Rogue Males: Sex Differences in Psychology Students

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Abstract

Introduction

This paper reports a preliminary study into the commitment and academic confidence of male students in undergraduate psychology, prompted by our own observations of the performance of male students and the literature on sex differences in education.

Method

Using an analytical survey, level 1 psychology students at a new university in South Wales, UK, were asked to complete the Academic Behavioural Confidence scale (Sander and Sanders, 2003) and a second scale, You And Your University Study, designed specifically for this investigation. The findings from a selective sample (n=72), with male students outnumbered 1:6 by the female students, are presented.

Results

The data show that when asked to rate the importance of the academic studies and the non-academic side of university life, the male students tended to give lower ratings to their studies than to the non-academic side, whereas the reverse was the case for the female students. Some students, particularly female students, who did rate the non-academic side of university life as the more important reported the need to build a strong and secure social network to support them through their studies. No differences in overall academic confidence were found, contrary to predictions, although there were some individual statement differences.

Conclusion

The data suggest that male students may be at a disadvantage through their attitude or approach to their academic studies, compounding the problems of being in a minority. Further research is being done to explore these preliminary findings.

Key Words

Sex differences; psychology undergraduates; academic confidence; social support; academic and non-academic aspects of university life.

Introduction

Sex ratios in psychology

Female students now outnumber male students in higher education (Francis, Robson and Read, 2001). In undergraduate psychology classes, a traditionally female domain, male students are a stable minority, currently around 21%, against a rising number of female students, which concerns the British Psychological Society (BPS) and is part of their Widening Access and Participation focus. (A similar problem is discussed by Alloway and Gilbert (2004) within an Australian setting.) The predominance of female students in psychology has been attributed to the nature of the subject and its relevance to the caring professions (Turpin, 2004). Turpin adds:

"It is anecdotally reported that fewer men are attracted to the discipline since it is not perceived as affording high status or income in the job market" (p. 28).

The inequalities between the sexes are not restricted to numbers. Our anecdotal experience suggests that male and female psychology students are not comparable in either their performance or their attitude to study. For example, in the first half of the autumn term of 2004, the following incidental observations were collected which are not, in any way unusual: almost all the first year male students were sitting in the last three rows of the lecture theatre; most workshop groups nominated a male spokesperson although males were outnumbered approximately 6:1. Male project students tended to be slower to initiate and less inclined to maintain contact with their supervisor; male students seemed to show either very high or very low commitment to their studies.

Sex differences in compulsory education

Sex differences in compulsory education have been well established. Boys tend to be identified with more problems within education than girls (Skelton, 1998; Warrington and Younger, 2000). Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) found that working class boys at least are more likely to be anti-school; few boys managed to be both overtly academic and popular and boys were oriented to adult authority and class-room agenda by "having a laugh". For some boys at least, high status for themselves was constructed through an oppositional culture. The perception of the boys was that teachers give greater attention to girls, and that they, the teachers, did not provide appropriate role models for the boys.

Research has shown significant attributional differences between boys and girls in schools, with girls being more likely than boys to attribute failure to themselves through not making enough effort, rather than to their teacher and to a lack of ability (Rusillo and Arias, 2004). Boys and girls also differ in that boys have a greater tendency to seek positive competency judgements and to avoid negative judgements (Rusillo and Arias, 2004). In effect, the boys are concerned with how they look in others' eyes which may go some way to explaining the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2004) observations. There is evidence to suggest that this tendency in girls goes with them into their university education, leaving them with lower confidence in themselves and a greater fear of failure (Stables, 1995; Newstead, 2000; Read, Archer and Leathwood, 2003; Leman, 2004; Robson, Francis and Read, 2004).

Sex differences in degree outcome

At degree level in the UK, sex differences have also been established in performance as measured by degree outcome. The distribution of degree grades is not the same for male and female students, with male students being more polarized, and, across all subject areas, getting more first class degrees and more poor degrees (Newstead, 2000; Francis, Robson and Read, 2001). The higher percentage of first class degrees by male students is supported by Oxbridge data (Leman, 2004) and for students at Oxford studying for the Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology (PPP) degree (Spear, 1997). Woodfield, Jessop and McMillan (2006), in a study with 650 undergraduates from the University of Sussex, found that females obtained higher overall percentage scores on their degrees. The higher representation of males in low degree performance is backed up by Metcalf, (1993), who also notes that males are more likely to drop out of their university courses.

Fifteen years ago concern was expressed that fewer women reached higher education and, when there, struggled to be taken seriously (Thomas, 1990). Likewise, there have been concerns about the number of students with disabilities, students from ethnic minority groups, lower socio-economic class students entering Higher Education (Metcalf, 1993). Under the current Widening Access and Participation agenda, attention should now also be focused on the numbers and the performance of male students, at least in some subject areas like psychology (Turpin, 2004). Now, as Francis, Robson and Read say, "the issue of gender and undergraduate achievement is one which affects both genders, rather than simply being a case of 'female disadvantage'" (2001, page 314). These variables also interact with each other and cannot be taken in isolation.

Spear's work (1997) showed differences between courses in the relative performance of males and females. Mellanby and Rawlins (1997), however, found no sex difference among the Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology degree students in their performance in psychology component of the degree, in contrast to a large difference in the philosophy component.

Possible explanations

Several possible reasons have been suggested for such performance differential. Woodfield *et al*. (2006) argue that attendance itself is important in explaining the variance in degree performance in that students gain something from the formal teaching situation. Indeed, in their study, attendance explained degree performance over and above measures of cognitive ability and personality variables and, interestingly, male students were more likely to be absent and more likely to under-report their absenteeism.

Woodfield and colleagues also suggest that the difference in attendance rates can be explained by female students' greater compliance to institutional requirements. Certainly it has been established that diligence and conscientiousness are traits taken up by girls as part of their construction of femininity (Francis, Robson and Read, 2001). Another potential factor is the differential influences of significant others on students prior to coming to university. Family and school appear to be more influential for females than males (Harris, 1999). All these factors may contribute to sex differences in behaviour at university, although there have been inconsistent findings relating sex with motivation and learning style on a degree course (Greasely, 1998; Magee, Baldwin, Newstead and Fullerton, 1998).

Confidence

As at school (Rusillo and Arias, 2004), female students at university are more preoccupied with failure than course content; adversely affected by workload pressure and by anxiety about speaking in tutorials (Greasley, 1998). In seminars and tutorials women speak less and are interrupted more (Somners & Lawrence, 1992; Sternglanz & Lyberger-Ficek, 1997) which may also affect and be affected by female students' confidence (Read, Archer and Leathwood, 2003). It has been argued that females generally lack academic confidence (Stables, 1995; Newstead, 2000; Leman, 2004; Robson, Francis and Read, 2004). Indeed Read, Archer and Leathwood (2003) illustrate female students' lower confidence with an account of

how one female student advised another to not let the male students in her tutorial group see that she lacked confidence.

Garcia *et al.* (1995) in an American university, found that compared with males, female students had lower self-efficacy for avoiding negative aspects of academic study like low grades, failing or not graduating on time. However, the female students had higher self-efficacy rating than male students in avoiding poor time-management.

In contrast, male students are more likely to rate their academic abilities more highly than female students, controlling for differences in performance, and are less likely to be adversely affected by the transition into higher education, perhaps, in part because the male students may be more self-centred and less attuned to social interaction issues than female students (Jackson, 2003). In turn, this might be why female students experience more academic stress than male students (Abouserie, 1994). Male students may be better able to cope with the stress they experience at university (Clark and Reiker, 1986), although Brember, Brown and Ralph (2002) found that where males did experience more stress than females, it was centred on issues of support of friends, family and partner.

Mellanby, Martin and O'Doherty (2000) argue that individual differences are not the causal agents, but rather that sex difference in performance is more likely to be related to an interaction of gender related characteristics like anxiety and the nature of the individual academic assessment system, with an emphasis on examination performance. Whilst the widespread usage of anonymous marking makes it much harder for markers to favour male students, writing style may indicate the sex of the student to the marker and the university system may favour a writing style more often associated with male students. Within universities, academic writing style may be more "male" in character, favouring male students (Farr, 1993; Flynn, 1988; Rubin and Greene, 1992), which could be linked to student confidence, with the less confident female students adopting the less bold and assertive approach found to be associated with high degree marks (Greasley, 1998). Whereas men are more likely to take risks, and successful risk-taking is more likely to lead to work at the level of a first-class classification (Goodhart, 1988; Read, Francis and Robson, 2001). The polarisation of male degree performance could be explained by the use of a bold style by males. If unsupported by clear argument or reference to any research literature it will be severely penalised and thus resulting

in the very low grades (Francis, Robson and Read, 2001). Confidence, when misplaced, would be a disadvantage.

The research literature suggests that there are good reasons to believe that there are differences in the ways that male and female students engage with, profit from and are adversely affected by UK higher education, supporting the anecdotal experiences that opened this section. Using a survey methodology, this preliminary study set out to explore differences in the academic commitment and confidence of a selection of male and female psychology students. Specifically we predict that there will be differences between males and females in academic confidence and in the perceived importance of the academic and non-academic sides of university life.

The measurement of Academic Confidence in this study was underpinned by research by Sander and Sanders (2003) who developed the Academic Confidence Scale (ACS, now referred to as the ABC or Academic Behavioural Confidence scale, Sanders and Sander (in press)) in order to understand variations in teaching preferences and learning behaviours for different groups of students (Sander et al, 2000).

The Sander et al (2000) study contrasted the expectations of two groups of UK university students; one group comprised medical students in a traditional university and the other psychology students in a new university. One aspect of the results was the striking differences in reasons given by students for not liking role-play and student presentations as methods of teaching. Essentially, the medical students were worried that these were not effective methods, whereas the psychology students were worried about their own competence to do them (Stevenson and Sander 2002). The possibility of academic confidence as an explanation for this difference arose from an examination of the differing entry profiles of the two groups. The medical students had an average A-level point score of 27.8, in contrast to 15.0 for the psychology students, (using the standard pre 2002 UCAS formula for assigning A level pointsi).

Academic confidence is conceptualised as being how students differ in the extent to which they have a 'strong belief, firm trust, or sure expectation' of how they will respond to the demands of studying at university. This is distinct from their aspirations for their own academic performance, although the two may be related.

The scale was developed through an iterative process with colleagues identifying appropriate academic behaviours that students would face. The scale's psychometric properties were explored in a preliminary study of 102 psychology in a new university, and 182 medical first-year undergraduates in a traditional university (Sander and Sanders 2003). It demonstrated a high level of internal reliability [Cronbach's alpha 0.88]. The overall score was computed as the mean response over the 24 items and the median for all students in the study was 3.83 (min 2.54, max 4.92). A comparison of the overall ABC scores showed that the medical students, as predicted, scored higher, i.e. were more confident, than the psychology students, (medians 3.88 and 3.71 respectively, Z=2.07, p<0.05 one-tailed), suggesting criterion validity of the scale. Furthermore, statistically significant ABC scores have been found between dyslexic and non-dyslexic students.

The scales concurrent validity was also assessed by asking respondents to estimate their final year degree mark. This correlated significantly (p<0.05) with their ABC score indicating that those who were confident that they could produce the behaviours required for academic study were those who felt they would do well academically.

The ABC scale has been used both at general and more focused levels. In the validation of the ABC scale, students were encouraged to work at a more global perspective on academic behavioural confidence (Sander and Sanders, 2003), in that they were asked about their confidence about their university course, rather than any one module or indeed any part of any one module. In contrast, a more recent study has usefully used the ABC scale to monitor changes in academic confidence in response to students giving presentations as a module requirement (Sander and Sanders, 2005). From this research, it is defensible to use the ABC both at global and more specific levels, even to the point of looking at changes in confidence measured through individual statements in the scale rather than at changes in the whole scale scores. (Sander, 2004).

Method

Design

An analytical survey was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

Participants

A first year psychology class of 72 students at a new university in south Wales was asked to participate in this study during week 9 of the first semester. Male students comprise 17.6% of the cohort, which is less than the national average. Attendance was at about 50%, so the views presented here are just those of the students who chose to attend, missing out the possibly more extreme absentees.

Materials

Academic confidence was measured using the Academic Behavioural Confidence (ABC) scale (Sander and Sanders, 2003). The views that students had on the study of psychology and their attitude to the academic and non-academic sides of university life were collected in a questionnaire developed for this study – "You and Your University Study". This questionnaire also sought the participant's sex, whether they believed their friendship group was predominantly male or female and, finally their route of entry (school, gap year, previous university course or as a mature student). These materials are appended.

Procedure

The two questionnaires were distributed to each student at the start of a lecture to all who agreed to take part in the study (no student declined). They were asked to complete them carefully and conscientiously. Sufficient time was given for all participants to complete this task at their own pace.

Method of Analysis

Differences in the responses by male and female students to ABC scale and the Likert type ratings in the scale, "You and Your University Study", were analysed using the Mann Whitney-U test as no assumptions could be safely made about the parametric properties of the data. For the same reason, the Sign test was used to explore differences within groups, in ratings.

The qualitative data from the scale, "You and Your University Study", were sorted into categories by sex and by route of entry. All themes identified were listed.

Results

Fifty-eight females (52% of female students on the course) and fourteen males (58% of male students on the course) completed the survey.

Table 1 summarises the data from the responses to two questions from the "You and Your University Education" questionnaire:

1. **<u>Why</u> are your academic studies important to you?**
2. **<u>How</u> important is the non-academic side of university to you (i.e. sport, socialising etc)**

These questions address the importance of the academic and non-academic side of university life. All data came from 5-point rating scales, with a high score (5) showing more importance or more confidence. Whilst the majority of females gave the academic side the highest possible rating (5) and the non-academic side a slightly lower rating (4), the males are fairly evenly divided between these top two points for academic but for non-academic, the majority rating is at the highest point (5). The median scores for the ABC scale for both males and females were 3.56.

Table 1:   Importance of aspects of university life by sex (frequencies)

Rating Scale Frequency	Male		Female	
	Academic	Non-academic	Academic	Non-academic
1	0	1	0	2
2	1	0	0	6
3	0	2	2	7
4	**7**	3	20	**28**
5	6	**8**	**36**	14

The difference between the two ratings, Academic and Non-academic, was calculated for each respondent and this showed a mean for the males of 0.07 whereas, for the females it was 0.77, which suggests that the males saw both sides of university life as roughly equally important in contrast to the female students who had a greater bias towards the academic side. This score differential was significantly different between the male and female students ($z=2.093$, $p<0.05$). The difference between the male and female students in response to these two questions is explored further in Table 2 which shows, shows, again by gender, the distri-

bution of the differences between the self rated importance of the academic side of university life minus the self rated importance of the non-academic side of university life, from the questionnaire "You and Your University Education"; the bigger the difference between the two measures, the greater the discrepancy between these two aspects of university life. A negative number, therefore shows that the non-academic side of university life was judged to be more important. In summary, the male students are all one point either side of zero, in contrast to the female students who, at face value, have a distribution skewed to favouring the academic side of university life. The small numbers in the more extreme differences and the much smaller number of male students in the sample suggests some caution is needed in interpreting these data.

Table 2:   Academic and non-academic sides of university life, by sex

Difference Academic – non-academic	Males		Females	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
-2			1	1.8
-1	3	21.4	1	1.8
0	7	50	28	49.1
1	4	28.6	14	24.6
2			7	12.3
3			5	8.8
4			1	1.8

In a sperate question,

Which is more important to you, the academic or the non academic side of university life?

Participants were asked explicitly to decide whether the academic or non-academic side was more important to them. The ratio of choice of academic or non-academic, classified by sex and by whether they came to the course direct from school, had a gap year between school and university, had been on a previous university course or were a mature (over 21 years) student are presented in table 3.

**Table 3: "Is the academic or non-academic side more important?"
by sex and route of entry.**

Route	Academic: Non-academic	
	Male	Female
School	7:1	22:4
Gap	3:0	9:3
Previous	2:0	6:0
Mature	1:0	14:0
TOTAL	13:1	51:7

Comparing the importance of the academic and the non-academic sides of university life for the female students, across all routes of entry, shows that 27 students saw the academic side as more important against only 2 who saw the non-academic side as more important. The remainder were ties. This difference is statistically significant with a Sign Test (z=-4.457, $p<0.001$). Whilst the sample size for the male students was not large enough to compute a Sign Test, 4 male students saw the academic side as more important, 3 saw it as less important. The remainder were ties.

This question from the "You and Your University Education" questionnaire also asked the respondents to explain their choice. Themes from this qualitative data are presented here to keep the results from this one particular question togther. For the 7 female students who chose the non-academic side, there was almost without fail, a justification for the choice through the need for a functioning social support system for effective, long-term study, which had to be built up during the first year of the course. For instance, respondent 14, a female school leaver, said:

"If I am not happy with the non-academic side of university then it will have a large effect on my degree"

This reasoning was also used by some of the male students, for example, respondent 67, a male student who had a gap year:

"I also find unless I am happy in my personal life I can't fully focus on my studies."

The mutuality between the social and academic sides of university life was not felt by all respondents, as number 16, a female school leaver makes clear:

"My studies and eventual outcome will determine my future. I don't believe socialising will do this to any real benefit."

The tension as well as the mutuality of the social and academic sides of university life is captured by respondent 18, a female school leaver:

"If I don't obtain a good degree at the end of three years it will have been a total waste of time and liver damage"

Some mature female students commented that they already had their own friendship groups and social support systems on entry to university, illustrated by respondent 15:

"The non-academic side of university life would be more important to me but I have no free time as I have three young children."

In order to understand whether the route by which the students participating in this study (straight from school; with a gap year; with previous university experience or as a mature student) had an effect on the perceived importance of the academic and non-academic sides of university life, table 4 shows the number of people, by sex coming through each route and the median rating scores for the importance of the academic and non-academic side on university life.

Table 4: Median Academic and Non-academic Scale Scores by Route by Sex

	Males			Females		
	(n)	Academic	Non-Academic	*(n)*	Academic	Non-Academic
School	(8)	4.5	5	(27)	5	4
Gap	(3)	4	4	(12)	4	4
Previous	(2)	3.5	3	(4)	4.5	4
Mature	(1)	5	5	(11)	5	4
Previous & mature				(3)	4	2

In relation to the data from the mature students in table 4, it should be recalled that the qualitative accounts indicated that these students had a somewhat lesser need to form strong friendship groups within the university setting, as respondent 68, a mature female says:

"I have my own peer group and friends I socialise with. I haven't the time to study, work and go out all the time. It is the least important aspect of my life."

The "You and Your University Study" questionnaire asked about sex ratios in friendship groups. No significant effects were found between predominantly male or female friendship groups for academic, non-academic or average ABC scores.

When individual ABC items were explored, there were two obvious differences. In statement 13, "prepare thoroughly for tutorials", the mean male score was 2.86 in contrast to the mean female score of 3.67 ($z=3.708$, $p<0.001$). For statement 19, "make the most of the opportunity of studying for a degree at university" the mean male score was 3.79 in contrast to the mean female score of 4.22 ($z=1.923$, $p=0.055$)

Other themesthat emerged from the qualitative data are that

- Both male and female students identified a good job or a career and planning for the future as an important reason for studying psychology.
- Students noted that they had enjoyed psychology previously at school or college. Some even pointed out that they were still enjoying it on their degree. Students, more notably the female students also liked psychology because it related to life; it provided an opportunity for something better that had to be seized.
- University provides new experiences, which could help the student to

  - develop as a person,
  - becoming a well rounded,
  - gaining in independence with a widening social circle.
  - make life-long .

- Social interactions could be a forum for learning psychology. Learning did not have to come just from books.

- Effective study would not happen if there was not a happy social life which offered them some security and support. This view was more notable in the female students but not exclusive to them.

Discussion

The results from the quantitative data showed that male students tended to rate the academic side of university life lower than female students. Some qualified this in response to an open question by saying that developing a good friendship base was important for effective long term university study.

The questionnaire "You and Your University Study" showed that within the small sample of male students, more of them were likely to have come straight from school. Only the male students who had been on a previous course (n=2) rated the non-academic side of university life as less important than the academic side of university life. Male students who had had a gap year and mature students rated the academic side of university life equal to the non-academic side of university life.

There were no overall differences in Academic Behavioural Confidence (ABC) between the male and female students, or between students separated by route of entry. The data set had too few male students to explore any interactions between sex and route of entry; an omission that follow-up studies must address, although it should be noted that Woodfield *et al.* (2006), had extreme problems in recruiting male volunteers for their second study on student absenteeism.

Two statements from the ABC scale about preparing for tutorials and making the most of the opportunity of studying at university had males with a lower confidence score than females which might seem to contrast with previous findings that female students lack confidence (Stables, 1995; Newstead, 2000; Leman, 2004 and; Robson, Francis and Read, 2004). However, the ABC scale is specifically measuring academic confidence rather than general confidence or self-esteem. Any further studies would need to clarify these constructs and operationalise them appropriately.

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) argue that boys in compulsory education are somewhat maligned in that they can, given the right circumstances show themselves as the antithesis of the "image of the angrily grunting and inarticulate teenager" (page 87), but the differences in ABC scores for these two statements at least may indicate male students are less than optimal in their attitude to their studies. Focus groups could be usefully set up to give the male students (as well as female students) greater opportunity to talk about their approach to their university study. Whether or not these groups should or should not be adult or tutor guided (Korobov and Bamberg, 2004) is an interesting question.

Whilst the differences in the qualitative themes between males and females were not as great as might have been anticipated, the qualitative data did reveal the importance of a secure friendship base to students in sustaining them through their studies. Further research is required to explore any possible links between the need for the establishment of such social networks and the greater stress experienced by female students in their university studies (Abouserie, 1994; Garcia *et al.*, 1995; Greasley, 1998).

An obvious and important issue coming from this study was the inconsistencies in the message from rating scale differences about the importance of the academic and non-academic side of university life and the question which asked students to make a straight choice between the two. It is likely that the transparency of this statement created demand characteristics or pressured students into presenting a favourable image of themselves. A greater proportion of the females selected the non-academic side of university life which leaves the question of whether the male students were managing the impression of themselves (Rusillo and Arias, 2004), which they failed to do in the two separate questions addressing this theme, which required a rating answer. However, the tag-question "Why is this important to you?", provided useful information on students views on the social support networks.

Despite the limitations of this study, the data suggest that male students disadvantage themselves through their attitude or approach to their academic studies, which deserves to be explored further, compounding the problems of being in a minority (Turpin, 2004) in under-graduate psychology classes.

Laudable as the efforts of the British Psychological Society are in extending the widening access and participation remit to include the under-represented group of male students,

the findings reported here, in line with Woodfield *et al.* (2006) suggest that support should be given to meet the difficulties of this particular group. For all students, Woodfield *et al.* advocate steps to improve attendance. This study suggests that the university or the department needs to support male students specifically. How this could be done should be driven by research findings. For instance, how do male psychology students feel about being in a minority in their classes? To what extent does the manifestation of maleness impede the education of male students through an inability to identify with the role models in the teaching team (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003), or the recognition that they should seek help with academic (or indeed non-academic) difficulties?

This study was, unashamedly a pilot study and so has many limitations. Perhaps one of the most significant of these was the sampling. There was a low attendance rate in the session where the data were collected; meaning that those students attending felt that it may have been more likely to be profitable to. Maybe the better, more conscientious students supplied the data? It might be that with a wider range of views, from the whole cohort, the qualitative data might have picked up on why the differences to academic study existed.

We feel however that this preliminary pilot study raises questions that are pertinent for all teaching psychology at degree level. We suggest that the next step would be to extend this study through a multi-centre collaborative study. We propose to survey incoming level 1 students during induction week and to follow their progress on the course thereafter. It might be possible to try to map the views expressed by students at this early stage onto their component marks, attendance records, degree aspirations and degree outcomes. Respondents could also be asked to judge their likelihood of attending timetables sessions and engaging in private study (Woodfield *et al.*, 2006).

The findings presented here are preliminary but suggest that sex differences in attitudes to and achievement in higher education are worth exploring further. To this end, a substantial research project will be starting in the autumn of 2005.

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Appendix 1 ABC Scale. How confident are you that you will be able to:

		Not at all confident				Very confident
1.	Study effectively on your own in independent / private study	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	Produce your best work under examination conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	Respond to questions asked by a lecturer in front of a full lecture theatre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	Manage your work load to meet coursework deadlines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	Give a presentation to a small group of fellow students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	Attend most taught sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	Attain good grades in your work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	Engage in profitable academic debate with your peers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	Ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, in a one-to-one setting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	Ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, during a lecture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	Understand the material outlined and discussed with you by lecturers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	Follow the themes and debates in lectures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13.	Prepare thoroughly for tutorials.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14.	Read the recommended background material.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15.	Produce coursework at the required standard.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16.	Write in an appropriate academic style.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.	Ask for help if you don't understand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.	Be on time for lectures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19.	Make the most of the opportunity of studying for a degree at university	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20.	Pass assessments at the first attempt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21.	Plan appropriate revision schedules.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22.	Remain adequately motivated throughout.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. Produce your best work in coursework assignments	Not at all confident				Very confident
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Attend tutorials	Not at all confident				Very confident
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix 2: You and your university education

Please answer the following questions as fully and honestly as possible in the space provided. You might find it useful to read all the questions first before answering them to help you avoid answers that overlap the questions.

Why did you come to university?

Why did you want to study psychology?

Why do you continue to study psychology?

What do you hope to achieve with your psychology degree?

How important are your academic studies to you?

Please indicate their importance using the scale below

Not at all
important

Very
important

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Do you have any comments to make?

Why are your academic studies important to you?

How important is the non-academic side of university to you (i.e. sport, socialising etc)

Please indicate their importance using the scale below

Not at all
important

Very
important

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Do you have any comments to make?

Why is the non-academic side of university important to you?

Which is more important to you, the academic or the non academic side of university life? Please make a choice one way or the other and explain why.

I need to know a little bit about you.

	Please circle as appropriate	
Are you male or female?	Male	Female
Would you describe your university friendship group as comprising mainly	Males	Females
	Please tick as applicable	
I came to this course straight from school		
I had a gap year between school and this course		

I was on another university course before
this one

I am a mature student

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i Pre 2002 UCAS formula for A level points by grade.
A =10 , B =8, C=6, D=4, E=2 and AS grades assigned half value points e.g. an A grade AS..
level =5.

The A and AS level qualifications are pre-university exams taken by school pupils in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, aged 17 – 18 years old. UCAS is a central admissions unit that deals with all undergraduate entries to UK universities.