

Template C4



Programme Specification

Title of Course: *MSc Forensic Psychology*

Date first produced	31/03/2015
Date last revised	23/09/2023
Date of implementation of current version	01/09/2023
Version number	7
Faculty	Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
School	School of Law, Social and Behavioural Sciences
Department	Department of Psychology
Delivery Institution	Kingston University

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes and content of each modules can be found in the course VLE site and in individual Module Descriptors.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Award(s) and Title(s): <i>Up to 10 pathways</i>	MSc Forensic Psychology
Intermediate Awards(s) and Title(s): <i>There are 4 Intermediate awards for each pathway</i>	PgCert Forensic Psychology PGDip Forensic Psychology
Course Code <i>For each pathway and mode of delivery</i>	
UCAS code <i>For each pathway</i>	n/a

RQF Level for the Final Award:	Masters
Awarding Institution:	Kingston University
Teaching Institution:	Kingston University
Location:	Penrhyn Road
Language of Delivery:	English
Modes of Delivery:	Part-time Full-time
Available as:	
Minimum period of registration:	Part-time - Full-time -
Maximum period of registration:	Part-time - Full-time -
Entry Requirements:	<p>1. Minimum Entry Qualifications</p> <p>The Master's in Forensic Psychology is open to those applicants who normally have achieved an upper second degree in psychology accredited by the BPS. Successful completion of this MSc gives exemption from Stage 1 of Chartered Forensic Psychologist training. Students enrolled on this MSc have no option choice as the modules covered ensure that the BPS syllabus is covered.</p> <p>Students who will be working with vulnerable people e.g. children, adolescents and/or those populations under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice e.g. those who reside in the secure estate or NHS secure and community facilities will require a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) See https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview</p>

	Without DBS students are not allowed to work with these protected populations. Passing a DBS check, however, will not automatically allow students to work on placement as certain placement providers may require their own security checks and the final decision will be at the discretion of the Programme Leader.
Programme Accredited by:	British Psychological Society
QAA Subject Benchmark Statements:	<i>Psychology</i>
Approved Variants:	None
Is this Higher or Degree Apprenticeship course?	

For Higher or Degree Apprenticeship proposals only

Higher or Degree Apprenticeship standard:	n/a
Recruitment, Selection and Admission process:	n/a
End Point Assessment Organisation(s):	n/a

SECTION 2: THE COURSE

A. Aims of the Course

Forensic psychology is concerned with the psychological issues associated with criminal behaviour and the treatment of those who have committed offences. It refers to the investigation of deception, fraud, criminal investigations and the psychological aspects of legal and judicial process. Forensic psychologists work in a variety of settings including prisons, social services, probation, criminal analysis units and academia.

Forensic psychology is a relatively new sub-discipline of psychology. This programme aims to develop students' knowledge in the core competencies, as stipulated by the British Psychological Society (BPS), central to forensic psychology as an object of investigation and area of employment.

Kingston's Full-Field MSc in Forensic Psychology offers a special blend of established and successful psychology with dedicated specialism in forensic psychology involving professional work and research placements which virtually all similar programmes are unable to offer. The nature of the core, integrated placement opportunity at Kingston will make the course highly competitive and very attractive to potential students.

Completion of the full-field MSc in forensic psychology offers serious professional advancement in the process of recognition by the HCPC as a Practitioner Psychologist/Forensic Psychologist. The MSc exempts students from Stage 1 training on the route towards BPS and HCPC recognition.

Stage 1: A BPS accredited Masters in Forensic Psychology – Stage 1

The MSc in Forensic Psychology provides exemption from Stage 1 of the BPS qualification in Forensic Psychology and once completed successfully can lead to Stage 2.

Completion of the minor-field allows students studying a complementary programme to augment and develop their interest in this fascinating area of study. Along with the full field these programmes offer students the opportunity to gain specialist knowledge in forensic psychology and skills highly prized by employers, including, understanding numerical and reasoned debate and the composition and critical reading of narrative and argument.

The MSc in Forensic Psychology will provide students with an appreciation of the current developments in Forensic Psychology, practice based, methodological and theoretically driven modules designed to promote independent learning and thinking, self-reflection, ethical consideration, academic discipline and an enthusiasm for continued learning.

The programme includes an integrated placement, which enables students to further develop their transferable skills and enhance their employability.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the forensic psychology application, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

The main aims of the minor field are:

- To develop students' knowledge of the key theoretical concepts and debates relevant to legal and investigative processes and critically analyse these areas of forensic psychology;
- To critically apply their knowledge of psychological principles to investigative techniques and the evaluation of courtroom testimony;
- To evaluate factors that can result in deception and undermine the provision of evidence;
- To enable students to evidence their critical understanding of the factors which can influence the robustness of different types of testimony within the courtroom context.
- Develop student's abilities to formulate research questions, and design appropriate methodologies to address them at a level consistent with academic and professional standards relevant to forensic psychology
- Develop student's written and oral communication skills, problem solving skills, organisational and leadership skills to an advanced level
- The 2 year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning

Additional aims of the full-field are:

- To enable students to complete this BPS accredited course equating to stage 1 of the BPS qualification in Forensic Psychology
- To provide training in the application of ethical principles to forensic psychological research and to practice;
- Develop students' critical appraisal skills and the ability to independently evaluate research publications, journal articles, clinical guidance and other factors which influence decision-making processes in forensic settings;
- To provide the opportunity to develop interviewing skills, individual/group treatment, intervention skills, and develop self-awareness and reflective practice dependent on the allocated type of placement;
- To enhance the students' understanding and critical appreciation of the professional organisation and contexts in which they might work;
- Provide opportunities to discuss the relevance and importance of diversity in the workplace
- Enhance student's ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Improve students' employability within forensic psychology and other related fields
- Enhance knowledge and understanding of risk assessment, management, treatment and service provision for those offenders with/without mental health disorders
- Extend and enhance student's knowledge and understanding of the key theoretical concepts in forensic psychology

B. Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas of forensic psychology;

- psychology of investigative and legal processes,
- the development of criminal offending across the lifespan,
- professional and practical issues surrounding treatment and intervention,
- statistical and research skills.

The programme outcomes are referenced to the British Psychological Society (BPS) requirements for accreditation, which are derived from the QAA subject benchmark statement for Psychology, and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2018), and relate to the typical student.

The programme learning outcomes are the high-level learning outcomes that will have been achieved by all students receiving this award. They must align to the levels set out in the [‘Sector Recognised Standards in England’](#) (OFS 2022).

Programme Learning Outcomes					
	Knowledge and Understanding		Intellectual Skills		Subject Practical Skills
	On completion of the course students will be able to:		On completion of the course students will be able to		On completion of the course students will be able to
A1	An in depth knowledge of the antecedents to criminal behaviour, the mental disorders associated with antisocial behaviour and criminal offending and the ability to reflect critically on the impact of these on the individual and societyFull	B1	Critically review extant literature on the relevant topics and complete advanced level review and analysis of research findings. Interpretation of the extant literature in the field of forensic psychology. Demonstrate independent thought and the ability to complete advanced literature searches. Demonstrate the ability to make theory practice links cognizant with their stage of developmentFull/Minor	C1	Structure and communicate complex ideas effectively in writing. Ability to communicate results of complex studies orally and in writing. IT skills – demonstrate ability to use relevant data base searches, presentation apparatus, use of presentation software e.g. power point, word processing, email, spreadsheets. Effective time management skills. Independent working.FullMinor
A2	An in depth knowledge and understanding of the investigative process, the legal system and the key areas of experimental research in forensic psychology Full/Minor	B2	Critically review extant literature on the relevant topics and complete advanced level review and analysis of research findings. Interpretation of the extant literature in the field of forensic psychology. Independent thought and ability to complete advanced literature searches. Full/Minor	C2	Structure and communicate complex ideas effectively in writing. Ability to communicate results of complex studies orally and in writing. IT skills – demonstrate appropriate information literacy including the ability to perform effective data base searches; ability to use presentation apparatus, use of presentation software e.g. power point, word processing, email, spreadsheets. Effective time management skills. Independent working. Laboratory management and skills in experimental tasksFull

A3	An advanced knowledge of research methodology, statistics. The ability to independently evaluate research publications, journal articles, clinical guidance and other factors which influence decision-making in forensic psychology and forensic mental health. Including taking into account the advanced skills required in order to weigh in balance the needs of the individual, the legal aspects, any ethical issues and the wider impact on society. Full	B3	Critical analysis of extant literature and interpretation of data and relevance to future research and practice. Full/Minor	C3	Advance use of statistical analysis packages e.g. SPSS. Advanced presentation of data analysis and results. Problem solving within the field of forensic psychology Full
A4	Knowledge, understanding and practice in the risk assessment, management, treatment and service provision for offenders to an advanced standard Full	B4	Identify and solve high-level problems centering on antisocial behaviour, criminal offending, mental disorder including associated ethical issues. Ability to make theory practice links. Gain skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback. Take responsibility for personal development Full	C4	Mastery of skills relevant to treatment/intervention in antisocial and criminal populations. Psychological assessments. Establish, plan and manage programmes to reduce maladaptive behaviours. The ability to implement change in forensic practice. Writing reports. Effective team working. Ability to take different perspectives. Develop interpersonal and collaborative skills. Good listening skills. Ability to gain autonomy. Full

In addition to the programme learning outcomes, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop the following range of Graduate Attributes:

1. Creative Problem Solving
2. Digital Competency
3. Enterprise
4. Questioning Mindset
5. Adaptability
6. Empathy
7. Collaboration
8. Resilience
9. Self-Awareness

C. Outline Programme Structure

The MSc in Forensic Psychology is part of the University's Postgraduate Credit Framework (PCF). Fields in the PCF are made up of modules which are designated at level 7. Modules in the framework are valued at 30 credits and there are 4 modules which equate to 120 credits with a further 60 credits for the dissertation module.

E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies

- The awards made to students who complete the field or are awarded intermediate qualifications comply fully with the National Qualifications Framework.
- All of the procedures associated with the field comply with the QAA Codes of Practice for Higher Education.
- Accreditation criteria for postgraduate programmes of the Division of Forensic Psychology, BPS.
- BPS occupational standards in applied psychology
- The ethical guidelines of the BPS and the HCPC have been incorporated into the design of the research modules, the placement guidelines and other assessments within this programme.

E2. Placements

Work placements are an integral part of the degree and make up a 30 credit module. We have agreements in principal with a number of different services applicable to forensic psychology e.g. children's home, youth offending teams, low, medium and high security hospitals, charities. . Placements will be allocated to students as appropriate based on their preferred choice, their experience, future goals and availability. The proposed programme allows students to work individually and at an advanced level with a research and/or placement supervisor. The placement supervisor will be a forensic or clinical psychologist, where appropriate to the setting, or by a suitable member of staff.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers' expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

In the event that problems are anticipated with a particular student with regard to suitability for these types of placements or indeed that a student does not have the necessary prior experience to adapt well, then alternative arrangements will be offered as a research assistant with a member of staff at the university. This will enable the student to gain valuable experience in research and will also contribute to the skills required for their dissertation. These students will be at no disadvantage in their development as research

experience is valued highly when applying for further training as a forensic psychologist, a clinical or counselling psychologist or for a PhD.

Students will be able to reflect on their own learning regardless of the type of placement, and should take the opportunity to consider their own judgements and biases with regard to their working environment. Reflective practice is a key skill to develop whatever path the student wishes to pursue. For those working in a more clinical placement they will be able to reflect on their own personal experiences, any judgements or biases they may have regarding the types of service users they work with, and working as part of a multidisciplinary team. Students should endeavour to make theory practice links as a basis for development of formulation and to enhance critical appraisal and evaluation skills.

The overall aims of the placement are to:

- Provide the opportunity to develop interviewing skills, individual/group treatment, intervention skills, and research skills dependent on the type of placement allocated.
- Enhance students' understanding and critical appreciation of the professional organisation and contexts in which they might work
- Develop self-awareness and reflective practice
- Provide opportunities to discuss the relevance and importance of diversity in the workplace
- Enhance student's ability to work independently and as part of a team (through multidisciplinary working and/or as part of a research group)
- Develop student's written and oral communication skills, problem solving skills, organisational and leadership skills to an advanced level
- Improve students' employability within forensic psychology and other related fields
- Provide a variety of transferable skills to increase employability in a wide variety of careers

All students will sign a work contract after consideration by themselves and their placement supervisor (Appendix 1).

E3. Outline Programme Structure

A student must complete 180 credits. All students will be provided with the University regulations and specific additions that are sometimes required by the BPS. Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

This field is part of the University's Postgraduate Credit framework. Fields in the PCF are made up of modules which are designated at level 7. The minimum requirement for a Masters degree is 180 credits. The proposed Full-Field programme is based on core modules which cover the requirements of the BPS regulations for Stage 1 in forensic psychology training.

The BPS specify eight core areas for accreditation. These are:

- the context of practice in forensic psychology
- assessment and formulation
- interventions
- working with specific client groups
- applications of psychology to processes in the justice system
- a research project and research methods
- advice and consultancy
- development and training

MSc Forensic Psychology							
Core modules	Module code	Credit Value	Level	Teaching Block	Pre-requisites	Full Time	Part Time
Antisocial Behaviours across the Lifespan; Treatment and Intervention	PS7030	30	7	TB1&2			
Applications of Forensic Psychology	PS7032	30	7	TB1&2			
Investigative and Legal Processes in Forensic Psychology	PS7031	30	7	TB1&2			
Psychology Dissertation	PS7000	60	7	TB1&2			
Research Design and Analysis	PS7002	30	7	TB1&2			
Optional Modules							

Level 7 information

Part-time students will take:

Year 1

Antisocial behaviours across the lifespan; Treatment and interventions
 Research Design and Analysis
 Investigative and Legal Processes in Forensic Psychology

Year 2

Applications of Forensic Psychology
 Research Dissertation

Full field students take PS7030, PS7031, PS7032, PS7002 and PS7000

Minor Field Students take PS7031.

Students exiting the Programme who have successfully completed 60 credits are eligible for the Award of Post Graduate Certificate of Education
 Students exiting the programme who have successfully completed 120 credits are eligible for the award of the Post Graduate Diploma of Higher Education

D. Principles of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The approach to student learning is a reflection of the Led by Learning Strategy of the University, which seeks to provide a learning experience from which all students gain optimum and life-long benefit.

Further, the teaching and learning strategies take cognizance of the core competencies as stipulated by the British Psychological Society (BPS) as central to a Masters programme in Forensic Psychology. These statements make specific reference to the knowledge and understanding and a range of cognitive and intellectual skills and specific techniques expected as outcomes in this master's level awards.

Students on the MSc Forensic psychology programme seek and expect:

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of forensic psychology informed by current scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments.
- development of core and transferable skills of critical analysis and synthesis, advanced research methods, applications of ethical and professional practice frameworks and communication and critical self-reflection .

To meet these objectives in the context of a masters programme in forensic psychology require a diversity of learning and teaching strategies to render the curriculum student-centred, accessible and effective in supporting the learning styles of different students.

The range of learning and teaching strategies includes:

- Keynote/formal lectures
- Workshops and seminars
- Debates
- Interactive lectures/sessions/workshops
- Small group laboratory work
- One-one tutorials
- One-one project supervision
- One-one placement supervision
- Student led discussions/presentations
- Research placements (where required)
- Practical placements in forensic settings
- External guest speakers from other academic institutions and forensic settings
- Further reading of extant literature

Lectures direct learning by providing an overview of relevant material, identifying key issues and case materials. Small group workshops include exercises and topics or scenarios for class discussion and provide opportunities to engage in critical discussions with lecturers and fellow students. Students will also lead discussion, to ensure that key learning points are acquired. Lecturers also use Canvas to provide additional materials as a means of engendering independent and collaborative and interactive student learning, and for communicating with students.

The programme is highly accessible for part-time students already working in a forensic setting, as this will provide ideal applied placement opportunities. The applied placement module provides a highly valuable 'real-world-learning' experience with students undertaking supervised practice in prisons, hospital probation, juvenile offending teams or investigative and legal settings and allows students to develop an understanding of equality, diversity and ethical issues and human rights. Similarly research placements develop those advanced research skills most valued by forensic employers. Employability skills are embedded throughout the course with theory based modules providing links to practice throughout and the development of transferrable skills such as group work, timekeeping, communication and presentations via both formative and summative assessment. Students are taught advanced independent study skills to prepare them for the dissertation module.

The assessment strategy reflects the aims and learning outcomes of the programme. It is designed to assess the knowledge and skills essential to meet the overall requirements of a master's degree, as well as the specific knowledge requirements of individual subject modules.

The purposes of the assessment strategy are to provide:

- appropriate formative assessments to enable students to develop and measure their knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities associated with a master's degree in forensic psychology.
- appropriate summative assessments to enable students to demonstrate their ability to apply theory, concepts, principles and empirical evidence to practice and to develop flexible, innovative, and conceptually robust solutions to problems in forensic psychology
- opportunities for students to utilise and apply their own experience in assessment
- an equitable, consistent and reliable measure of achievement and performance.

The assessment strategies are mapped against the teaching and learning strategy and related to the learning outcomes. They are designed to assess the development of student's knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of ways, and also to offer a set of stimulating challenges, which will reflect the demands they are likely to encounter in the workplace. These skills will be assessed in different ways across the modules using a combination of :

- Essays
- Critical appraisal reports
- Research reports
- Research proposals
- Clinical report writing (where applicable)
- Oral presentations
- Case studies
- A dissertation

Students will be expected to make oral presentations to their cohort, academic staff, and members of the multidisciplinary teams at their placement (where applicable). Students will be able to refine their presentation skills and also learn to respond positively to constructive feedback from both their peers and tutors. Students will receive feedback on a regular basis through formative assessments, one-one sessions with placement supervisors, and with their dissertation research supervisor. The specific skills necessary for conducting research will be assessed by research reports, a research proposal and the dissertation. The dissertation will require the student to carry out an independent piece of research which is theoretically driven and a relevant progression from recent research in the chosen area. This substantial piece of work will assess the student's understanding of the literature, ability to provide a rationale for their particular study as well as choose the most appropriate methodology, analysis and dissemination of results. The integral placement will be assessed by the Placement Supervisor and/or the Programme Leader and will be based on the ability to demonstrate growth in those areas pertinent to the particular work carried out on placement. Every assessment will be appropriate to the student's stage of development as a scientist/practitioner in order that they have the necessary foundations to further their progression to the career of their choice.

E. Support for Students and their Learning

Students are supported by:

- A course leader who will provide an induction at the start of the course and a course team who will provide ongoing support and information about the course structure.
- A module leader for each module
- A research supervisor
- A placement supervisor
- Technical support to advise students on IT and use of facilities including specific software appropriate to the degree.
- A designated course administrator

- VLE/Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site
- Staff-student consultative committee
- A designated information advisor/librarian for psychology and a specialised psychology library
- A personal tutor
- Help desk
- CASE
- The Psychology Society
- The Student Union

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- The Psychology Society
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The Library: In collaboration with the psychology course team the library provides information skills teaching tailored to meet the subject needs of the students. Postgraduate psychology students are given an initial introduction followed by a more detailed session on accessing e-resources. Research students are encouraged to attend the Research Information Skills training course provided through the Graduate School.

Students also have the opportunity to make individual appointments with their psychology information advisor and are encouraged to seek advice by phone or email as well as in person.

Personal tutors for these programmes meet with all students to introduce them to the support provided by Information Services on StaffSpace and to support them during their study at the University. Tutors should discuss any difficulties or obstacles that the students face during their study and how to overcome these difficulties. Tutors also discuss the progress of the students throughout the year.

The Help Desk: The LRC Help Desks are staffed during opening hours to help with users' information enquiries on an individual basis. Students are encouraged to learn how to find information for themselves so that they are able to carry out their own independent learning.

F. Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision.

These include:

- External examiners
- Boards of study with student representation
- Annual review and development
- Periodic review undertaken at the subject level
- Student evaluation
- Moderation policies
- DBS checks and adherence to codes of conduct, ethical and professional issues of the BPS and HCPC

Students with a psychology background, both undergraduate and postgraduate, are in high demand from a range of employers who value the range of skills that develop over the course of the degree. These include; communication skills both written and oral, presentation skills, teamwork, independent thinking, critical evaluation, time management and importantly the analytical skills students acquire from the use of study methodology and statistical tools.

G. Employability and work-based learning

The Full-Field MSc in Forensic Psychology will provide exemption from Stage1 of the BPS qualification in Forensic Psychology, and when completed successfully can lead to Stage 2 supervised practice. Those students wishing to follow the practitioner route will be suitably qualified to apply for Assistant Psychologist posts in for example, clinical forensic settings, prisons, and probation. The qualification will also be a good foundation for applications for clinical (DClinPsy), and counselling (PsychD) doctoral training particularly having experienced a sustained practical element. Students will also have a good foundation in investigative psychology and will be able to pursue further doctoral training (PhD) should they wish to pursue a career in academia, the police and/or criminal investigation units.

Students following the full, or minor field will be well equipped to develop a variety of careers involved in the criminal justice field, such as:

- policing;
- probation;
- offender management;
- crime reduction;
- youth justice;
- programme evaluation and research;
- related advocacy and policy based organisations.

The skills acquired during the course e.g. advanced writing skills, interpretation of data, team working, presentation skills, developed with an intrinsic problem-based learning approach, include a range of transferable skills which will enhance the student's employability in a range of other areas of employment.

Work-based learning, including sandwich courses and higher or degree apprenticeships

n/a

H. Other sources of information that you may wish to consult

See subject benchmarks for Psychology
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-psychology.pdf?sfvrsn=6935c881_13

See British Psychological Society
<http://www.bps.org.uk/>

I. Development of Course Learning Outcomes in Modules

This table maps where course learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the modules for this course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

Module Code		Level 7				
		PS7000	PS7032	PS7030	PS7002	PS7031
Knowledge & Understanding	A1		S	S	S	S
	A2	S			S	S

	A3	S		S	S	S
	A4		S			
Intellectual Skills	B1	S	S	S		S
	B2	S		S		S
	B3				S	S
	B4		S			
Practical Skills	C1	S	S	S		S
	C2				S	S
	C3				S	
	C4		S			

Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.