

Template C4



Programme Specification

Title of Course: *MSc Forensic Psychology*

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| Date first produced | 31/03/2015 |
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| Date of implementation of current version | 02/09/2024 |
| Version number | 13 |
| Faculty | Faculty of Business and Social Sciences |
| Cross-disciplinary | |
| 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 module can be found in the course VLE site and in individual Module Descriptors.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

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| Award(s) and Title(s): | MSc Forensic Psychology |
| Exit Award(s) and Title(s): | 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 |

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| Awarding Institution: | Kingston University |
| Teaching Institution: | Kingston University |
| Location: | Penrhyn Road |
| Language of Delivery: | English |
| Delivery mode: | Primarily campus based (up to 20% of scheduled L&T hours delivered online) |
| Learning mode(s): | Part-time Full-time |
| Minimum period of registration: | Part-time - 2 Full-time - 1 |
| Maximum period of registration: | Part-time - 4 Full-time - 2 |
| Entry requirements | Kingston University typically uses a range of entry requirements to assess an applicant's suitability for our courses. Most postgraduate taught course requirements are based on having been awarded a relevant undergraduate degree and are normally coupled with minimum grades expectation of 2:2, specific courses in certain areas may have a stricter grade requirement. We may also use interview, portfolio and performance pieces to assess a person's suitability for some courses. We recognise that every person's journey to a postgraduate taught education is different and unique and in some cases we may take into account work experience and other non-standard pathways onto University level study. Additionally, all non-UK applicants must meet our English language requirements. |

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| | Please see our course pages on the Kingston University website for the most up to date entry requirements. |
| Regulated by | The University and its courses are regulated by the Office for Students |
| Programme Accredited by: | British Psychological Society |
| Approved Variants: | None |
| Is this Higher or Degree Apprenticeship course? | No |

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. Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme learning outcomes are the high-level learning outcomes that will have been achieved by all students receiving this award. They have been aligned to the levels set out in '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 society Full | 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 development Full/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. Full/Minor |
| 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 |

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| | | | | | 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 psychologyFull |
| A4 | Knowledge, understanding and practice in the risk assessment, management, treatment and service provision for offenders to an advanced standardFull | 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 developmentFull | 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 |

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| | | | | | skills. Good listening skills. Ability to gain autonomy.Full |
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C. Future Skills Graduate Attributes

In addition to the programme learning outcomes, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will engage students in developing their Future Skills 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

D. 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.

- 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.

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).

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

| Level 7 | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|-------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 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 | | | |

Exit Awards at Level 7

PLEASE DELETE IF THERE ARE NO LEVEL 7 MODULES IN THIS COURSE

Students exiting the programme with 60 level 7 credits are eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate.

Students exiting the programme with 120 level 7 credits are eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma.

(Where appropriate – specify if there are any core modules that students must achieve for either of the exit awards)

Please note pre-requisite requirements for master's courses should only be set where there are defined progression points in the course where assessment boards have ratified module outcomes.

E. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This course uses a range of teaching and assessment methods which have been designed to support students' learning and achievement of the learning outcomes. The course has been developed with reference to the Kingston University Academic Framework which sets-out core principles relating to Course and Credit Structure (including Module delivery Structure and Pattern, and Learning Hours and Learning Formats); Curriculum Design (inclusion Learning Design Principles and Inclusive Curriculum); and Future Skills.

Teaching and Learning on the course consist of Scheduled Learning and Teaching and Guided Independent Study (self-managed time). Scheduled Learning and Teaching includes the following, and the format for each module is set out in the module specification:

- Laboratory Sessions
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Workshops
- Placements

Guidance for students on the use of independent study time is communicated through the 'Succeed in your module' section on the Canvas Virtual Learning Environment and through other communications during the course.

In addition to the core Scheduled Learning and Teaching activities for the course, the University may offer students additional optional opportunities for learning. Examples of these include Study abroad and Work-based learning.

The course will provide students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills relating to at least two United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). We are committed to empowering students with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to understand and address the UN SDGs: each course is thus also required to prepare students for at least two of the SDGs (not including Quality Education, which all courses must deliver).

F. Support for Students and their Learning

Students are supported through a range of services that provide academic and wider support. These include:

- A Module Leader for each module

- A Course Leader to help students understand the course structure
- Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
- Technical support to advise students on IT and the use of software
- Student Voice Committee – to ensure the views of students are heard
- Canvas – Kingston University’s Virtual Learning Environment
- Student support facilities that can provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support
- Disabled student support
- The Kingston Students’ Union
- Student Development and Graduate Success

G. Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course

The University has policies and procedures for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

- Continuous Monitoring of courses through the Kingston Course Enhancement Programme (KCEP)
- Student evaluation including Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs), the National Student Survey (NSS)
- Internal and external moderation of graded assignments

H. External Reference Points

External reference points which have informed the design of the course. These include:

- PSRB standards
- QAA Subject benchmarks
- Other subject or industry standards

I. Development of Course Learning Outcomes in Modules

This table maps where programme learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the **core** 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 | PS7031 | PS7002 | PS7030 |
|--------------------------------------|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 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.

Additional Information