



School of Psychology

**DOCTORATE
in
EDUCATIONAL,
CHILD & ADOLESCENT
PSYCHOLOGY**

**Selection Procedures:
A Guide for Applicants**

**Closing date Friday, 9th January 2026
@ 4pm**

Queen's University Belfast

School of Psychology

DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL, CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

Applications for September 2026 entry

The Doctorate in Educational, Child & Adolescent Psychology (DECAP) is a three year (36 month) postgraduate professional training course, accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as conferring eligibility for chartered status and approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as conferring eligibility to apply for registration as an educational psychologist. The course is based in the School of Psychology at Queen's University Belfast and placements are undertaken in a variety of educational, health or community settings. This document provides information and guidance for applicants.

N.B. Applications for the DECAP programme for September 2026 entry must be submitted online via the DECAP website, *along with the supplementary documentation outlined in 6.4 below*. Failure to provide all the information requested by the application closing date may result in your application not being considered.

The closing date is Friday 9th January 2026 at 4.00 pm.

The online application form can be accessed at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/Study/PostgraduateTaughtCourses/DECAP/>

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Please see Appendix (i) for information on the University's policy.

Proof of identity and qualifications will be required from those candidates offered a place on the programme.

On your online application form, one referee must be nominated by the candidate from the last position (if any) in which s/he was working with children or young people. If there is a gap in a candidate's employment history, this should be briefly explained on the application form. All candidates who are successful, and offered a place on the course, will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Check.

1. ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1.1 Entry Requirements

All applicants to the course must have at least an upper second class (2:1) honours degree in psychology, or the equivalent.

All candidates should state the published mark of the degree on the application form. **Transcripts should also be emailed to decap@qub.ac.uk, along with the other required supplementary documents listed in section 6.4 below.** If a transcript is not available, please explain why and state published marks. In the absence of such marks, students will be disadvantaged as the panel will assume the lowest possible

mark within the degree category. Candidates who graduated prior to computerisation of results will not be disadvantaged.

Candidates who have not obtained an upper second class (2:1) honours degree may apply if they can show evidence of a postgraduate degree relevant to educational psychology (e.g. Masters or PhD). In the case of a Masters degree, the percentage mark should be given and/or academic qualifications (Conversion) transcript.

- 1.1.1 The qualification must be such that the applicant is, or will be, eligible for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Status (GBC) of the British Psychological Society (BPS) by the application closing date. Candidates with qualifications from overseas etc., or where GBC is uncertain, **should have received a decision from the BPS as to whether their degree confers GBC by the application closing date.**

GBC. In order to be eligible to become a chartered psychologist on completing the DECAP, all candidates must have a primary qualification in psychology which is recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Status (GBC). If your primary qualification in psychology is unusual in any respect or comes from outside the UK, then you should provide evidence that it confers GBC. Queries regarding GBC status should be directed to the BPS, St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester, LE1 7DR. Tel. 0116 254 9568.

- 1.1.2 Candidates are expected to have appropriate experience working with children, young people and young adults for at least two years full-time equivalent (a minimum of 2,000 hours) **by the application closing date.** This can be cumulative or continuous and may be remunerated employment or work undertaken in a voluntary capacity. Experience acquired during university placement of less than 10 months will not be counted. Whatever kind of work has been undertaken, applicants **should reflect** on what they have learnt from their experiences and its relevance to the work of an educational psychologist, and, how they have been able to apply the knowledge of psychology from their studies. Please see the DECAP website for some suggestions about relevant experience. The 'quality' of experience in work experience is as important as the quantity of experience gained. Breadth and variety of experience will be favourably considered.
- 1.1.3 In line with the university's Postgraduate Prospectus, applicants requiring a work permit for employment in the UK cannot be considered for enrolment on the DECAP course. In applying for this course, you are agreeing that you have the right to work in the UK. A student visa is not sufficient. If you do not have the right to work in the UK, you cannot be considered for a funded place on the course. Unfortunately, we do not have capacity for self-funded places for September 2026 entry. For queries about your right to work in the UK you should contact your local British Consul/Embassy or further information is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>.

We are unable to offer this programme to students who are not eligible for a funded place. Funding is only available for students who are eligible for Home Tuition Fees. Further information regarding Fee Status can be found at <https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/PostgraduateStudy/TuitionFees/Postgraduatefeestatus/>.

- 1.1.4 Overseas candidates should provide evidence of proficiency in written and spoken English, unless you obtained your degree through English. Candidates must be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to Level 7 of the International English Language

Testing System (with no element below 6.5) or in an equivalent English Language test acceptable to the university; see <http://go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs>

1.1.5 **Education Authority (NI) Commitment**

Successful applicants will be funded by the Department of Education provided they undertake to work in the Education Authority (NI) Educational Psychology Service for three years following qualification, subject to the availability of EP posts. Applicants applying for such funding must agree to apply for all EP posts for which they are eligible during their final training year of the DECAP programme, and for a period of three years following successful completion of the DECAP programme. Applicants should be prepared to work anywhere in NI. Any absences, save for maternity leave, sick leave and annual leave, will not count towards the computation of the said three year period.

- 1.1.6 In addition, the requirement to travel throughout the region for placement and other activities means that applicants are normally expected to have, or to obtain before enrolment, a full driving licence, unless prevented for health or disability reasons.

1.2 **Additional Information**

Most applicants will possess the minimum entry requirements. The following three core elements are *rated* on the basis of the evidence presented in the application form and later at interview. Shortlisting, and later offers of places, are determined by the selection panel, on the basis of ratings awarded.

1.2.1 **Academic Ability**

This is a judgement of the applicant's ability to cope with the academic demands of training. Whilst the quality of previous academic qualifications and training plays a large part in forming judgements here, other competencies inform this - especially at the interview stage. These include critical reflection and reasoning skills, ability to synthesise information succinctly, ability to draw inferences and implications from information, psychological knowledge, ability to apply psychological theories and research to educational scenarios, research skills, presentation skills, etc.

1.2.2 **Readiness for Training**

This reflects the panel's judgement on the amount, breadth and quality of relevant experience the applicant possesses which suggests they may have already encountered some of the challenges associated with DECAP training. In the Relevant Experience section of the application form, you should describe your relevant experience, with dates of employment, in chronological order beginning with the earliest employment. See worked example on page 11.

1.2.3 **Personal Statement and Self Reflection**

This reflects the panel's judgement on how well the applicant has been able to reflect on his or her personal qualities, as expressed in the personal statement, and how they have been developed by means of training, employment and voluntary or other experiences. In this section of the application form you should demonstrate evidence of your capacity to reflect on your motivation to undertake educational training as an educational psychologist, the experiences and values which have shaped that decision, as well as the personal qualities you would bring to this career. You may wish to include information about your personal and/or professional interests. You should indicate how you relate your experiences, skills and competencies to the training programme for educational psychology.

1.3 References

We require three references with regard to each application. At least one of the references should be academic and at least one should be professional. ***Please note that one referee must be from the last employment in which you worked with children or young people.*** References written by relatives of candidates are not acceptable. These references are considered by the selection panel only after ratings have been awarded at interview. Applicants with unsatisfactory references are unlikely to be offered a place on the course. The selectors will contact the referees of candidates who have been shortlisted for interview.

1.4 Equal Opportunities

Applications are invited from all sections of the community. An equal opportunities policy is adopted in relation to selection. Applications are invited from candidates regardless of gender, marital status, dependency, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, perceived religious affiliation or political opinion. Every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments to training requirements for those successful applicants who have a disability which may impact on training.

2. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

In line with QUB regulations, the DECAP programme may provide consideration for recognition of prior certified learning. However, due to the bespoke nature of DECAP modules it is highly unlikely that modules completed in other courses or institutions would be recognised as contributing to DECAP.

3. FUNDING

3.1 Places on the course are funded by the Department of Education. ONE APPLICATION covers both the application for a place on the course and application for funding.

3.2 Selected applicants are recommended to the Department of Education or their appointees for the award of a training bursary of at least £25,422 per annum (*this bursary is free of income tax*). They are appointed for one academic year in the first instance, with contracts renewable each year, subject to a successful annual review in training. Trainees will be subject to terms and conditions of education and training, as determined by Queen's University and the Department of Education.

3.3 In accepting places funded by the Department of Education, trainees **are required to sign an undertaking that, on successful completion of training, they will make themselves available to work within Educational Psychology Services in Northern Ireland in accordance with the staffing needs as determined by the Education Authority, for three years (subject to the availability of educational psychologist posts).**

4. SHORTLISTING

4.1 Late and incomplete applications will be discarded as invalid, and do not go to the shortlisting panel. **You must therefore ensure that you have completed the application form and provided all the necessary supplementary documentation by the application closing date.**

- 4.2 The shortlisting panel is made up of practitioner psychologists and tutors, each of whom scrutinises all valid applications.
- 4.3 Applications are first judged on whether the candidate meets the minimal entry requirements as described in Section 1. Those who do not will not be shortlisted. The candidates are then rated by individual panel members on readiness for training and personal qualities. On the basis of the combined panel ratings, a shortlist of candidates for interview is drawn up.

5. INTERVIEWS

- 5.1 Interviews will take place in person this year. You will be allocated times for two separate interviews, both of which will be held on the same day. Please bring with you ***one form of photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport, driving licence) as well as an original birth/marriage certificate.***
- 5.2 The interviews **usually** consist of:
- The **academic-research** interview, which includes questions designed to assist the panel in rating appropriate elements of academic ability, personal qualities and readiness for training as described in Section 1.
 - The **professional-personal** interview, which includes questions designed to assist this panel in rating appropriate elements of academic ability, personal qualities and readiness for training as described in Section 1.
- 5.3 The two interviews are equally weighted. Ratings from the two interviews are combined, and those with the highest overall ratings in the three components (academic ability, personal qualities and readiness for training), and who have reached a satisfactory standard in each of the three components, are offered places on the course.
- 5.4 A reserve list may be drawn up and a reserve candidate may be offered a place if one of the original offers is turned down.
- 5.5 It is anticipated that interviews will take place week commencing 2nd March 2026.

6. COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

- 6.1 Applicants should read the following notes carefully before completing their application form.
- 6.2 Make sure to include in your form **all the information** you wish the shortlisting panel to take into consideration. Bear in mind the selection criteria as described above. **No other information will be sought on candidates prior to shortlisting.**
- 6.3 Your responses must be confined to the spaces provided in the application form. Please note the word limit for Section 7 (750 words).
- 6.4 **Photocopies** of the following documents are required, **in addition to your online application and must be emailed to decap@qub.ac.uk once your application has been submitted:**

- (i) certificates and course transcripts
- (ii) birth certificate, and marriage certificate (if applicable)
- (iii) proof of GBC (should there be any doubt about this)
- (iv) evidence of proficiency in English (if applicable).

6.5 You should pay particular attention to the following:

- i. **Driving Licence.** This question must be answered accurately or your application will be invalid. Applicants currently without full driving licences may be offered places but these will normally be subject to having full licences before beginning the course (unless prevented for health or disability reasons). Given the geographical spread of placements, trainee psychologists who do not drive encounter significant difficulties in carrying out their duties.
- ii. **Qualifications.** You should provide the name of your primary degree/qualification in psychology and the awarding institution. It is important to state your DEGREE CLASS and PUBLISHED MARK and to provide a copy of an academic transcript. If these are not available, you should provide the marks for ALL the modules taken in Level 2 and Level 3 of your degree (or in the last two academic years/academic levels of your degree study). In the absence of a published mark, the panel will assume the lowest mark in the degree category applicable. Please provide similar information about additional qualifications undertaken, as well as details of A-Level grades (or equivalent). If the number of additional qualifications prohibits recording all marks in the space provided, you should record the marks/grades of the qualifications which you deem to be most relevant. If you have a qualification from outside the UK or Ireland (with which the selectors would probably not be familiar), you should email copies of your certificate and, if possible, course transcripts to decap@qub.ac.uk.
- iii. **Referees.** Give the name, address, telephone number and **email address** of three referees who can comment on your academic and/or professional suitability for educational psychology training. These should normally include someone familiar with your first degree in psychology or higher degree where this is recent and someone who has known you in a work setting. ***In accordance with Safeguarding procedures, one of the three referees must be from the last place of employment (or voluntary work) in which you worked with children or young people.*** Where possible, you should name psychologists or others familiar with the demands of educational psychology training. People who have known you only personally (e.g. family, friends), or in the distant past (e.g. schoolteachers), are not usually suitable. The selectors reserve the right to seek references, if necessary, from persons other than those you have named. The selectors will contact the referees of candidates who have been shortlisted for interview.

6.6 This application is for consideration for both a place on the course and funding. Please ensure you complete the application in full.

6.7 Queen's University Belfast is registered as a **data controller** with the Office of the Information Commissioner. As such, it is entitled to hold personal information on those who enquire about admission, on applicants and on current and former students. These data are held in electronic and paper format. By submitting the application form, applicants are consenting to the processing of the data by the University for administrative purposes, including consideration of their applications, but only insofar as it is permitted to do so

within the constraints of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- 6.8 When you submit your application you are confirming that the information you give is correct and complete. If the selection panel believes that you or any other person has given **false information** in your application or references, or has made any misrepresentation in the information given, we reserve the right to take whatever steps necessary to check the authenticity of the application. The panel also reserves the right to ask you to give further details on any aspect of the application (e.g. proof of academic qualifications, status, etc.). Fraud is a very serious offence and where detected the panel reserve the right to disclose such details to outside agencies (e.g. the police).
- 6.9 There is currently no discretion for **deferred entry** except under very exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness). If you are offered a place for September 2026 and do not take it up, you will normally be expected to re-apply the following year.
- 6.10 Applications must be submitted **online** via the DECAP website **by 4.00 pm on Friday, 9th January 2026**. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Approximately 4-5 weeks after the closing date, applicants will be informed whether or not they have been shortlisted for interview.
7. **FURTHER ENQUIRIES:** Please contact the Course Administrator on **028 9097 5651** or a.jeffrey@qub.ac.uk if you have any additional queries or questions.

APPENDIX (i)

Vetting Information

Enhanced Disclosure Checks (EDCs) will be requested for successful candidates when the post is offered, and all offers are subject to a satisfactory check.

This is a requirement because the activity you will engage in involves working with children and/or adults in ‘regulated activity’ as defined by the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The current legislative framework requires the University to conduct the highest level of criminal history check (Enhanced Disclosure with barred list Checks) on anyone engaging in regulated activity. Requesting checks is one of a number of measures the University implements to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

The organisation that processes these checks is called [AccessNI](#) (ANI) and it sits within the Department of Justice. After the check is completed an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) will be issued to you from AccessNI.

Information that may be disclosed on an EDC with barred lists check

This certificate contains details of any spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions, informed warnings and diversionary youth conferences that are not ‘protected’ or ‘filtered’ as per the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979, as amended in 2014. It will also indicate if there are no such matters on record. The certificate will also include details of any cautions and warnings issued in England and Wales or similar disposals in Scotland.

EDCs may also contain non-conviction information (for example attempted prosecutions which were unsuccessful) that are held on police records which a Chief Police Officer reasonably believes to be relevant to the post applied for and ought to be disclosed (i.e. “soft/police intelligence”). The police may also include information that is protected or has been filtered by AccessNI on the basis that the Chief Officer reasonably believes it is relevant and ought to be disclosed.

The EDC will confirm whether you are on the Children’s Barred List or the Adult’s Barred List.

ANI currently works with the Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO) to disclose information on offences against children by applicants from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain which occurred in their home country.

Further information can be obtained from AccessNI’s website at the link below:

[Information disclosed in a criminal record check | nidirect](#)

The disclosure of any criminal conviction etc may not necessarily prevent you from obtaining a position within the University, however, if you appear on the barred lists it is an offence for you to engage in, or seek to engage in, regulated activity.

Concerns and Complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints in relation to your enhanced check you can contact AccessNI at the following:

[AccessNI advice and complaints | nidirect](#)

AccessNI, PO Box 1085, Belfast, BT5 9BD

Tel: 0300 200 7888

Email: accessni@ani.x.gov.uk

Certificate of Good Conduct

Non-UK/ROI students in regulated activity/applicants/employees/members of the extended workforce are required to source a Certificate of Good Conduct (CoGC) from the embassy of their home country. Details of how to request such checks are available at [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Any individual who has lived in any other country (outside of the UK/ROI) for one complete year is required to source a CoGC from the embassy of the country in which they lived. This includes UK/ROI nationals who have lived overseas.

The countersignatory responsible for conducting criminal history checks is responsible for requesting that the individual sources the required CoGC.

For those who have lived in a country where criminal record checks cannot be obtained, or if the individual is a refugee with leave to remain in the UK, additional references must be sought and followed up by telephone and letter.

APPENDIX (ii)

EXAMPLE FOR APPLICANTS Name of organisation/Nature of work	Dates		Hours per week	Total weeks	Total Hours
	From	To			
Education Authority/ David Keir School/ Classroom Assistant/	Sept 2020	June 2021	25	40x25	1,000
Wee Bunnies - Volunteer	Sept 2021	August 2022	10	44x10	440
Education Authority Psychology Assistant	Sept 2022	February 2023	35	20x35	700
Cumulative total number of hours (pgs. 3 & 4) NB: This is typically the equivalent of two years' full-time work					2,140