

# Employability in the first degree: The role of work placements on students' perceptions of graduate employability

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*Employers often claim that graduates are not ready for the world of work as they lack employability skills (Archer & Davison, 2008). One policy response to this claim has been to encourage students to undertake a work placement to enhance success in the competitive job market (The Dearing Report, 1997). The present research investigated whether psychology students, who were enrolled on an undergraduate degree programme that included a one-year work placement, understood the advantages and disadvantages of work placements and perceived its impact on employability. We present questionnaire data from 49 undergraduates at different stages of their degree programme – pre- and post-placement. Generally, students perceived the employability benefits of the work placement. However, there were differences in how these were articulated by pre- and post-placement students, with post-placement students able to use more concrete terms. This suggests that there is some development throughout the applied degree, but emphasis needs to be placed on training students how to demonstrate the skills they have developed through the work placement to potential employers.*

**Keywords:** *Employability; work placement; thematic content analysis; psychology.*

**S**OCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS such as recession, increased tuition fees, and changes to student funding have brought graduate employability to the forefront of academic, industrial, and political focus in the UK, especially in the past decade (Association of Graduate Recruitment, 2010; Confederation of British Industry, 2007; see also National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). The research previously undertaken in this area has generally focused on asking employers what they look for in graduates (e.g. Archer & Davison, 2008), how employers perceive the graduates seeking employment (High Fliers Research Ltd., 2013), and how the present state of the economy impacts graduate employability (Coughlan, 2013). Current research is rather limited in considering the perspective of the graduate her/himself (e.g. Tymon, 2013) but this perspective is important to consider. It is this perspective in particular that the current research focuses on, as it affords professionals in an advisory role (e.g. career advisors,

academics, personal tutors, etc.) an advantage to better guide and motivate students through the employment and recruitment process. Therefore, our work specifically aims at uncovering how students perceive their future employability, and how this changes over the course of the degree. In particular, we explored students' perceptions of the extent to which a work placement, included in an applied degree programme, will contribute to their employability, and the advantages and disadvantages related to undertaking a work placement.

The most recent statistics portray an exceptionally competitive job market for graduate students. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2013), over 350,000 graduate degrees were obtained in the year 2012/13; whereas, the number of graduate vacancies was estimated at just under 17,000 for the year 2013 (High Fliers Research Ltd., 2013), and expected to rise to just over 18,000 in 2014 (High Fliers Research Ltd., 2014). Whilst the graduate market responds to this increase in gradu-

ates, with employers adding more entry-level vacancies year by year, the number of graduates entering the market is also increasing incrementally (Universities UK, 2013). Purcell and Elias (2004) found that, seven years after graduating, over three-quarters of graduates were in employment or self-employment, suggesting that a long-term view of employability may be positive. However, in such a competitive environment, getting on the first step of the career ladder seems challenging. This further heightens the importance of the skills and attributes graduates may need to demonstrate over and above their degree attainment. It seems clear that, to stand out as a good recruit, a Bachelor's degree alone is not enough.

The Dearing Report (1997, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education) was among the first official reports to suggest that graduates need to go beyond just obtaining a degree in order to be more employable. Further research attests that academic qualifications are merely the 'first tick in the box' (Brown, 2002). It is graduates who exhibit attainment beyond the degree that employers look for (e.g. Hugh-Jones, 2008). For example, Pegg et al. (2012) consider the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) perspective that employers define 'employability skills' as: business and customer awareness, problem solving, communication and literacy, application of numeracy, application of IT skills, entrepreneurship, and a 'can-do' attitude (see also Trapp et al., 2011). To enhance such skills, a key recommendation from the Dearing Report was that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should encourage students to complete some form of work experience during their degree (recommendation 18, paragraph 9.26). Furthermore, a recent study has shown that 63 per cent of graduates with a 2.1 degree (as opposed to a 2.2) **plus** a work placement were in graduate level employment six months post-graduation, compared to only 33 per cent of those with an equivalent degree classification but no work placement (Moore & Reddy, 2012).

This provides support for the intuitive idea that carrying out a work placement can enhance graduate recruitment prospects or employability.

It is important to consider that employability is not simply the 'ability to get a job', it combines a mixture of 'achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment, and be successful in their chosen occupation' (Yorke, 2004, p.7). This definition reflects that one of the key ingredients in employability is graduates' ability to function in the labour market (Yorke, 2004). This is echoed in situations where graduates are falling short of employer expectations, where there is a mismatch between the business needs expressed by organisations and the competencies graduates offer (Archer & Davidson, 2008). At present this is something that still pervades the current graduate employment market, as employers state that graduates are not ready for the world of work (Tyson, 2013), and are particularly lacking in their professionalism (e.g. Hugh-Jones, 2008). This research extends existent literature as it investigates students' perceptions of why work placements make them more attractive to prospective employers, and how this changes over the course of the degree programme.

As we have highlighted in our review so far, most of the research into graduate employability focuses on the graduate employer and its views of graduates, but overlooks the graduates' own understanding of the process. A recent exception is the work of Tyson (2013), who has investigated undergraduates studying business and found that whilst many students recognised that work experience was critical for employability at all stages of the degree; this view was most evident in the final year. Tyson (2013) concluded that these undergraduates were aware of employers' values, and that this awareness develops throughout the degree (see also Jackson, 2013; Johnson & Burden, 2003; Taylor, 2005). It is possible that business undergraduates are more exposed to employ-

ment matters, the importance of employability skills development, and the current labour market and related issues – this possibility is reflected in the Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark (General Business and Management, QAA, 2007). Therefore, further work is required to understand the students' perspective from other disciplines too, and also with an explicit focus on the motivations for undertaking a work placement, and how perceptions of its tangible value change across degree stages.

## Overview

Previous research in the area of graduate employability is mostly divided between what employers want from graduates, and what governmental policy makers or advisors suggest HEIs should do in order to meet these employer needs. The employer view is that, in general, graduate employability is lacking and that students are not entering the labour market equipped with the necessary skills to carry out the work (e.g. Hugh-Jones, 2008). Policy makers' view is that HEIs need to do more to prepare graduates for the labour market and that encouraging undergraduate students to undertake work placements or internships may provide the solution (The Dearing Report, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). However, the vastly underrepresented view is that of the students themselves, and it seems that only recently has research turned its focus on this matter for students of business studies. The suggestion that all HEIs should encourage work experience assumes that students are aware of its benefits to their employability, and can capitalise on it, but it is unclear whether or not this is actually the case.

The present research expands on the previous work of Tymon (2013) and Jackson (2013) by investigating psychology undergraduate students' perceptions of employability – specifically students enrolled on an applied sandwich degree (in this case the third year of a four-year degree is undertaken in a work placement). We focus on

whether students who are completing work experience during their degree perceive the benefits of this experience for their employability and graduate employment prospects. We ask students at the pre-placement and post-placement stage of this degree for their perceptions of work placements and employability to understand how the experience shapes their understanding.

## Method

### *Participants*

We recruited 49 undergraduate students enrolled on the Applied Psychology degree (a four-year course, where the third year is spent working in a work placement) to answer an online survey in return for £3 incentive. The participants comprised 42 women and seven men, who ranged in age between 18 and 30 years ( $M=20.49$ ,  $SD=1.84$ ). The sample consisted of: (1) 26 post-placement students (100% of those registered); and (2) 23 pre-placement students who were enrolled on the applied degree, but were studying their first or second year of the degree at the time of the questionnaire (52.27 per cent of those registered for the degree).

### *Materials and procedure*

The survey included the following four open-ended questions (in this order): (1) 'What made you consider the applied degree?' (2) 'What are the advantages of going on a work placement?' (3) 'What are the disadvantages of going on a work placement?' and (4) 'What employability skills do you think you have developed [are/will be developing] through your work placement?' The first two questions were included with the aim of identifying students' perspectives on the applied degree from an applicant perspective and from a practical perspective. The questions were chosen to gain insight as to how students themselves perceive the work placement year and impact on their own employability. This allows us to better understand what the students feel they are achieving and whether HEIs are suitably preparing gradu-

ates for the labour market. We expected that students who were on the placement, or had been on the placement year in the past would be more able to reflect on their skills in light of employer needs and expectations.

### Data analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to identify themes within the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). The thematic content analysis was performed independently on all four questions, as they were designed to identify unique aspects of a work placement experience. These were later merged to allow an analysis by development throughout the degree. This meant that the analysis was also separated by pre-placement and post-placement student responses. Pre-placement group comprised of applied degree students who were yet to undertake a work placement and were studying in their first or second year of the degree at the time of the questionnaire. Post-placement group comprised of applied degree students who were on placement or in the final year of the degree, having completed the work placement. The analysis was primarily exploratory, the research aim of gaining insight into student perceptions of employability guided theme generation.

The initial stage of analysis involved familiarisation with the data, whereby the first author of this paper read responses for each question several times and organised meaningful segments that related to the research question or salient responses under themes. The themes generated were: Career Development; Academic Achievement; Personal and Social Aspects; and Research Experience. The analysis compared the themes generated, and the contents within each theme, by pre-placement vs. post-placement students. This allowed for an assessment of the development of knowledge and ideas as the students progressed through the applied degree.

### Results

The responses were used as descriptors in cases where they were very brief, and these were grouped into broader themes. For

example, several participants reported 'gaining experience' or wanting to 'improve the chances of getting a job' so such descriptors were grouped under the theme Career development. The results below consider the content for each theme.

#### Career development

Across all four questions, post-placement students report 164 career development related descriptors (representing 38 per cent of all descriptors), compared with 123 (representing 29 per cent of all descriptors) reported by pre-placement students. The notable variation between the pre- and post-placement students was when asked about the competencies they thought that they would develop/had developed through undertaking the work placement.

Regardless of whether pre- or post-placement, the vast majority of participants, reported career development benefits such as gaining experience and improving chances of getting a job, as the main reasons for choosing the applied degree, as well as the advantages of going on a one year work placement, with little difference in the responses between pre- and post-placement students. Examples include:

*The fact that I would be able to gain some relevant experience of psychology in the applied field with the supervision of a professional psychologist. (pre-placement).*

*I wanted a career in Clinical Psychology and knew that having this sort of experience would give me a better change of achieving this (pre-placement).*

*To increase my chances of employment after my degree (post-placement).*

*Also, like I said before, a lot of employers prefer, if not demand, experience from their candidates and although placements don't give you much client contact due to confidentiality issues it does give you a good head start and offers great signposting to organisations where you may be able to get the client contact through volunteer work (post-placement).*

In addition, when asked about the employability skills gained on a work placement, post-

placement participants not only reported more skills, but also more skills specific to the workplace. For example, administrative responsibilities, leadership development, planning tasks, and role specific duties like auditing. None of these skills were mentioned by pre-placement students, who simply describe that they will gain workplace experience and are likely to improve time management and communication but see little else relating to career development as stemming from the work placement.

*I hope to learn what it's like to have a relevant job to the career I want to pursue, giving me the necessary skills that I'll need for when it's time to find a paid full-time job (pre-placement).*

*With the placement I should also increase my communication (pre-placement).*

*Experience of working in a multi-disciplinary team and liaising somewhat with external agencies (e.g. community mental health/social services) (post-placement).*

*I am learning a great understanding of the NHS services, which would benefit me in the future (post-placement).*

These findings suggest that post-placement participants gain more employability skills than they might expect. Crucially, this demonstrates that work experience does indeed allow students to better communicate and reflect on the competencies they have developed. This suggests that there may be an opportunity for HEIs to provide some form of mentoring, that post-placement students could offer to pre-placement students and prospective applicants. Such mentoring could both increase the pre-placement students' awareness of what they can expect on the work placement, why they should consider a work placement, and would also help post-placement students to articulate their experiences and explain to others how their experiences have benefited them on returning to university.

#### **Personal and social aspects**

Personal and social aspects were not frequently mentioned as a positive outcome of the applied degree or work placement,

but were the most frequently cited disadvantage that students saw to doing a work placement (representing 19 per cent of all descriptors). Importantly, pre-placement participants were considering structural issues to the extra year of the degree (e.g. the difficulties that might arise in returning to study), whilst those in the post-placement phase were much more focussed on the social connections and the importance of the academic community. The descriptors relating to personal and social aspects include examples such as:

*Not having all your friends around in the fourth year and having to find somewhere to live possibly without people you know (pre-placement).*

*You need to take a year out of studies which may make it difficult to get back into the habit of studying upon return (pre-placement).*

*Time spent away from friends, feel like you miss out (post-placement).*

*You do feel separated from university and the university life (post-placement).*

These findings suggest that it is important for HEIs to also address the social and community aspects of a work placement for degree students on a work placement. Academic community is a vital part of degree success, and these results highlight how important it is to help placement students stay connected during their time away, and also help them to reintegrate on their return to full time study.

#### **Academic achievement**

Students at both stages of the degree highlighted similar academic achievements such as having the opportunity to deepen learning and improve employability skills, such as writing and computing abilities, whilst taking a year away from studying. Examples include:

*A break from academic study, hopefully will be more motivated in final year, provide a focus for final year (pre-placement).*

*The research project can also help us with our final year project (pre-placement).*

*Potential to achieve a good mark that will count*

*towards final degree... Greater understanding of theory (post-placement).*

*I wasn't sure I was ready for the final year (post-placement).*

Only a small number of post-placement students (and one pre-placement student) mentioned the fact that it may help to increase their final year marks. There is research to suggest that in general, this is the case (see Reddy & Moores, 2011), but this aspect is not clear to the students who are undertaking the work placements – not even for those who have returned to study for their final year. In fact, in this case the responses seem to suggest that pre-placement students are more confident that this will be the case than the post-placement students. This in turn poses the question, why are post-placement students not as certain about this? This perhaps reiterates the need for more support on return to the academic setting, and also suggests that HEIs could better prepare such students for the benefits of a placement on academic achievement.

### ***Research experience***

In general, there was the acknowledgement that students pre- and post-placement felt they would gain/had gained experience in carrying out research projects, collecting and analysing data and perhaps writing this up in a report style format. Examples include:

*Ability to conduct research (pre-placement).*

*I think I would learn more about statistical packages (pre-placement).*

*Learn to use methods, techniques and equipment which wouldn't be exposed to at university (post-placement).*

*A better understanding of the preparation involved in research (post-placement).*

The analysis demonstrates that pre-placement students are aware of the benefits of a work placement in developing research skills. Importantly, post-placement participants are much more concrete about these advantages, articulating how specifically the work placement has helped them develop

research skills and the demonstration of these skills. This demonstrates how the experience of a work placement can help students better reflect on their personal development and achievements.

In general, the analysis suggests that there are core competencies that students consider when asked about their expected or actual experiences on a degree with a work placement component. These competencies do not vary widely depending on the stage of the degree, but what does vary is the concreteness of examples within each theme. Students post-placement seem better able to articulate what competencies they have developed due to work experience. Critically, students post-placement are also articulating a greater sense of separation from the academic community than is perhaps expected before going on placement.

### **General discussion**

Current findings indicated that students at both pre- and post-placement most frequently mentioned aspects relating to future career development when describing the benefits of a work placement. This was followed by personal and social aspects, academic achievement, and finally research experience. The level of concreteness of examples was somewhat greater for students in the post-placement phase, probably reflecting standard transition but also a potential mismatch between expectations and reality of the experience. Importantly, there was a notable difference when asked about the disadvantages of the work placement, where the majority of descriptors were in the personal and social attributes theme. For most themes there are only slight variations in the number of descriptors students at the pre- and post-placement stages of the degree mention. The overall similarity between students' knowledge and understanding may suggest that the students who are taking the degree with a work placement base their decision on the fact that this degree will benefit their future employ-

ability. However, there are also areas that HEIs may need to address. Current findings suggest that students understand that gaining work experience is of value to their employability, and is an attribute that employers are looking for, but they show an inability to communicate the experiences gained on the work placement to their future applications or employment.

Similar observations have been noted by employers who found it frustrating that students have the capacity, but are unable to market themselves well and show evidence of their skills (e.g. Hugh-Jones, 2008). Current research is thus consistent with previous findings and emphasises a gap in students' abilities to increase their own employability. It opens up numerous avenues for potential intervention by HEIs and career advisors to assist students in bridging this gap. This research also demonstrates the importance of understanding how the conceptualisation and value of the work placement varies along the journey. Past work placement students have the benefit of working for a year in a placement, making the transition back to university and the awareness of how the skills developed on work placement are impacting their final year studies and job prospects. There is the potential for final year students to act as mentors to current and future placement students to also assist in highlighting skill development and the benefits of a work placement. This may stand to better prepare the pre-placement students for what to expect on the work placement, as well as highlight areas other than 'gaining work experience' that the work placement has to offer.

As mentioned by Trapp et al. (2011), any form of work experience is potentially beneficial to the study of psychology and a degree in psychology is relevant for life long improvement not just getting a job, but this may not be clear to students. In turn this may be hindering them in making the relevant link between their experiences and further learning or job prospects. With this in mind, mentoring may give post-placement students

the opportunity to start talking about their experiences in more reflective terms and explain how the work placement has impacted their study during the final year. This may in turn help them to practice in marketing themselves effectively. Additionally, Reddy and Moores (2011) found that taking a one-year work placement actually improved students' final year academic achievement. However, the current research found that there were few acknowledgements of this, and that this knowledge was particularly scarce in pre-placement students. This suggests that it is neither clear to students, nor benefit enough to negate the negative effect of the personal and social aspects mentioned, such as losing contact with friends or not knowing anyone on the return to study. Again, this highlights the potential need for some form of mentoring or reintegration support for students taking the applied degree, in order to give these concerns some perspective. This may also be of benefit to the post-placement students who will have the opportunity to form a network back at the university, making the transition after the work placement smoother.

Current findings also indicated that, although pre- and post-placement students do not differ much in the **types** of descriptors they used, there were some differences highlighted in **how** these descriptors were used. For example, students who were actively taking part in the placement were able to identify different skills compared to those who have completed work placements. This may have implications for how graduates are monitoring their progress and how they translate their experiences to employers. Research has stated that in addition to undertaking the work placement, the graduate must develop the ability to show what they have learned and how they have achieved this. Hugh-Jones (2008) reported one employer's view that 'equipping students with the skills matters little unless individuals know how to promote those skills'; that is, graduates are more attractive

to potential employers if they not only possess the skills but can articulate learning them and give evidence of how they have used them (Yorke, 2004).

Furthermore, students agreed with employers that such skills are not well developed during their degree (Johnson & Burden, 2003). It may then be necessary to look into the forms of personal development review and planning that students are undertaking alongside their work placement and degree. There is a clear need for students to be able to track and give evidence of the skills they have developed, and show potential employers how they have developed. As Hugh-Jones (2008) noted, employers were dissatisfied with the way psychology graduates were able to self-market their skills, suggesting that candidates were often good on paper, but unable to give evidence of their unique talents. It may then be the case that some form of embedded review process, within the work placement degree (or other programmes), would assist students in being able to track their development, give evidence of skills learnt, and better articulate their unique selling points to employers. For example, getting students to create personal development plans that are updated periodically with the support of the HEI and careers service may be one solution to this problem.

Furthermore, Landrum and Harrold, (2003) reported studies in the US which found that employers of psychology graduates are looking for the following key skills and abilities: Listening skills; teamwork; getting along with others; willingness to learn; willing to learn new skills; focus on customer/client; interpersonal skills; adaptability to changing situations; ability to suggest solutions to problems; and implement these solutions (see also Pegg et al., 2012). The current results show that only two of these abilities (teamwork and interpersonal skills) were mentioned by the participants, suggesting that students may not differ much in their perceptions of the skills and abilities they will develop on a work

placement, but there is still a large difference between their views and the views of potential future employers. Again, PDP may offer some assistance in bridging this gap, allowing students to continually update their skills and experiences as and when they develop them, and keep an ongoing reflection of their progress, perhaps preventing them from being forgotten or seen as less relevant when newer skills are developed.

### **Limitations and future directions**

Our study, of course, is not without its limitations. The present study only asked the perceptions of psychology students at one HEI, on the work placement degree, and thus, may not be representative of students enrolled on other degrees. However, there is support from previous research that focussed only on business students (Jackson, 2013; Tymon, 2013) that may indicate that the degree subject is not the key facet in students' perceptions of employability. Future research should compare the understanding of employability skills development in students in different HEIs. In addition, the development and evaluation of intervention strategies should be developed, for example, better highlighting expectations for future students and mechanisms for preventing problems with re-integration within the academic community.

Besides testing our research on different degree subjects and HEIs, another useful addition to the present work would be to investigate the perceptions of a group who are not undertaking a formal work placement as part of their degree. The personal and social aspects that students mentioned may indicate aspects that cause reluctance to undertake work placements, but in order to see if this is the case, a necessary future study would need to compare applied degree students with non-applied degree students, and also follow up with the same cohort as they progress through the degree. In other words, the length of the work placement or volunteering work may differentially affect students' perceptions of their employability.



Future research should thus include conditions in which students are undertaking a non-applied degree. In addition, it would be useful to track one cohort longitudinally across their degree programme and experience, to avoid cohort effects impacting the results.

We also note that many of the responses collected were brief and students did not elaborate on their reasoning, a contrast to the work of Tomlinson (2006), who was able to elicit richer detail through using interview methods. Future research could use more quantitative methods to better understand relationships between factors and/or focus-oriented methodologies (i.e. interview) to directly ask for more details on how students perceive their own employability, and also whether they feel that they are able to articulate their development effectively in relation to future study and gaining employment. Our results suggest that students themselves seem to be able to recognise the potential of the work placement in increasing employability, but do not articulate this in a very concrete way.

Akhurst (2005) suggested that HEIs place too much emphasis on the academic qualifications, which is at the cost to the employer who must then supply training and management of the new recruits. This implies that HEIs should be helping their students to hone their skills and do more to equip them with the ability to articulate their development to employers. Further study could also look at how HEIs feel their work placement students are developing, and in line with the suggestion that mentoring may help students to articulate their development, this could be a process overseen and guided by the HEI. Trapp et al. (2011) outline the need for psychology students to understand the relevance of the degree to the 'real world' – an area in which work placements may be particularly relevant. However, there was disagreement recorded amongst members of the steering group as to whether this should be the aim of the

degree. This may suggest a disparity within the discipline, from some teachers of psychology who perhaps do not match the perceptions of the students with regards to the importance of work placements or the holistic aim of the degree (Trapp et al., 2011). This may suggest that academic centres themselves need to recognise the value of the work placement in the same terms that students and employers do, and in turn foster a reflective, developmental aspect to the degree programmes. Such a focus may allow students to develop beyond just the acknowledgement of skills and experiences gained on placement into clearly articulated employability skills. As a result of this, students may have the opportunity to prepare for applications and interviews, with the guidance and support of the psychology faculty at their own HEI.

Personal development planning (PDP) has been identified as a method of personal reflection that may help students in making the link between what they have learnt in the classroom with the needs of the industry (Harvey & Green, 1994). As Hugh-Jones (2008) states, employers often use competency based interviews to test the graduates ability to not only demonstrate their skills, but show that they have reflected on past performance and are able to use this to enhance future performance, noting that employers consider development monitoring an expected part of working life. A key use of PDP would be to allow students to reflect upon their progress and make links between their learning and how this evidences job related skills, helping to clarify their unique selling point. Future research could ask students what form of PDP they prefer to engage in both academically and on the work placement, and whether they feel that this is of use to them in preparing themselves for job applications and interviews. This may reveal further implications for how HEIs and students can work together to foster graduate employability.

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The British Psychological Society  
Conferences & Events

## Organised by BPS Conferences

BPS conferences are committed to ensuring value for money, careful budgeting and sustainability

2014

CONFERENCE	DATE	VENUE	WEBSITE
Psychology4Students – Sheffield	20 November	Mercure Sheffield	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/p4s">www.bps.org.uk/p4s</a>
Psychology4Students – London	2 December	Kensington Town Hall, London	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/p4s">www.bps.org.uk/p4s</a>
Psychology4Graduates	3 December	Kensington Town Hall, London	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/p4g">www.bps.org.uk/p4g</a>
Division of Clinical Psychology	3–5 December	Radisson Blu Hotel, Glasgow	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dcp2014">www.bps.org.uk/dcp2014</a>

2015

Division of Occupational Psychology	7–9 January	Hilton Glasgow	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dop2015">www.bps.org.uk/dop2015</a>
Faculty for People with Intellectual Disabilities	29 Apr–1 May	The Oxford Hotel	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/fpid2015">www.bps.org.uk/fpid2015</a>
Annual Conference	5–7 May	ACC, Liverpool	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/ac2015">www.bps.org.uk/ac2015</a>
Division of Forensic Psychology	1–3 July	Manchester Metropolitan University	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dfp2015">www.bps.org.uk/dfp2015</a>
Division of Counselling Psychology	10–11 July	Majestic Hotel, Harrogate	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dcop2015">www.bps.org.uk/dcop2015</a>
Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section	2–4 September	Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/qmip2015">www.bps.org.uk/qmip2015</a>
Developmental Section & Social Section	9–11 September	The Palace Hotel, Manchester	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/devsoc2015">www.bps.org.uk/devsoc2015</a>
Division of Health Psychology	16–18 September	Radisson Blu Portman, London	<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk/dhp2015">www.bps.org.uk/dhp2015</a>