



Master of Arts in Psychoanalysis

Handbook

April 2026

Introduction

Master of Arts in Psychoanalysis

The MA in Psychoanalysis is suited for individuals who are interested in exploring the human psyche and gaining a deeper understanding of how individuals think, feel, and behave. It may complement the studies of those with training or experience in mental health or counselling professions — such as psychologists, social workers, or therapists — as well as those who wish to apply psychoanalytic theory and techniques in fields such as art, literature, or film.

The programme joins some of the most reputable contemporary thinkers in psychoanalysis to introduce different positions in the psychoanalytic landscape. Its aim is to create a dialogue between different understandings of psychoanalysis, apply psychoanalysis to problems beyond the individual subject, and develop models of understanding the human mind in its interaction with the world beyond single psychoanalytic positions.

This is achieved by drawing on classical and contemporary approaches — including Jungian, Freudian, Lacanian, Deleuzian, and Winnicottian positions — interpreted by contemporary figures such as Bruce Fink, Todd McGowan, and Jamieson Webster, among others. The programme empowers students to understand psychoanalysis as a tool for critical analysis of the human condition, navigating topics from religious phenomena and literature to clinical case studies and contemporary political crises.

In all cases, students should be prepared to pursue substantial academic studies.

Entry requirements

Education Requirements

Candidates must hold an EQF 6 level degree. Students with relevant experience or other forms of learning may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning at the time of admission.

Language Requirements

English language competency at IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required of all applicants.

Instructional design

Teaching: The programme combines asynchronous components — including lecture videos, assigned readings, and written assignments — with synchronous sessions in which students and instructors meet via video call to discuss the course materials. Students have direct access to their teacher and peers at all times through direct messaging and group chat.

Assessment: Assessment is of two kinds: regular (continuous evaluation of submitted assignments, weighted at 60%) and cumulative (a final project, written examination, or oral examination, weighted at 40%). For the Psychoanalysis Dissertation, both the supervising instructor and a second faculty member grade the work independently.

Degree structure

The degree consists of 10 taught modules totalling 30 ECTS and a compulsory 60 ECTS Psychoanalysis Dissertation, for a total of 90 ECTS.

Module	ECTS	Level
Introduction to Psychoanalysis	3	EQF 7
The Freudian Tradition: Psychoanalysis and the Body	3	EQF 7
Psychoanalysis and Literature	3	EQF 7
Desire and Its Interpretations	3	EQF 7
Psychoanalysis and Religion	3	EQF 7
Psychoanalysis and Eastern Philosophies	3	EQF 7
The Jungian Tradition: Symbols and Synchronicity	3	EQF 7
Topics in Psychoanalysis	3	EQF 7
Figures in Psychoanalysis	3	EQF 7
Independent Study in Psychoanalysis	3	EQF 7
Psychoanalysis Dissertation	60	EQF 7

Module Descriptions

1. Introduction to Psychoanalysis

This module introduces fundamental concepts and figures in the psychoanalytic tradition. It sets off from the understanding of the mind's division into consciousness and the unconscious, advancing into concepts such as dreams and their interpretation across different schools of psychoanalysis, the pleasure principle, the death drive, and the role of symbols. The module also examines the historical development of

psychoanalysis, tracing the core concepts of Jungian and Freudian psychology and their continuing development in contemporary scholarship.

Learning Outcomes

1. Create critical contextualised discussions of key issues related to psychoanalysis.
2. Apply a scholarly approach to research problems pertaining to psychoanalysis.
3. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to psychoanalysis.

2. The Freudian Tradition: Psychoanalysis and the Body

In the twenty-first century, the body is the arena for political contestation: who receives care and who is exposed to risk, who is excluded and who has rights. Returning to Freud's early thoughts on "conversion" shows a landscape where the question of the body is always tied to a demand for radical structural change. "Conversion" was part of the very creation of the unconscious and was also the source of working through in psychoanalysis. From Freud's early definition of conversion to his notion of the drive on the frontier of the somato-psychic, to Lacan's distrust of knowledge exemplified in the symptom's symbolic over-interpretation, this module re-considers the centrality of the body in psychoanalytic process.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of Freud.
2. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to contemporary psychoanalysis.
3. Solve problems and be prepared to take leadership decisions related to the study of the body in the psychoanalysis process.

3. Psychoanalysis and Literature

This module applies psychoanalytic theories to the analysis of film and literature, with special focus on the expression of desire in contemporary, postmodern media. It examines the effects of capitalism on the subject from a psychoanalytic standpoint and challenges students to apply psychoanalytic theory to contemporary examples. The module focuses on in-depth readings of G.W.F. Hegel, Jacques Lacan, Sigmund Freud, and Todd McGowan, combining theory with readings from Hegel and other philosophers to create a foundation for critical engagement with contemporary media.

Learning Outcomes

1. Apply a scholarly approach to analysing film and literature using psychoanalytic theories.
2. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to literature and psychoanalysis.
3. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the psychoanalytic study of literature and film.

4. Desire and Its Interpretations

Based on Lacan's Seminar VI, this module investigates the theoretical cornerstones of the Lacanian interpretation of Freud's concept of desire and its applications in therapeutic and theoretical practice. Students study with experienced clinicians and work on real-life examples to apply their knowledge of Lacanian theory. The module positions desire as a central pillar of the subject's unconscious constitution, exploring its interplay with the death drive, *jouissance*, and the unconscious. Students develop in-depth fluency in Lacan's core concepts and are enabled to apply Lacanian psychoanalysis to clinical practice and social critique.

Learning Outcomes

1. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to Lacanian theory.
2. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of desire and psychoanalysis.
3. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

5. Psychoanalysis and Religion

This module links religion, religious phenomena, contemporary critiques of religion, and the basic tenets of psychoanalysis — including concepts such as the collective unconscious, drive, and repetition. It moves through the landscape of religion from folk religions and ritual practices to Christianity, Buddhism, and Daoism, prompting students to critically reflect on the implications of such practices for psychoanalytic theory. The module also introduces students to Radical Theology, offering a historical overview of its various streams and their implications for psychoanalytic thought.

Learning Outcomes

1. Create critical contextualised discussions of key issues related to religion.
2. Apply a scholarly approach to research problems pertaining to psychoanalytic practice.
3. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to religion and psychoanalysis.

6. Psychoanalysis and Eastern Philosophies

This module follows two lines of inquiry: first, the development of psychoanalytic thought in the East (with particular focus on the practice of psychoanalysis in China); and second, the parallels and possible theoretical influence of Eastern thought — especially Daoism — on the development of psychoanalytic theories in the West. The module examines the writings of Daoism, particularly the *Yi Jing* and *Dao de Jing*, and their influence on Jungian psychoanalysis. It also considers Winnicottian theory in relation to Eastern philosophies, developing a sensibility for critical questioning of contemporary theories and practices.

Learning Outcomes

1. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to psychoanalysis and the study of Eastern philosophy.
2. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of Eastern philosophy and psychoanalysis.

3. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to contemporary psychoanalytic practice and Daoism.

7. The Jungian Tradition: Symbols and Synchronicity

This module introduces the fundamental terminology, theory, and philosophy of Jungian analytical psychology, with focus on theory rather than practice. It sketches the general outlines of the Jungian understanding of the mind and pays special attention to the development of synchronicity in late Jungian thought. The module examines key concepts including the collective unconscious, the role of symbols, the structure of the ego, individuation, and synchronicity — highlighting how Jung departs from the Freudian and Lacanian traditions.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of Jungian analytical psychology.
2. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to Jungian thought.
3. Solve problems and be prepared to take leadership decisions related to the structure of the ego.

8. Topics in Psychoanalysis

Topics in Psychoanalysis allows students to delve into subjects of interest that complement the core curriculum. The module is delivered by expert practitioners who share tailored insights and practical guidance, and its exact content changes each year in response to contemporary political issues, student needs and interests, and faculty expertise.

Learning Outcomes

1. Create critical contextualised discussions of key issues related to psychoanalysis.
2. Apply a scholarly approach to research problems pertaining to psychoanalysis.
3. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to psychoanalysis.

9. Figures in Psychoanalysis

Figures in Psychoanalysis allows students to explore subjects of interest that complement the core curriculum, delivered by expert practitioners who share tailored insights and practical guidance. Like Topics, its content changes each year in response to contemporary political issues, student needs and interests, and faculty expertise.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of psychoanalysis.
2. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to contemporary figures in psychoanalysis.
3. Solve problems and be prepared to take leadership decisions related to psychoanalytic theories.

10. Independent Study in Psychoanalysis

This module is designed for students to conduct independent research in the field of psychoanalysis, guided by faculty on a topic of their choice. Students meet in small groups with selected faculty members to discuss their research topics, clustered by subject area. Students present their research outcomes to the group and defend their work against questions from peers and faculty — a process that simulates the dissertation defence. Topics must be within the field of psychoanalysis but are encouraged to apply psychoanalytic theories to other contexts.

Learning Outcomes

1. Efficiently deal with interdisciplinary issues that arise in connection to psychoanalysis.
2. Demonstrate self-direction in research and originality in solutions to issues related to the study of psychoanalysis.
3. Act autonomously in identifying research problems and solutions related to psychoanalysis.

11. Psychoanalysis Dissertation

The Psychoanalysis Dissertation contains both a research planning phase ("The Research Plan") and a research execution phase ("The Dissertation"). Students develop and pursue an original research question in the field of psychoanalysis, under the supervision of a faculty member. Both the supervising instructor and a second faculty member assess the dissertation independently.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate practical skills in gathering information from a variety of primary and secondary sources and in applying it to specific psychoanalytical questions.
2. Grasp the theoretical issues that affect the proposed field of enquiry and the relative strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches in the secondary literature.
3. Display the competence to manage complex, sustained research on a problem in psychoanalysis, and develop new interpretive strategies.
4. Demonstrate the capacity for independent responsibility for a programme of research that contributes to professional knowledge.

Internships policy

Internships must be a genuine extension of the student's academic programme, providing opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to substantive projects directly related to their field of study. Internships consisting primarily of administrative or routine tasks will not be approved.

Every internship must have a defined start date, end date, and formal learning plan with objectives agreed in advance by the student, the host organisation, and the relevant college. Responsibilities and task complexity should increase over time. Each student must be assigned a named supervisor within the host organisation who holds relevant expertise and is responsible for providing regular guidance and feedback.

Woolf prioritises paid internships to ensure equitable access regardless of socioeconomic background. Unpaid internships may only be approved where they constitute a genuine learning opportunity and do not displace the work of a paid employee.

Programmatic standards

Day-to-day management sits with the relevant college. Each college must have a designated Woolf contact responsible for vetting and approving all host organisations and placements before any internship may proceed. Colleges are responsible for matching students to approved positions.

Students must complete pre-internship preparation before commencing a placement, which may include CV writing, interview support, and other instruction as necessary. Virtual internships are encouraged to widen access beyond geographical constraints; support systems must address the challenges of remote work, including cross-timezone communication and fostering professional belonging.

Programme effectiveness must be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Formal evaluations will be collected from students, host supervisors, and academic advisors, and will inform curriculum design and programme improvement.

Grading Scheme

General Marking Criteria and Classification

Marking of student work keeps in view the scale of work that the student can reasonably be expected to have undertaken in order to complete the task.

The assessment of work for the course is defined according to the following rubric of general criteria:

1. **Engagement:**
 - Directness of engagement with the question or task
 - Range of issues addressed or problems solved
 - Depth, complexity, and sophistication of comprehension of issues and implications of the questions or task
 - Effective and appropriate use of imagination and intellectual curiosity
2. **Argument or solution:**
 - Coherence, mastery, control, and independence of work
 - Conceptual and analytical precision
 - Flexibility, i.e., discussion of a variety of views, ability to navigate through challenges in creative ways
 - Completion leading to a conclusion or outcome
 - Performance and success of the solution, where relevant
3. **Evidence (as relevant):**
 - Depth, precision, detail, range and relevance of evidence cited
 - Accuracy of facts
 - Knowledge of first principles and demonstrated ability to reason from them
 - Understanding of theoretical principles and/or historical debate
 - Critical engagement with primary and/or secondary sources
4. **Organisation & Presentation:**
 - Clarity and coherence of structure
 - Clarity and fluency of writing, code, prose, or presentation (as relevant)

- Correctness of conformity to conventions (code, grammar, spelling, punctuation, or similar relevant conventions)

Definition of marks

97-100

Work will be so outstanding that it could not be better within the scope of the assignment. These grades will be used for work that shows exceptional excellence in the relevant domain; including (as relevant): remarkable sophistication and mastery, originality or creativity, persuasive and well-grounded new methods or ideas, or making unexpected connections or solutions to problems.

94-96

Work will excel against each of the General Criteria. In at least one area, the work will be merely highly competent.

90-93

Work will excel in more than one area, and be at least highly competent in other respects. It must be excellent and contain: a combination of sophisticated engagement with the issues; analytical precision and independence of solution; go beyond paraphrasing or boilerplate code techniques; demonstrating quality of awareness and analysis of both first principles or primary evidence and scholarly debate or practical tradeoffs; and clarity and coherence of presentation. Truly outstanding work measured against some of these criteria may compensate for mere high competence against others.

87-89

Work will be at least very highly competent across the board, and excel in at least one group of the General Criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

84-86

Work will demonstrate considerable competence across the General Criteria. They must exhibit some essential features of addressing the issue directly and relevantly across a good range of aspects; offer a coherent solution or argument involving (where relevant) consideration of alternative approaches; be substantiated with accurate use of resources (including if relevant, primary evidence) and contextualisation in debate (if relevant); and be clearly presented. Nevertheless, additional strengths (for instance, the range of problems addressed, the sophistication of the arguments or solutions, or the use of first principles) may compensate for other weaknesses.

80-83

Work will be competent and should manifest the essential features described above, in that they must offer direct, coherent, substantiated and clear arguments; but they will do so with less range, depth, precision and perhaps clarity. Again, qualities of a higher order may compensate for some weaknesses.

77-79

Work will show solid competence in solving problems or providing analysis. But it will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to fully solve the problem or discuss the question directly; some irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual error, or error in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; technical performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting.

74-76

Work will show evidence of some competence in solving problems or providing analysis. It will also be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria, including: failure to solve the problem or discuss the question directly; irrelevant use of technologies or citing of information; factual errors or multiple errors in selection of technologies; narrowness in the scope of solution or range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence or engagement with the problem; significant technical performance issues (but not so much as to prevent operation); poor organisation or presentation, including incorrect conformity to convention or written formatting. They may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument or solution.

70-73

Work will show evidence of competence in solving problems or providing analysis, but this evidence will be limited. It will be clearly marred by weakness in multiple General Criteria. It will still make substantive progress in addressing the primary task or question, but the work will lack a full solution or directly address the task; the work will contain irrelevant material; the work will show multiple errors of fact or judgment; and the work may fail to conform to conventions.

67-69

Work will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some of the qualities required, such as the ability to grasp the purpose of the assignment, to deploy substantive information or solutions in an effort to complete the assignment; or to offer some coherent analysis or work towards the assignment. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level, and may be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, major technical performance issues, error and poor organisation and presentation.

64-66

Work will fall down on a multiple General Criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to offer some coherent work. Such qualities will be substantially marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

60-63

Work will display a modicum of knowledge or understanding of some points, but will display almost none of the higher qualities described in the criteria. They will be marred by high levels of factual or technology error and irrelevance, generalisation or boilerplate code and lack of information, and poor organisation and presentation.

0-60

Work will fail to exhibit any of the required qualities. Candidates who fail to observe rubrics and rules beyond what the grading schemes allow for may also be failed.

Indicative equivalence table

US GPA	US Grade	US Percent	UK Mark	UK UG Classification	UK PG Classification	Malta Grade	Malta Mark	Malta Classification	Swiss Grade
4	A+	97 - 100	70+	First	Distinction	A	80-100%	First class honours	6.0
3.9	A	94-96				B	70-79%	Upper-second class honours	
3.7	A-	90-93							5.5
3.3	B+	87-89	65-69	Upper Second	Merit	C	55-69%	Lower-second class honours	
3	B	84-86	60-64						
2.7	B-	80-83	55-59	Lower Second	Pass				5
2.3	C+	77-79	50-54			D	50-54%	Third-class honours	
2	C	74-76	45-49	Third	Pass				
1.7	C-	70-73	40-44						
1.3	D+	67-69	39-	Fail	Fail				
1	D	64-66							
0.7	D-	60-63							
0	F	Below 60				F			

Synchronous Adjustments Template

Synch discussions may affect the mark on submitted assignments: written work is submitted in advance, and a discussion follows. This provides students an opportunity to clarify and explain their written claims, and it also tests whether the work is a product of the student's own research or has been plagiarised.

The synchronous discussion acts to shift the recorded mark on the submitted assignment according to the following rubric:

+3

Up to three points are added for excellent performance; the student displays a high degree of competence across a range of questions, and excels in at least one group of criteria. Relative weaknesses in some areas may be compensated by conspicuous strengths in others.

+/- 0

The marked assignment is unchanged for fair performance. Answers to questions must show evidence of some solid competence in expounding evidence and analysis. But they will be marred by weakness under one or more criteria: failure to discuss the question directly; appeal to irrelevant information; factual error; narrowness in the range of issues addressed or evidence adduced; shortage of detailed evidence; or

poor organisation and presentation, including consistently incorrect grammar. Answers may be characterised by unsubstantiated assertion rather than argument, or by unresolved contradictions in the argument.

- 3 (up to three points)

Up to three are subtracted points for an inability to answer multiple basic questions about themes in the written work. Answers to questions will fall down on a number of criteria, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to see the point of the question, to deploy information, or to offer some coherent analysis towards an argument. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level or consistently, and will be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organisation and presentation.

0 (fail)

Written work and the oral examination will both be failed if the oral examination clearly demonstrates that the work was plagiarised. The student is unfamiliar with the arguments of the assignment or the sources used for those arguments.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without correct referencing. The consequence of plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own work. Plagiarism violates Woolf policy and will result in disciplinary action, but the context and seriousness of plagiarism varies widely. Intentional or reckless plagiarism will result in a penalty grade of zero, and may also entail disciplinary penalties.

Plagiarism can be avoided by citing the works that inform or that are quoted in a written submission. Many students find that it is essential to keep their notes organised in relation to the sources which they summarise or quote. Course instructors will help you to cultivate professional scholarly habits in your academic writing.

Depending on the course, short assignment essays may not require students to submit a bibliography or to use extensive footnotes, and students are encouraged to write their assignments entirely in their own words. However, all essays must acknowledge the sources on which they rely and must provide quotation marks and citation information for verbatim quotes.

There are several forms of plagiarism. They all result in the presentation of someone's prior work as your new creation. Examples include:

- Cutting and pasting (verbatim copying)
- Paraphrasing or rewording
- Unauthorised Collaboration
- Collaboration with other students can result in pervasive similarities – it is important to determine in advance whether group collaboration is allowed, and to acknowledge the contributions or influence of the group members.
- False Authorship (Essay Mills, Friends, and Language Help)
- Paying an essay writing service, or allowing a generous friend to compose your essay, is cheating. Assistance that contributes substantially to the ideas or content of your work must be acknowledged.

Complaints and appeals

Students and faculty should always seek an amicable resolution to matters arising by addressing the issue with the person immediately related to the issue. Students should handle minor misunderstandings or disagreements within a regular teaching session or by direct message, or with their College. If a simple resolution is not possible, or the matter remains unresolved for one party, the steps outlined in this section apply to all groups, colleges, and units of Woolf.

The Red Flag system

An issue with a red flag should be submitted in the case that a member of Woolf seeks to make an allegation of serious misconduct about another member, including matters of cheating, plagiarism, and unfair discrimination or intolerance.

Any member of Woolf, seeking to raise a matter of serious concern, should submit a red flag by emailing redflag@woolf.education. Provide a short, clear description of the issue.

If a student submits an issue with a red flag, or if a faculty member submits an issue about a student, it will trigger a meeting with the student's College Advisor. If the issue is not resolved, the matter will be escalated to the College Dean, or to a committee designated by the College Dean, which will have the power to clear the flag.

If an issue is submitted with a red flag by a faculty member about another faculty member, then the issue is reported directly to the College Dean.

For both students and faculty members, after the Dean's decision, the one who submits the complaint is provided the opportunity to accept or appeal the decision; if the one submitting the issue appeals the decision, it will be assigned to the Quality Assurance, Enhancement, and Technology Alignment Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Faculty Council.

Mitigating circumstances

When serious circumstances ('Mitigating Circumstances'), beyond the control of a student or faculty member, adversely affect academic performance or teaching support, a Mitigating Circumstances report must be submitted using Woolf's red flagging system. Mitigating Circumstances may include but are not limited to serious medical problems, domestic and personal circumstances, major accidents or interruptions of public services, disturbances during examination, or serious administrative or procedural errors with a material effect on outcomes.

Mitigating circumstances do not normally include a member's personal technology problems, including software, hardware, or personal internet connection failures; employment obligations or changes in employment obligations; permanent or sustained medical conditions (unless there is a sudden change of condition); or circumstances where no official evidence has been submitted.

Mitigating circumstances are normally only considered when a red flag has been submitted for the issue before the deadline of an affected written project or assignment, or within one week of a cumulative examination. Proof of mitigating circumstances may result in an extended deadline or examination period, or the possibility to retake an examination; it will not result in any regrading of existing submissions or exams.

Grade appeals

Students who dissent from the grades they have received should follow the normal procedure for submitting a red flag.