Course Summary: March 30, 2026

Cognitive Science BSc Honours

- UCAS code: **C859**
- Full time
- 3-4 years

Explore how humans think, learn, behave, and communicate. This interdisciplinary degree combines the study of psychology, linguistics, computer science, and philosophy.

You are currently viewing course information for entry year: **2026**

Next start date:

- September 2026

Tuition fees (Year 1)

- Home: **£9,790**
- International: **£30,900**

Entry requirements and offers

- A-Level: **ABB**
- IB: **32 points**

UCAS Institution name and code:

- NEWC / N21

Undergraduate Open Day

Start your university journey. Find where you belong. Friday, June 26 (9:00-16:00) Saturday, June 27 (9:00-16:00)

Book your place now

Course overview

Are you curious about how the human mind functions? Fascinated by how people communicate effectively? Interested in why technologies aren't always accessible?

Cognitive Science, like psychology, aims to understand the mind's complexities and how the brain's mental processes influence behaviour. It emerged in the 1950s as a response to Behaviourism, which argued that behaviour is shaped by past experiences and conditioning. This theory became difficult to defend, especially for researchers studying language development, which Behaviourism couldn't explain.

Cognitive Science developed as an interdisciplinary field, bringing together insights from psychologists, linguists, computer scientists, and philosophers. This shift led to key breakthroughs in understanding language, perception, memory, and decision-making.

This degree explores key cognitive functions like perception, attention, memory, and language. You'll understand the various methods used to explore behaviour and understand the strengths and limitations of different approaches.

By studying modules from across the University, you'll come to understand:

- The structure and function of the human mind and brain
- The development and evolution of human language and communication
- How AI impacts the way we think and communicate

You'll graduate with the ability to combine critical thinking and problem-solving skills with the knowledge and understanding to reshape our future.

Your course and study experience - disclaimers and terms and conditions
Please rest assured we make all reasonable efforts to provide you with the programmes, services and facilities described. However, it may be necessary to make changes due to significant disruption, for example in response to Covid-19.

View our Academic experience page, which gives information about your Newcastle University study experience for the academic year 2025-26.

See our terms and conditions and student complaints information, which gives details of circumstances that may lead to changes to programmes, modules or University services.

Quality and ranking

Professional accreditation and recognition

All professional accreditations are reviewed regularly by their professional body.

Modules and learning

Modules

The information below is intended to provide an example of what you will study.

Most degrees are divided into stages. Each stage lasts for one academic year, and you'll complete modules totalling 120 credits by the end of each stage.

Our teaching is informed by research. Course content may change periodically to reflect developments in the discipline, the requirements of external bodies and partners, and student feedback.

Optional module availability
Student demand for optional modules may affect availability.

Full details of the modules on offer will be published through the Programme Regulations and Specifications ahead of each academic year. This usually happens in May.

To find out more please see our terms and conditions

You'll be introduced to a broad base of theoretical frameworks. They will set you up with a strong foundation for the rest of your degree. You'll explore cognitive psychology, language structure, philosophy, and basic skills for dealing with quantitative and computational data.

Modules

Compulsory Modules	Credits
Quantitative Methods for Cognitive Science 1	20
Philosophical Approaches to the Humanities and Social Sciences and Critical Reasoning	20

Cognitive Psychology	10
Principles of Evolution, Genetics and Behavioural Development	10
Perception	10
Introduction to the Structure of Language 1: Phonetics, Phonology & Morphology	20
Introduction to Language Structure 2: Syntax, semantics and pragmatics	20
Introduction to Computing	10

You'll delve deeper into language development, current theory and practice in psychological science, and applied data analysis.

You'll choose from a wide range of optional modules to focus in more depth on topics that interest you. Modules will include topics such as social psychology, second language acquisition, philosophy of science, and experimental methods in behavioural science.

Modules

Compulsory Modules	**Credits**
Cognitive Neuroscience	10
Optional Modules	**Credits**
Philosophy and Science	10
Foundations in Developmental Psychology	10
Developmental Psychology	10
Social Psychology	10
Individual Differences	10
Biological Psychology: Sex, Drugs, Rhythms and Blues	10

Psychological Enquiry 2: Principles of Psychology	10
Introduction to Comparative Cognition and Behaviour	10
Syntactic Theory	20
Sociolinguistics	20
Pragmatic Theory	20
CHiLD: Current Hypotheses in Language Development	20
Introduction to Second Language Learning and Teaching	20
Experimental Practicum	20
Being Human: debates, questions and conversations in anthropology	20
Brain and Behaviour across the Lifespan II: Neuropsychology	10

You'll put the knowledge and skills from Stages 1 and 2 into practice. You'll undertake your own research in an independent project with cross-disciplinary supervision. Alongside this, you'll take advanced modules in linguistics and psychology. You'll also have the the option of integrating modules from other disciplines.

Please note: Some modules are currently listed as inactive. These modules are not offered in 2025/26.

Compulsory modules	**Credits**
Empirical Project for Cognitive Science	40
Optional Modules	**Credits**
Career Development for final year students	20
Clinical Sport & Exercise Psychology	20

Neurodiversity of Development	20
The Damaged Brain: Case Studies in Neuropsychology	20
Decision Making and Cooperation: Understanding Our Choices	20
Art, Mind and Brain	20
Shared Minds: Culture, collaboration, and creativity in humans and other animals	20
Advanced Second Language Acquisition	20
Laboratory Phonology	20

You can also take the following modules:

- Origins and Evolution of Language (20 credits)
- The History of Linguistic Ideas (20 credits)
- It's not what you say, it's how you say it: Prosody and intonation (20 credits)
- Comparative Syntax: English in a cross-linguistic context (20 credits)
- From Input to Output: The Blackbox of Child Language Acquisition (20 credits)

Teaching and assessment

Teaching methods

You'll be taught through a combination of:

- lectures
- seminars
- workshops
- computer-based lab sessions
- practical sessions

- field work

Assessment methods

You'll be assessed through a combination of:

- Case studies
- Dissertation or research project
- Essays
- Examinations – practical or online
- Group work
- Presentations
- Reflective report/journal
- Reports
- Seminar tasks/exercises

Skills and experience

You'll learn to integrate and apply theoretical perspectives from core disciples of cognitive science including:

- psychology
- linguistics
- philosophy
- computer science

You'll hone skills in:

- persuasive and scientific writing
- effective presentation of cross-disciplinary research
- quantitative analysis and data visualisation
- basic computer programming

Research skills

In Stage 3 you'll undertake an independent research project. This will be a cross-disciplinary collaborative supervision from at least two core cognitive science

disciplines. It will give you the chance to integrate critical and technical skills to address open questions in cognitive science. This will allow you to produce new and innovative interdisciplinary research. This independent research project also allows you to show your learned knowledge. It'll also allow you to develop your skills, techniques and understanding.

Our staff have world-leading expertise in:

- comparative approaches to human cognition and behaviour
- machine learning and analysis of large-scale behavioural/language datasets
- evolutionary and developmental approaches to human language
- intimacy, sexuality, family, childhood, and education
- digital labour, platform economies and neoliberalism
- media ethics

Opportunities

Professional Placements

You can apply for a professional placement between Stage 2 and Stage 3. This is subject to eligibility. The School of Psychology placement team secure and advertise a wide range of placements. Examples of previous placements have been in the NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria Police, University research institutes and local mental health support charities. National placement opportunities are also advertised, for example, at Great Ormond Street Hospital. If successful in securing a placement, you will be supported by the placement team. They will support you whilst preparing for and undertaking your placement. Placements are an excellent opportunity for you to apply the knowledge and skills you have learned in a practical context. They are an opportunity to gain an important advantage in a competitive job market.

Study Abroad

You can study abroad for a year at a university in a different country. Currently, we have partnership agreements with universities in the US, Canada, and Sweden. We continually expand our global study opportunities. The international study year takes place between Stages 2 and 3. To join the international study you need to apply for a place and numbers are limited.

Find out more information on studying abroad. We will provide further information during your course.

Careers Placements

Get career ready with a work placement and leave as a confident professional in your field. You can apply to spend 9 to 12 months working in any organisation in the world. You'll receive University support from our dedicated team to secure your dream placement. Work placements take place between stages 2 and 3.

You'll gain first-hand experience working in the sector, putting your learning into practice, and developing your professional expertise.

If you choose to take a work placement, it will extend your degree by a year. Your degree title will show you have achieved the placement year. Placements are subject to availability.

Facilities and environment

Facilities

As a Cognitive Sciences student at Newcastle University, you'll be based in the School of Psychology's Dame Margaret Barbour Building. This is located on the University's city-centre campus.

The School of Psychology is around a ten minute walk from Newcastle city centre. It also has great access to libraries, the student union and sports centre facilities.

You'll also have access to our excellent practical facilities in the School, such as:

- a forensic interviewing suite
- a media and behaviour lab
- medical consultation rooms
- psychological testing cubicles

You'll also have access to the linguistics lab in the School of English Literature, Languages and Linguistics. The linguistics lab includes:

- a sociolinguistic interview suite
- a child language acquisition lab
- ultrasound tongue imaging
- state of the art recording equipment

Support

You will have an academic member of staff as a personal tutor throughout your degree. They can help with academic and personal issues.

All first-year students join a study group of approximately 15 students, led by an experienced and trained final-year Psychology student who will also act as your Peer Mentor for your first year.

Your future

Opportunities for diverse career paths

The multidisciplinary nature of this degree will result in a broad and versatile set of skills. The critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills you'll develop will make you an attractive hire in almost any graduate job in the contemporary job market. Cognitive Sciences graduates will be well suited to work in a variety of sectors including:

- artificial Intelligence
- data science
- user experience testing or human computer interaction
- technical and educational consulting

- assistive technology
- healthcare roles in technology, mental health services or administration.
- government policy
- behavioural science or research

Many of our graduates embark on further study, including master's degrees and PhDs. Some go on to pursue careers in academia and research.

Careers support

Our Careers Service is one of the largest and best in the country, and we have strong links with employers. We provide an extensive range of opportunities to all students through our ncl+ initiative.

Visit our Careers Service website

Recognition of professional qualifications outside of the UK

If you're studying an **accredited degree** and thinking about working in Europe after you graduate, the best place to find current information is the UK Government's guidance on recognition of UK professional qualifications in EU member states. This official resource explains whether your profession is regulated in another country, what steps you need to take, and which organisation you should contact.

Find out more...

- Go online for information about our full range of degrees: **www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate**
- Watch videos about student life in Newcastle by visiting our YouTube channel at **www.youtube.com/@newcastleuni**
- Watch a virtual tour of our campus at **https://youtu.be/vJUfHcqB7l8?si=8IUrf7kTxXbgdfr1**
- Book for an Open Day to come and see us in person **www.ncl.ac.uk/openday**
- Contact us online at **www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries** or phone +44 (0)191 208 3333

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