

Module Code	PSU12300
Module Name	Personality and Individual Differences
ECTS credit weighting	5 ECTS
Semester taught	Semester 2 (Hilary Term)
Module Coordinator/s	Dr Kristin Hadfield
Module Learning Outcomes (with embedded Graduate Attributes)	<p>On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define personality and explain the historical development and major theoretical approaches to studying personality and individual differences. 2. Critically evaluate tools and methods for measuring personality and intelligence, including their psychometric properties, strengths, and limitations. 3. Analyse how genetic and environmental factors interact (including diathesis–stress, differential susceptibility, and vantage sensitivity models) to shape personality and intelligence. 4. Distinguish between normal personality variation, subclinical traits, and personality disorders, with reference to current classification systems. 5. Apply personality and intelligence research to real-world contexts, including how individual differences affect behaviour, decisions, and outcomes across the lifespan. 6. Demonstrate skills in academic research and critical writing through the evaluation of psychological measures. 7. Critically analyse research in personality and individual differences. <p>These outcomes map to the programme learning outcome requiring an advanced understanding of personality and individual differences as one of the core areas of psychology, and they embed the Trinity Graduate Attributes (in particular, to Think Independently and to Communicate Effectively) through the critical evaluation of theory and evidence and the development of academic writing skills.</p>
Module Content	<p>This module explores what makes people psychologically different from one another, and why. It looks at how psychologists describe, measure, and explain individual differences in personality and intelligence, and at how those differences shape people’s behaviour and lives. The teaching is organised around five themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality: what personality is, how our understanding of it has developed, and the main ways psychologists describe it (such as the Big Five or HEXACO). This theme also asks where ordinary personality variation ends and personality disorders begin, including traits linked to antisocial behaviour. • Intelligence: the main theories of what intelligence is, how it is measured using IQ tests, and how far it is shaped by genes as opposed to environment. • Genes and environment: how nature and nurture work together rather than separately, using models that help explain why people respond so differently to the same experiences, and why some show resilience. • Measurement: how personality and ability are actually measured (e.g., through questionnaires or ratings by other people), how good tests are built, and the problems that can affect them, such as bias or people faking their answers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications: how individual differences relate to mood and motivation, and how personality and thinking ability change across a person's life. <p>As well as building academic knowledge, the module aims to give students personal insight and an understanding of how these ideas apply in everyday life and in society.</p>								
Teaching and Learning Methods¹	<p>The module is delivered through 22 one-hour lectures across a single semester. Lectures introduce theoretical material and use contemporary research and real-world examples to illustrate how individual differences shape behaviour and outcomes.</p> <p>Students engage with primary empirical literature (see Indicative Reading List) to develop the critical-evaluation and academic-writing skills central to the module. Lecture slides, recordings, and additional resources are made available through Blackboard to support independent study, and in-lecture questions and worked examples provide formative opportunities to check understanding ahead of the summative examination.</p> <p>Lecture-based delivery efficiently conveys the broad conceptual foundation required for the knowledge-based outcomes (LOs 1–5), while directed reading of empirical papers builds the critical-analysis and academic-writing skills assessed by the essay component (LOs 2, 6, and 7). These strategies align with the contact and independent-study hours below and prepare students directly for both the multiple-choice and essay elements of the examination.</p>								
Assessment Details²	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment Component</th> <th>Assessment Description</th> <th>LO(s) Addressed</th> <th>% of total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>In-person written examination</td> <td>An invigilated end-of-module examination comprising multiple-choice questions and essay questions. The MCQ section samples breadth of knowledge across the module; the essay section requires students to construct and critically evaluate arguments.</td> <td>LOs 1–7</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Academic integrity and AI: As a closed, invigilated in-person examination, this assessment inherently limits the scope for unauthorised assistance, including the use of generative AI. The essay component of the exam requires students to synthesise and critically evaluate material in their own words under examination conditions, providing an authentic demonstration of the learning outcomes.</p>	Assessment Component	Assessment Description	LO(s) Addressed	% of total	In-person written examination	An invigilated end-of-module examination comprising multiple-choice questions and essay questions. The MCQ section samples breadth of knowledge across the module; the essay section requires students to construct and critically evaluate arguments.	LOs 1–7	100%
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Contact Hours and Indicative Student Workload³	<p>Contact hours: 22 hours (22 × 1-hour lectures).</p> <p>Independent study: reading of set texts and journal articles, review of lecture material, and consolidation; revision and preparation for, and completion of, the examination (103 hours)</p> <p><i>Total indicative workload ≈ 125 hours, commensurate with the 5 ECTS weighting</i></p>								
Inclusive Curriculum	<p><i>All modules should be inclusive for all students who learn differently. The questions below have been reviewed for this module (☑ = yes).</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have you reviewed the teaching/assessment methods and materials for possible barriers to learning (e.g. students with English as a second language,</p>								

¹Trinity-INC provides tips and resources on how to make your curriculum more inclusive.

²<https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/assessment/>

³https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/assessment_workload/

	<p>disabilities, significant external responsibilities, or those requiring specific accessibility software)?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have you adapted your resources and teaching materials taking into account Trinity's Accessible Information Guidelines?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does the content of your module address diversity (e.g. a diverse demographic profile of authors, diversity of ideas and perspectives, or acknowledgement of the homogenous context of the discipline)?</p> <p>Two ways this module incorporates inclusivity and accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple modes of representation: core ideas are presented through lectures, captioned slides, and a curated set of accessible readings on Blackboard, so that students can engage with the material in the way that best supports their learning. • Diverse and applied content: the syllabus draws on a range of authors and perspectives and explicitly addresses cultural considerations and bias in psychological measurement, while connecting theory to real-world individual differences across the lifespan.
<p>Indicative Reading List (approx. 4–5 titles)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, C. (2020). <i>Individual differences and personality</i>. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. (<i>Recommended text</i>) • Belsky, J., & Pluess, M. (2009). Beyond diathesis stress: Differential susceptibility to environmental influences. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, <i>135</i>(6), 885–908. • Plomin, R., & von Stumm, S. (2018). The new genetics of intelligence. <i>Nature Reviews Genetics</i>, <i>19</i>(3), 148–159. • Tyrer, P., Reed, G. M., & Crawford, M. J. (2015). Classification, assessment, prevalence, and effect of personality disorder. <i>The Lancet</i>, <i>385</i>(9969), 717–726. • Sauce, B., & Matzel, L. D. (2018). The paradox of intelligence: Heritability and malleability coexist in hidden gene–environment interplay. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, <i>144</i>(1), 26. <p><i>Further readings are provided as the module progresses, with additional resources made available on Blackboard and through the Library.</i></p>
<p>Module Pre-requisite</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Module Co-requisite</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Are other Schools/Departments involved in the delivery of this module? If yes, please provide details.</p>	<p>No.</p>