

Do you want to apply to do the MA/MSc in Cognitive Science?

If you think this degree might be for you, please read the following carefully.

Every year we get many applications from eager students with high expectations. These students see the degree as a stepping stone on their chosen career, and they are attracted by the high standing of the university, and the prospect of obtaining a prestigious masters degree.

But many of these students would be bitterly disappointed if we actually admitted them to the programme. Here are some common misperceptions:

[1] This is not a psychology degree

Cognitive science is not the same as psychology. It is an interdisciplinary field, and psychology is one voice at the table, but there are many others, including those that are critical of psychological theory and practice. The degree is absolutely not a stepping stone on the path to becoming an accredited psychologist.

[2] This is not a computer science degree

Cognitive science treats of some issues that overlap with the concerns of artificial intelligence and robotics. But we teach a broad degree to students from diverse backgrounds. We do not assume any computational skills in particular, and we do not teach you how to program, or to develop technology. This is not a degree in artificial intelligence.

[3] This is not a clinical degree

In our masters, you will learn nothing about cognitive behavioural therapy. There is no part of our degree that contributes towards becoming a member of the caring professions, including clinical psychology, psychotherapy, and the like. This degree does not offer that.

[4] This is not a vocational degree

Our university offers many degrees that are tailored for the needs of industry. These have content that is matched to specific requirements of companies, and students taking those degrees have high expectations of obtaining employment as a direct result of their study. The cognitive science degree is not one of those degrees, and it is not designed with the needs of industry in mind. It will probably not lead directly to a placement in industry. (If you want an industry-facing degree, you might consider our masters in computer science by negotiated learning or our masters in computer science (conversion) degrees).

We offer a broad range of courses. If you are interested in applying, please familiarise yourself with our course offering first. You will find that we have a strong emphasis on philosophy and the foundational issues that arise when people from different fields try to establish some common ground. If you have a primary specialisation, we can offer breadth to that, so that if you go on to do research, e.g. towards a PhD, you will do so with an interdisciplinary sensibility. This is excellent grounding for those with ambitions to do a PhD (But note: completion of the masters does not grant you entry to our PhD programme!).

If after all this you believe that our degree is aligned with your training and goals, we are happy to consider your application!