

# A week in the life of a Psychology and Counselling student

**Eileen, a third year Psychology and Counselling student, talks us through what a standard week in her life is like.**

As I'm in my final year, we have fewer lectures as the dissertation accounts for half of our options. I've don't have any lessons on Monday, so I can spend that time working studying or working on my assignments.

On Tuesday morning we have Expressive Therapies; this is all about different types of creative therapies

such as art, music or drama therapy.

This is one of the

optional modules you will be able to choose in your third year. Last week the session was on Drama Therapy with a live performance from a group called Playback Theatre. This week was about outdoor therapy, so we had a lecture about the theory and how the discipline developed,

followed by an outdoor session: an experiential session on Shinrin Yoku (Japanese Forest Bathing)! We all came dressed for a walk in the woods—which meant boots, hats and brollies to be fully prepared for a Mancunian winter's day! We set off for the wooded area over on the main campus and spent an hour or so on various mindfulness-type activities exploring the area. It was actually a powerful experience, finding such an oasis of calm in such a built-up area;

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the noises of the traffic disappeared and were replaced by birds tweeting! We ended the session building a kind of monument to nature out of the sticks and branches we found.

On Wednesday I had a meeting with Sam the Psychology technician to discuss the equipment I have



*a Mancunian winter's day")*



chosen to use for my dissertation. I am using functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS for short!) to investigate brain activity in specific areas of the brain while participants do particular tasks. The equipment does this by measuring changes in blood oxygenation levels. Salford is quite unique in that students can use any of the equipment we are interested in for our dissertations; there are a three dedicated Psychology technicians who are always available to show is how to use the equipment and help us to set up our experiments. I have taken part in a few of my fellow students' experiments for their dissertations; they can return the favour now I've got mine ready to go!

I am also off on Thursdays this year, so in September I started volunteering as a telephone counsellor at Childline. The training was very intense, taking until the end of

November to complete and I started my volunteer shifts, on Thursday afternoons/evenings in December. It really is rewarding, and the training is excellent. It's great to actually put some of the skills I have learned on my counselling modules into practice, and it will be great to have as experience on my cv for when I finish at uni.

On Friday afternoon I have the psychology module 'Brain and Behaviour'. We had load of modules to choose from including social, developmental, and forensic psychology. I have really enjoyed the biological modules so chose this for my last module. I was amazed at how much biology was involved in the study of psychology. In this module we are looking at the relationship between behaviour and the nervous system, and looking at things like the effect on behaviour of damage to particular areas of the brain.