



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

# Course Specification

## PG Cert School Mental Health Specialists

Course Code: SMHSP

2026/27

[leedsbeckett.ac.uk](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

# PG Certificate School Mental Health Specialists (SMHSP)

## Applicant Facing Course Specification for 2026/27 Postgraduate Entrants

Confirmed at February 2026

### General Information

<b>Award</b>	Postgraduate Certificate School Mental Health Specialist
<b>Contained Awards</b>	N/A
<b>Awarding Body</b>	Leeds Beckett University
<b>Level of Qualification and Credits</b>	Level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, with 60 credit points at Level 7 of the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.
<b>Course Lengths and Standard Timescales</b>	<p>Start dates will be notified to students via their offer letter. The length and mode of delivery of the course is confirmed below:</p> <p>The format is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 year (part-time, distance-learning, online delivery)</li></ul>
<b>Part Time Study</b>	<p>PT delivery is usually at half the intensity of the FT equivalent course, although there may be flexibility to increase your pace of study to shorten the overall course duration. Some modules may be delivered in a different sequence to that defined within this information set but the modules offered within each level are consistent. Please note that the work placement option is not generally available to PT students.</p>
<b>Location(s) of Delivery</b>	Online
<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<p>Students will need to be working in, or working across, early years settings, schools or colleges. This includes special, alternative and other educational settings.</p> <p>The setting must have a Senior Lead with responsibility for mental health who is able to support the student during the two-year programme.</p> <p>The student will be required to evidence how they are supporting pupils with their mental health needs, contributing to school or</p>

college level strategies and working with other staff in their setting. Therefore, they must be in a role which enables this.

Admissions criteria are confirmed in your offer letter. Details of how the University recognises prior learning and supports credit transfer are located here:

<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/student-information/course-information/recognition-of-prior-learning/>

Admissions enquiries may be directed to: [AdmissionsEnquiries@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:AdmissionsEnquiries@leedsbeckett.ac.uk).

## Course Fees

Course fees and any additional course costs are confirmed in your offer letter. Fees enquiries may be directed to

[Fees@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:Fees@leedsbeckett.ac.uk).

## Timetable Information

Timetables for Semester 1 will be made available to students during induction week via:

- i) The Student Portal (MyBeckett)
- ii) The Leeds Beckett app

Any difficulties relating to timetabled sessions may be discussed with your Course Administrator.

## Policies, Standards and Regulations ([www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/academicregulations](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/academicregulations))

There are no additional or non-standard regulations which relate to your course

## Key Contacts

<b>Your Course Director</b>	Claire Sewell
<b>Your Academic Advisor</b>	Module Leader / Programme Lead
<b>Your Course Administrator</b>	<a href="mailto:education@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">education@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>

## Course Overview

The course will adopt a public mental health, sociological, approach to mental wellbeing and will provide students working in schools and colleges with a thorough understanding of the theory and practice of evidence-based strategies to support children and young people in relation to:

- (1) Preventing mental illness and promoting protective factors
- (2) Early identification and support and early promotion of wellbeing for those with reduced wellbeing

- (3) Preventing relapse and the associated impacts of mental disorders such as stigma and risky behaviours.

**The aims of the programme are to:**

- enable students to synthesise theory, including international perspectives, with practice which will promote the emotional resilience of pupils and staff in the schools and colleges where they work
- enable students to critique and lead wellbeing initiatives and establish cultures and practices conducive to good mental health and wellbeing across their school or college
- synthesise specialist, in-depth knowledge of the signs, symptoms and behaviours associated with poor or declining mental health of children and young people in their school or college
- equip students with the confidence and skills to critique, select and deploy evidence-based skills and intervention strategies to support children and young people in need
- enable students to maximise the impact of parental involvement and pupil participation in wellbeing initiatives and interventions across their school or college community
- enable the student to work alongside the senior lead for mental health and to critically synthesise, apply and sustain evidence-based, data-driven whole school approaches to good mental wellbeing, including training and supporting colleagues with appropriate interventions

**Course Learning Outcomes**

**At the end of the course students will be able to:**

1. Independently research, critically review and apply current evidence, including international evidence, on protective factors and the promotion of self-efficacy and emotional resilience, to support positive wellbeing and mental health in school or college contexts
2. Critically reflect on current research, theory and the latest thinking relating to high risk factors, indicators and behaviours associated with poor or declining mental health and wellbeing, and take these into account when implementing school or college-based systems, interventions and practices
3. Demonstrate a critical understanding and specialist knowledge of a range of mental health needs experienced by children and young people
4. Select and employ ethically approved, methodologically robust and age appropriate intervention strategies to support emerging, mild or moderate mental health conditions of children and young people in need, including appropriate evidence-based skills, theories, techniques and strategies

## Teaching and Learning Activities

### Summary

The programme will develop communities of practice . All modules will utilise online resources to facilitate group discussion, presentations, feedback and collaborative learning and will be led by colleagues with relevant professional practice and research expertise.

The course will involve students critically reflecting upon their professional practice, the current and potential activities within their school or college, their learning on the course and the interconnectedness of a community of practice.

Delivery for each of the six modules will include online using Leeds Beckett University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as:

- a repository for learning materials and resources
- a forum for discussions
- a means of ongoing formative feedback and formal assessment.

Leeds Beckett University's Distance Learning Unit will ensure a consistent and interactive approach and a user-friendly experience.

The Senior Lead for Mental Health will serve as a work-based mentor for the student. The student will also receive supervision from a suitably trained and experienced course tutor who will support them as they apply the learning and development gained during the course to their role as the school mental health specialist.

The final module for the course involves a visit to another organisation followed by a work-based project. For this, each student will be allocated a project supervisor who will guide them in drawing up their project proposal and developing and investigating a negotiated line of enquiry in order to develop as an independent practice-researcher and to make a tangible improvement to mental health support at their school or college.

The approach to learning, teaching and assessment is informed by a commitment to:

- helping students to undertake their role as the school mental health specialist as effectively as possible, through the application of theory and evidence within their school or college
- whole school or college evaluation of current practices
- the creation of realistic school or college improvement plans
- self-reflection and critical evaluation of practice and perspectives
- exposing students to up-to-date national and international research and practice in the application of mental health in schools and colleges
- making conscious and explicit the research-informed teaching and professional practice undertaken by all staff contributing to the programme

Course participants will work in different school or college sectors such as primary, secondary and further education and different types of organisation such as: Special Schools, Multi Academy Trusts, Pupil Referral Units, Maintained Schools, University Training Colleges, Six Form Colleges and Further Education Colleges.

Whilst all assessment tasks and learning objectives are generic and apply to all course participants, learning materials and activities will be differentiated to account for the educational settings and ages of children and young people.

## Your Modules

This information is correct for students progressing through the programme within standard timescales. Option modules listed are indicative of a typical year. There may be some variance in the availability of option modules. Students who are required to undertake repeat study may be taught alternate modules which meet the overall course learning outcomes. Details of module delivery will be provided in your timetable.

There are three core modules in year one and three modules in year two and no optional modules.

Level 7 Year 1 Semester 1	Core (Y/N)	Semester 2	Core (Y/N)
<i>Promoting protective factors for good mental health and wellbeing</i>	Y	<i>Early identification of mental health support needs (Jan to April)</i>	Y
		<i>Supporting children and young people with mental health needs (May to August)</i>	Y

## Assessment Balance and Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities

The assessment balance and overall workload associated with this course are calculated from core modules and typical option module choices undertaken by students on the course. They have been reviewed and confirmed as representative by the Course Director but applicants should note that the specific option choices students make may influence both assessment and workload balance.

A standard module equates to 200 notional learning hours, which may be comprised of teaching, learning and assessment, any embedded placement activities and independent study. Modules may have more than one component of assessment.

### Assessment

On this course students will be assessed entirely by coursework, by undertaking a variety of tasks and assignments.

### Workload

Overall Workload	
Teaching, Learning and Assessment	120 hours
Independent Study	260 hours
Placement	220 hours

## **Learning Support**

If you have a question or a problem relating to your course, your Course Administrator is there to help you. Course Administrators work closely with academic staff and can make referrals to teaching staff or to specialist professional services as appropriate. They can give you a confirmation of attendance letter, and a transcript. You may also like to contact your Course Rep or the Students' Union Advice team for additional support with course-related questions.

## **Student Services**

If you have any questions about life at University, call into our Student Services Centre at either campus or contact Student Advice directly. This team, consisting of trained officers and advisers are available to support you throughout your time here. They will make sure you have access to and are aware of the support, specialist services, and opportunities our University provides. They also work on a wide range of projects throughout the year all designed to enhance your student experience and ensure you make the most of your time with us. Student Advice are located in the Student Services Centre in the Leslie Silver Building at City Campus and on the ground floor of the Priestley Building at Headingley Campus. The team can also be contacted via email at [studentadvice@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@leedsbeckett.ac.uk), telephone on 0113 812 3000, or by accessing our online chat link, available on the student homepage.

## **Support and opportunities**

Within MyBeckett you will see two tabs (Support and Opportunities) where you can find online information and resources for yourselves. The Support tab gives you access to details of services available to give you academic and personal support. These include Library Services, the Students' Union, Money advice, Disability advice and support, Wellbeing, International Student Services and Accommodation. There is also an A-Z of Support Services, and access to online appointments/registration.

The Opportunities tab is the place to explore the options you have for jobs, work placements, volunteering, and a wide range of other opportunities. For example, you can find out here how to get help with your CV, prepare for an interview, get a part-time job or voluntary role, take part in an international project, or join societies closer to home.