



UNIVERSITY OF  
PORTSMOUTH

## COURSE SPECIFICATION

### *Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology*

**Academic Standards, Quality and Partnerships  
Department of Student and Academic Administration**

**February 2020**

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# COURSE SPECIFICATION

Please refer to the [Course Specification Guidance Notes](#) for guidance on completing this document.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b><i>Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology</i></b>
Final Award	<i>DForenPsy</i>
Exit Awards	<i>MSc in Professional Research; PGDip in Forensic Psychology Practice</i>
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	<i>C2637F</i>
Mode of study	<i>Full time (post-graduate study, mainly out on placement)</i>
Mode of delivery	<i>Distance Learning</i>
Normal length of course	<i>3 years</i>
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	<i>from September 2020 intake onwards</i>
Awarding Body	<i>University of Portsmouth</i>
Teaching Institution	<i>University of Portsmouth</i>
Faculty	<i>Faculty of Science</i>
School/Department/Subject Group	<i>Department of Psychology</i>
School/Department/Subject Group webpage	<a href="http://www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/">http://www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/</a>
Course webpage including entry criteria	<a href="http://www.port.ac.uk/courses/psychology/dforenpsy-professional-doctorate-in-forensic-psychology/">http://www.port.ac.uk/courses/psychology/dforenpsy-professional-doctorate-in-forensic-psychology/</a>
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	<i>Health &amp; Care Professions Council; British Psychological Society</i>
<a href="#">Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level</a>	<i>Level 8</i>

This course specification provides a summary of the main features of the course, identifies the aims and learning outcomes of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods used by teaching staff, and the reference points used to inform the curriculum.

This information is therefore useful to potential students to help them choose the right course of study, to current students on the course and to staff teaching and administering the course.

Further detailed information on the individual modules within the course may be found in the relevant module descriptors and the Course Handbook provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the [Module Web Search](#) for further information on the course structure and modules.

## Educational aims of the course

The global aims for this programme are to provide:

- opportunities to explore professional roles and implement research investigations in order to improve one's contribution in a service delivery setting.
- support for research and professional development learning so that graduates can make decisions relevant to their profession and generate new knowledge.
- an award of the highest academic level that is distinct from the PhD, and that is clearly relevant to the needs of the individual's professional working situation.
- graduates with opportunities to enhance their practice through systematic enquiry and reflection on the relevance of their learning to their own professional context.
- graduates with the cognitive, practical, professional and transferable skills to enable them to assume independent practitioner roles within their profession.
- graduates opportunities to disseminate their research and professional skills to a variety of audiences and via a range of forms.

## Course Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) sets out a national framework of qualification levels, and the associated standards of achievement are found in their [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) document.

The Course Learning Outcomes for this course are outlined in the tables below.

### A. Knowledge and understanding of:

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
A1	the establishment, and sustained implementation, of required systems for legal, ethical and professional standards in applied forensic psychology	Students will receive monthly supervision from a professionally qualified applied practice supervisor (Registered Forensic Psychologist). Throughout the duration of the programme they will attend quarterly group workshops, which each have a specific learning and teaching theme and provide a supportive environment for reflective practice, the development of practice skills, and peer-debate and development.	The portfolio of coursework (comprising critical reflections, a practice log, and case studies of applied work) is compiled by the student during the course and is finally examined via a Portfolio presentation.
A2	models of evidence based practice, reflection, and evaluation to inform and innovate practice within their profession	Consistent with the course's work-based learning emphasis students will also be supported to identify and undertake placement opportunities to attain at least 360 days of experience. One day per week is expected to be dedicated to completion of the requirements of the qualification as defined in the Module Specifications.	Doctoral students will produce an article in a journal format (Part 1) and a research proposal (Part 2). Each will include peer reviews, which students will respond to.
A3	The ethical and governance frameworks applicable to research and practice within their professional field		
A4	Critical reflection for own learning and professional practice	Doctoral students will receive monthly research supervision from a University-based academic. In Part I (Year 1) of the	
A5	Research methods		

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
	applicable to the field of forensic psychology.	programme, these students partake in lectures, tutorials, workshops, and presentations related to research methodology.	

**B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) skills, able to:**

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
B1	integrate knowledge of science and/or social theory to analyse problems or opportunities related to practice and justify strategies to inform practice	<p>In their 360 days minimum placement-based experience, students are required to reflect on and apply their learning. In applied practice supervision students are supported and challenged to examine and critically evaluate evidence relating to their practice with clients. Quarterly themed peer group workshop sessions (e.g., 'Context and Social Justice') are provided throughout the duration of the programme</p> <p>Doctoral students receive monthly research supervision from a University-based academic to reflect on and develop research. The assignment linked to the 'taught' Part I of the Course is designed to stimulate reflection and learning related to developing their professional research project.</p>	<p>Professional practice case study reports, consultancy reports, and training plans/reviews, all encourage critical appraisal and reflection skills. These reports are for diverse audiences, hence they require students to demonstrate adapted styles of written communication. In the portfolio presentation students are required to explain and justify the decisions made in their exemplar case studies.</p> <p>Doctoral students further demonstrate their cognitive skills in preparation of their final professional research and development project.</p>
B2	formulate questions, critically appraise, synthesise and evaluate evidence so as to transfer theoretical, research and professional understanding into areas of practice		
B3	critically discuss the methodological, ethical and financial limitations of their proposed plan of investigation and be aware of the implications of such constraints		
B4	critically appraise the value of theoretical perspectives and research evidence collected and use it to effectively and logically challenge current concepts, thinking and approaches		
B5	initiate, develop, analyse and evaluate original psychological research		

**C. Practical (Professional or Subject) skills, able to:**

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
C1	establish, develop and maintain working relationships with clients	Assignments have been designed to address requirements of the practitioner role (e.g. reflective practice, training needs analysis, professional reports for different audiences). Students are required to meet course requirements while conducting their applied roles and using real (anonymised) case studies from the present applied setting. Students benefit from monthly professional supervision and quarterly workshops to reflect on and develop professional practice philosophy and values, and the communication of psychological knowledge.	Professional supervision notes and practice logs provide reflections on professional working relationships with different clients. Students are encouraged to use research evidence and make theory-practice links. Professional case study reports evidence psychological applications, while the training plan and review encourages students to promote psychological practices to non-psychologists. A consultancy report promotes the development of skills in communication with other professionals in formal settings.
C2	conduct applications of Forensic psychology		
C3	monitor consultancy and evaluate its impact		
C4	promote psychological principles, practices, services and benefits		
C5	communicate the processes and outcomes of psychological and other applications and developments.		

**D. Transferrable (Graduate and Employability) skills, able to:**

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
D1	prepare and present evidence in formal settings.	The placement-based learning, requiring students to perform at work in line with the requirements of a Forensic Psychologist, provides students with professional training. Trainees are encouraged to be proactive in their supervision and provide their agenda. Applied practice supervisors support career development by overseeing student training plans and conducting progress reviews. Students can access the Psychology VLE (Moodle site) to support their development.	The portfolio of coursework comprising critical reflections, a practice log, and case studies of applied work is designed to evidence professional skills consistent with a registered Forensic Psychologist. The portfolio must be explained and defended in a 'practice viva' which provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills.  Doctoral students have an additional opportunity to demonstrate transferrable researcher-
D2	provide feedback to clients		
D3	disseminate theoretical, research and professional understanding and recommendations to critical communities using a variety of formats		
D4	manage change effectively, prioritise time and workloads and respond to changing professional demands	Doctoral students will avail of the VLE for distance learning modules in Part 1 (publication and dissemination module and research proposal module), which encourage students to develop a reflective and self-critical approach to their research.	
D5	demonstrate a		

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
	reflective and self-critical approach to research and professional development.		practitioner skills via their professional research and development project, which is also assessed by examiners in a <i>viva voce</i> oral hearing.

## Academic Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth [Academic Regulations](#) will apply to this course.

## Support for Student Learning

The University of Portsmouth provides a comprehensive range of support services for students throughout their course, details of which are available at the [MyPort](#) student portal. The Department of Psychology also has a dedicated Placement and Employability Adviser.

In addition to these University support services this course also provides support through the following staff and resources

- Workplace supervisors ('practice placement educators' and if available 'coordinating supervisors').
- Support during placements via University-based applied practice supervisors. Three University staff members are qualified to act as coordinating supervisors should there be no provision for this at the workplace.
- A University-based research supervisor for each student, who is a different person from the applied practice supervisor / coordinating supervisor.
- A variety of online e-learning resources available via the Virtual Learning Environment for the Course, including the Placement Handbook.

## Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

The University of Portsmouth undertakes comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation of courses within clearly assigned staff responsibilities. Student feedback is a key feature in these evaluations, as represented in our [Policy for Listening to and Responding to the Student Voice](#) where you can also find further information.

Distinctive additional mechanisms include:

- Accreditation provided by the British Psychological Society (BPS)
- Course approval by the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC)

## Reference Points

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

*Insert additional reference points or delete as required*

- [University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Education Strategy 2016 - 2020](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning](#)
- [The Quality Assurance Agency Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [The Quality Assurance Agency Characteristics Statement for Doctoral Degree](#)

- [BPS Standards for the accreditation of Masters and Doctoral programmes in forensic psychology \(2015\)](#)
- [Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists](#) (HCPC, 2015).
- Vocational and professional experience, scholarship and research expertise of the University of Portsmouth's academic members of staff

## Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information provided in this Course Specification and will endeavour to deliver this course in keeping with this Course Specification. However, changes to the course may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of modules and courses.

Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University of Portsmouth will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students.

It is also possible that the University of Portsmouth may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University of Portsmouth will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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## Document details

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