Behavioural Science in Practice

For the Change Makers
Behavioural science examines human behaviour and choices, drawing on insights and methods from psychology, economics and neuroscience.
An introduction to Behavioural Science in Practice

An immersive three-day executive programme run by Warwick Business School and the Behavioural Insights Team, introducing key principles from behavioural science and how to apply them to real world problems.

Addressing most issues in society, from daily challenges to complex problems, requires an understanding of how and why people behave the way they do in relation to themselves and others. Behavioural science has revolutionised how we approach these problems by challenging traditional models of behaviour and providing a more realistic understanding of what drives our decisions. Governments, businesses and charities across the world are now using insights and methods from behavioural science literature to develop solutions to live issues.

Benefits
You will learn about the key principles and current thinking in behavioural science, and how to apply them to research, design and test ideas. The course emphasises practical application, so that what you learn is directly transferable back into your workplace.

Learning outcomes:
■ Uncover the drivers of human behaviour and decision-making by exploring key findings from behavioural science and cognitive and social psychology
■ Understand how, when and why human behaviour deviates from traditional economic models
■ Learn how to use insights and methods from behavioural science literature to develop solutions to live issues
■ Learn how and when to run large scale randomised controlled trials to test behavioural science solutions in real world settings
■ Get feedback and guidance from world-leading experts on the problems and solutions you are working on.

“Behavioural Science is the scientific approach to individual behaviour applied to understand social and economic phenomena. Its methods are, to some extent, experimental, drawing significantly on psychology, economics and neuroscience. Our aim is to understand the mechanisms inside individual people and how those mechanisms apply out in aggregate behaviour - so how they affect social behaviour, how they affect markets and the economy at large.”

Nick Chater
Professor of Behavioural Science
Who is the programme for?

Course overview
- Theory – latest insights from leading academics on experimental psychology, judgement and decision-making and behavioural science
- Problem-led – working on live briefs set by external partners
- Practice – learn from some of the best researchers and practitioners in the field

The programme
Each day, you will learn about both theory and practice, while working on live problem briefs.

Evening activities
- Day 1 – Networking with canapés and refreshments.
- Day 2 – Cohort dinner at a local restaurant followed by a guest speaker.

Themes covered during the programme
The foundations of behavioural science
Exploring the hidden forces that shape how we think and decide, and the influence of context and culture, including:
- Beliefs – The serenity of thought, how we reason by-example, the ubiquity of overconfidence, and reasoning as rationalisation.
- Decision-making – Why decision making is so hard, our brain as a comparison machine, deciding one reason at a time, and choosing by comparing and by copying.
- Preferences – Self-control problems and how they can be addressed: social norms, altruism, reciprocation, network nudges and social bridging.

The TEST methodology (Target, Explore, Solution, Test)
This is a project methodology developed by the Behavioural Insights Team to tackle real world problems. It will be used to structure the practical sessions throughout the programme, including:
- The EAST framework – This is a framework developed by the Behavioural Insights Team as part of the Solution phase of the TEST methodology to help practitioners develop behavioural science solutions.
- Test, Learn, Adapt – This is the framework developed by the Behavioural Insights Team as part of the Test phase to help practitioners test what works and improve what doesn’t.
- Step 1 of the TEST methodology. How to structure a programme, system or intervention through the eyes of its users.
- Step 2 of the TEST methodology. How to explore a programme, system or intervention.
- Step 3 of the TEST methodology. The EAST framework for developing new behavioural science interventions.
- Step 4 of the TEST methodology. The Test, Learn, Adapt framework for running evaluations to test what works (and what doesn’t).

Provisional timetable

Day 1
- Introduction to key concepts
  - The importance of behavioural science and the TEST methodology.
  - Beliefs
    - How people deviate from the standard model by having systematically incorrect beliefs.
  - Decision-making
    - How people deviate from the standard model by using comparison and copying.

Day 2
- Preferences
  - How people deviate from the standard model by constructing preferences on the spot when needed.
- Bite size behavioural science
  - The role of motivation, confidence and self-efficacy in decision-making.
  - EXPLORE
    - Step 2 of the TEST methodology. How to understand a programme, system or intervention through the eyes of its users.

Day 3
- Bite size behavioural science
  - Risk, uncertainty and dealing with large numbers.
  - Social norms, reciprocation and the importance of feedback.
  - TRIAL
    - Step 4 of the TEST methodology. The Test, Learn, Adapt framework for running evaluations to test what works (and what doesn’t).
Along with being some of the most cited scholars in the field, the WBS and Behavioural Insights Team utilise cutting-edge research to help address the challenges of today’s marketing, innovation, and research organisations.

Nick Chater
Professor of Behavioural Science at Warwick Business School

Nick joined WBS in 2010, after holding chairs in psychology at Warwick and UCL. He has over 200 publications, has won four national awards for psychological research, and has served as Associate Editor for the journals Cognitive Science, Psychological Review, and Psychological Science. He was elected a Fellow of the Cognitive Science Society in 2010 and a Fellow of the British Academy in 2012. Nick is co-founder of the research consultancy Decision Technology; and is on the advisory board of the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), popularly known as the ‘Nudge Unit’.

Edward Gardiner
Behavioural Design Lead at Warwick Business School

Ed is Behavioural Design Lead at WBS, applying insights and methods from behavioural science to support the design of products and services with a social purpose. He previously led the Behavioural Design Lab, a partnership between WBS and Design Council, and now focuses on ways to support collective action, helping people work more effectively together to achieve their own and common goals. He holds an MA in Natural Sciences (Psychology) from the University of Cambridge and an MSc in Cognitive and Decision Sciences from UCL.

Alex Sutherland
Chief Scientist and Director of Research and Evaluation, The Behavioural Insights Team

Alex is Chief Scientist and Director of Research and Evaluation at the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). Alex’s recent published work has been on police body-worn cameras and he has led a number of large-scale randomised-controlled trials in education.

Before joining the BIT, Alex was at RAND Europe for 5.5 years, and spent three years coordinating and teaching research design and quantitative methods at the University of Cambridge. Prior to Cambridge, he worked at the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford and has a D.Phil. in sociology, also from Oxford.

Elspeth Kirkman
Senior Director: Health, Education, and Communities, The Behavioural Insights Team

Elspeth is responsible for BIT’s work on health, education, and local government. Prior to this she oversaw the establishment and growth of BIT’s North American office from New York. She has taught behavioural science at Harvard, acts as an expert advisor to a number of global institutions, and serves as a Senior Fellow for Casey Family Programs, advising on the applications of behavioural and decision science to child welfare systems. Prior to joining BIT in 2013, Elspeth was a management consultant working with government clients around the world. Elspeth is the author of the forthcoming “Behavioral Insights” book in the MIT Press Essential Knowledge series.

Applications, fees & accommodation

Programme date
Behavioural Science in Practice is a three-day programme which will take place at WBS London at The Shard, find upcoming programme dates here:

Fees and accommodation
Please see our website for the latest fee information for this course. Course fees include all of the course materials, lunch and snacks each day, an evening dinner, and a networking evening with canapés and refreshments. Overnight accommodation is not included, but can be booked at venues nearby.

How to apply
Applications can be made online, and we are always happy to talk through any queries you may have. Once we have received your application, the team will be in touch to confirm your place on the programme.

To apply please visit:

Executive Education
Behavioural Science: the impact

With the growth in behavioural science as a discipline, the Behavioural Science group at WBS and BIT are driving forces behind how it can be applied in society, and our understanding of how it can influence and impact our every day lives.

The Behavioural Science group at Warwick Business School is the leading centre of its kind in Europe, at the forefront of research in psychology, economics and neuroscience, while heavily involved in real world applications.

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) is a social purpose company, jointly owned by the UK Government; Nesta; and BIT’s employees. Their main objectives are to:

- Make public services more cost-effective and easier for citizens to use
- Improve outcomes by introducing a more realistic model of human behaviour to policy
- Enable people to make ‘better choices for themselves’.

Read more about the work of the Behavioural Insights Team by visiting behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/

Here are just a few research insights that have come from the Behavioural Science group at WBS.

“The best thing that I’ve learnt is the frameworks. It’s not just throwing psychological knowledge at something, but how it’s framed, how to approach the problem, and how I can distribute my time amongst behavioural challenges.”

James Smith
Course Participant

“Make the best of something out of the worst...”

Suzanne Lawrence
Managing Director in Primary Care, Care UK, Course Participant

“It was interesting to see that, while it may not always go as you would expect, it’s all about trying something new.”

Suzanne Lawrence
Managing Director in Primary Care, Care UK, Course Participant

“In the area of fraud, error and debt, for example, telling late tax payers that most people in their towns had already paid their tax, increased payment rates by 15 percentage points.”

Extract from ‘Big problems, small solutions’, Core Edition One wbs.ac.uk/go/bigproblems

“The better we know our natural tendencies the more we will understand how cooperation works in different contexts.”

Dr Alcina Melis
Extract from ‘Smells like team spirit’, Core Edition Two wbs.ac.uk/go/teamspirit

“I was interested in the programme because I work in healthcare, and healthcare is a resource constrained industry, and so we’re trying to squeeze every bit of healthcare we can out of every penny we’ve got and behavioural insights offers some fairly cheap ways to make practical changes.

Having the involvement of the Behavioural Insights team has been critical to bringing the research and principles into reality. It’s been example after example of tests they’ve done, including ones that did not deliver the outcomes they were expecting, which is just as important as the majority which had given the level of behavioural change that they were anticipating.

So it’s left me feeling much more energised and much more likely to go back and do things differently.”

Suzanne Lawrence
Managing Director in Primary Care, Care UK, Course Participant
Learning in London, one of the world's great capitals