, or an equivalent higher education qualification.

Fees and Funding: For tuition fee information, please go to the Student Finance pages at www.hope.ac.uk/postgraduate/

How to Apply: For details on the application process visit: www.hope.ac.uk/postgraduate/howtoapply

School: Psychology

Contact Details:

Student Recruitment,
courses@hope.ac.uk

Disclaimer: Information is correct at time of print, however programme details can change.



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Curriculum

The course spans across four modules which run during two days per week.

Cognition, Aesthetics and Techniques (40 Credits compulsory)

The module explores how we perceive the world and how we integrate information across different senses. This is achieved by considering how perceptual processes underlie our appreciation for a variety of stimuli, from abstract configurations, artworks, to object and space design, music and tactile experiences taken in isolation or integrated in multisensory spaces. Where appropriate, the topics are examined in relation to individual differences, including sensory impairments and neurodiversity. In this module, students will also learn the theoretical and practical aspects of a basket of behavioural and neuroscience tools that are used in different experimental settings as well as in applied scenarios (i.e., cultural sector, creative industries, and marketing agencies).

Cognition, Aesthetics and Project management (40 Credits compulsory)

Aesthetics play an important role in our everyday life as the majority of our choices, whether conscious or not, are grounded on our preferences. The study of cognition and aesthetics will explore cognitive processes underlying our preferences in consideration of individual differences and the context. This is achieved by evaluating the relationship between cognitive functioning and the use of cutting-edge technology (i.e. AI) to propose solutions around issues of social bias, environmental sustainability, health, and well-being. In this module, students will also develop an understanding of research

impact and knowledge exchange and will demonstrate the ability to seek project funding and acquire project management skills.

Advanced Research Design and Analysis (40 Credits compulsory)

The Advanced Research Design and Analysis module helps students to develop research design knowledge with respect to Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed methods designs. The course is taught in a series of workshops where students can learn the theory behind sessions but also gain practical experience at the same time. The course explores more advanced methods for developing questions, and more advanced measurement and analysis techniques using the software R.

Cognition and Aesthetics Dissertation (60 Credits compulsory)

The dissertation module entails supervision of the students for the preparation of their empirical project in the area of cognition and aesthetics. The project can be conducted in the controlled lab environment or in a real setting in collaboration with external stakeholders and participatory groups (artists, curators, designers, etc). The process leading to the delivery of the project and the submission of the thesis involves the writing up of a research proposal and the application for ethical clearance. In addition to the submission of the written thesis, students will disseminate their research to a diverse audience via an oral examination (VIVA).

Research-informed Teaching

The Vision and Cognition Research Group includes staff members with expertise that spans face perception and visual search through to colour

perception, aesthetics, spatial navigation and motor control. We have a wide range of technical expertise that includes the running of behavioural paradigms, the use of eye tracking techniques, to measuring brain function and psychophysiological influences on perception and cognition. Much of our research is conducted in collaboration with external partners and agencies, including Tate Liverpool, National Museums Liverpool, Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, Culture Liverpool, Sefton Council, National Trust, Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA). We actively engage in Open Science practices; we contribute to generate impact in our society and facilitate knowledge exchange.

Future Career Opportunities

The programme provides a strong scientific background in cognition and aesthetics that foster the adoption of evidence-based practices. This places students in the best position to translate understanding of the cognitive functioning underlying preferences and aesthetics adopting a multidisciplinary approach. The course enables students to develop a set of specialised skills leading to a PhD programme or to work in a variety of public and private sectors. There is a strong focus on developing transferable skills; alongside analytical and critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, planning and time management.



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