

PgDip in Forensic Psychology Practice

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of modules and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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Course Details

1. Named Awards

PgDip in Forensic Psychology Practice

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2703P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

Healthcare and Care Professions Council (pending)

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

N/A

7. Document Control Information

July 2018

8. Effective Session

2018-2019

9. Author

Dr Dominic Pearson

10. Faculty

Faculty of Science

11. Department

Department of Psychology

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

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;
- A Postgraduate award 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.

The specific aims for this programme are to:

- Develop, implement and maintain personal and professional standards and ethical practice.
- Apply psychological and related methods, concepts, models, theories, and knowledge derived from reproducible findings.
- Develop new and existing psychological methods, concepts, models, theories and instruments in psychology.
- Communicate psychological knowledge, principles, methods, needs, and policy requirements.

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document 2016
- University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-Based and Placement Learning (2015)
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff.
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education.
- QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ, 2008)
- [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).

14. General Learning Outcomes

The PGDip programme includes 8 x teaching blocks and placement based learning. There are four modules delivering practitioner skills and training to complement placement activity offering a structured approach to placement based learning. There are two similar modules focusing on clinical practice, formulation and intervention. All students will enter the programme having already completed a BPS accredited Masters in Forensic Psychology which is an admissions requirement and has common learning outcomes and standards. The nature of BPS accredited Masters degrees means students will have substantial 'taught' subject-specific knowledge when entering the programme.

On completion of the PGDip students will be able to:

- Be autonomous in the planning and management of their own learning;
- Demonstrate a reflective approach to their professional development;
- Interact and network within a multidisciplinary team so as to conduct or support research and professional development;
- Research, analyse and evaluate information so as to transfer new theoretical, research and professional understanding into areas of practice and beyond;
- Be aware of the changing professional context and manage the processes of change to enable the solving of problematic situations as they arise;
- Using appropriate and reasoned methodology, make a significant, original contribution to professional practice;
- Provide authoritative solutions when presented with practical, ethical and research problems within a professional context;
- Disseminate their theoretical and professional understanding and recommendations to critical communities using a variety of formats;

- Demonstrate the relevance and innovative approaches of existing research and professional development to the practice of forensic psychology.

Level 7

Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

Level 8

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments

15. Learning Outcomes

All learning outcomes have been designed to meet the competencies specified for BPS QFP, which were developed in line with HCPC's Standard of Proficiency and can therefore demonstrate equivalent fulfilment of HCPC Standards of Education and Training (SET) 1. SET 1 specifies the threshold level of qualification for entry to their Register as: Masters degree for Forensic Psychologists with the award of the BPS qualification (QFP), or equivalent. It is important to note that a recent standards mapping exercise exploring differences between the BPS QFP and HCPC SOP indicated that the substantive difference between the two programmes lies in Core Role 2 (Research) requirements from the BPS QFP which are not replicated by HCPC SOPs at Doctoral level (Level 8). These requirements need to be demonstrated at postgraduate level however and hence the MSc Dissertation module is an **essential** requirement for RPL in order to progress to the PGDip.

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A1. Establishing, maintaining and developing systems for legal, ethical and professional standards in applied psychology (QFP CR1).
- A2. Models of evidence based practice, reflection, and evaluation used to inform and innovate practice within their profession (QFP CR1, CR4).
- A3. The ethical and governance frameworks applicable to research and practice within their professional field (QFP CR1, CR3, CR4).
- A4. Critical reflection for own learning and professional practice (CR1, CR3).
- A5. Scientific writing and publication processes within the Forensic psychology field (QFP CR4).

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

- B1. Integrate knowledge of science and/or social theory to analyse problems or opportunities related to practice and justify strategies to inform practice (QFP CR1).
- B2. Formulate questions, critically appraise, synthesise and evaluate evidence so as to transfer theoretical, research and professional understanding into areas of practice (QFP CR4).
- B3. Critically discuss the methodological, ethical and financial limitations of their proposed plan of investigation and be aware of the implications of such constraints (QFP CR1, CR4).
- 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 (QFP CR1, CR3, CR4).

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

- C1. Establish, develop and maintain working relationships with clients (QFP CR1, CR3).
- C2. Conduct applications of Forensic psychology (QFP CR1).
- C3. Monitor the implementation of consultancy (QFP CR4).
- C4. Evaluate the impact of the consultancy (QFP CR4).
- C5. Promote psychological principles, practices, services and benefits (QFP CR3, CR4).
- C6. Provide psychological advice and guidance to others and facilitate the use of psychological services (QFP CR1, CR4).
- C7. Communicate the processes and outcomes of psychological and other applications and developments (QFP CR3).

- C8. Outline changing professional context and manage the processes of change to enable solving of problematic situations as they arise (QFP CR1, CR3).
- C9. Plan a research/professional development protocol and prepare an application for approval and demonstrate the likely relevance of the work to the area of practice (QFP CR4).

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D1. Prepare and present evidence in formal settings (QFP CR3).
- D2. Provide feedback to clients (QFP CR1, CR3).
- D3. Disseminate theoretical, research and professional understanding and recommendations to critical communities using a variety of formats (QFP CR4).
- D4. Manage information and research data (QFP CR3, CR4).
- D5. Manage change effectively, prioritise time and workloads and respond to changing professional demands (CR1).
- D6. Interact and network within a multidisciplinary team to conduct research and develop professionally (QFP CR3, QFP CR4).
- D7. Identify learning needs and be autonomous in the planning and management of their own learning (QFP CR1, CR4).
- D8. Demonstrate a reflective and self-critical approach to research and professional development (QFP CR1).

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The central orientation and values that inform the teaching and learning strategy embedded in the programme are to provide a learning experience that meets students' needs, which is underpinned by research-led teaching, and a supportive and enabling learning environment. The programme will be conducted within a demonstrable research culture, as evidenced by the active publication record of members of the programme team and other staff allied to delivery and supervision.

As the majority of the learning outcomes in this programme relate to Section 5 of the HCPC's Standards of Education and Training (which focuses on programme's practice placements), learning and teaching strategies and methods have been developed to closely adhere to these external body guidelines. That is, the learning and teaching strategy is primarily via supervision.

Supervision is defined as "a personal interaction between the Forensic psychologist in training and their supervisor for the purpose of addressing the trainee's needs and performance in relation to the requirements of the accredited programme". This supervision may take place by means of face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations and/or e-mail communication. Supervision may also occur between supervisors and groups of trainees. We have adapted this model of supervision and supplemented the mandatory requirements with a formalised learning and teaching structure.

During the 'taught' element of the programme, students will partake in lectures, tutorials, workshops, and presentations [A3, A4, A5, B2, D3]. Students will attend workshop sessions in teaching blocks throughout the duration of the programme, which will have a specific learning and teaching theme [A1, A2, A3, A4, A5] and provide a supportive environment for reflective practice, the development of practice skills, and peer-debate and development, [C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, D3, D6, D8]. Students will also have a (minimum of) quarterly one-to-one tutorials with their supervisor(s) (see below) to reflect on and develop practice and theoretical understanding [B1, B2, B3, B4, C9, C10], professional development and practice philosophy and values [C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8], and toward the communication of psychological knowledge [D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8].

In addition, students will be supported to identify and undertake placement opportunities to attain at least 360 days [A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8].

This placement will include:

At least two years' full-time placement experience.

Full-time is defined as five days per week for 45 weeks of the year with a minimum of 360 days placement experience in total. One of these days per week is expected to be dedicated to completion of the requirements of the qualification as defined in the Module Descriptors. Each Core Role must have a minimum of 90 days but it is expected that, in most instances, more days will be required to demonstrate competence and to meet the requirements of the Qualification. Placements for this programme will typically last for at least 6 months and up to 4 placements may be required. It is the responsibility of the student to source appropriate placements although the university is able to provide assistance to this end through the placement office, contacts with the course team and some arrangements between the University and placement providers.

It should be noted that whilst a minimum of 90 days of supervised practice is expected in relation to each Core Role, there is no expectation that portfolio case study submissions should cover a period of practice of this length. Much of the time spent on placement will be spent acquiring skills and developing competence.

The portfolio case study reports, which should demonstrate that competence has been achieved, are likely to represent a shorter period of time during which a piece of work has been carried out at the level expected of a Registered Psychologist.

The programme will provide access to a range of appropriately qualified and experienced supervisors who will support students in three ways. First, students will be supported by a coordinating placement tutor or supervisor who is appropriately qualified (i.e., a Chartered Psychologist, HCPC registered Forensic Psychologist). The coordinating supervisor may be a member of the programme team and will advise students on identifying and pursuing placement opportunities.

Second, students will have practice placement educators/ designated supervisors. These supervisors must be appropriately qualified such as being a Chartered Forensic Psychologist and HCPC registered, but may also include individuals registered in a different domain of psychology, or be a member of another profession:

- a) Psychologists providing supervision to trainees on accredited programmes must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.
- b) Members of other professions who are providing supervision to trainees on accredited programmes should normally be registered with an appropriate professional or statutory body.

The nature of supervision provided will depend on the organisational context in which the placement takes place and may range from supervision of specific case work to supervision of the whole placement experience. The course leader will ensure that all supervisors involved have the appropriate competencies to be offering the particular services in which they are supervising the trainee.

17. Assessment Strategy

As this degree maps against regulatory body (HCPC) requirements, the assessment strategy is specifically aligned with these respective standards and assessment loads. More information is provided in the [Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists](#).

A portfolio of coursework comprising critical reflections, a practice log, and case studies of applied work will provide the majority of assessment load – which is managed through supervised practice evidenced in the portfolios for the Professional Practice Modules (1 and 2) and assessed through the portfolio log of evidence. Consultancy and training reports are also submitted in line with the requirements of the Training and Reflection in Forensic Psychology module and the Consultancy, Communication and Expertise module. A 90 minute practice related viva voce is also integrated into the final assessment for this latter module.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Module Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and modules

The PGDip in Forensic Psychology Practice will be offered part time over 2 years. The postgraduate diploma comprises 120 L7 credits. Direct entry to Stage 2 is the normal route into the programme. Stage 2 comprises the four 30 credit modules of the PGDip.

19. Employability Statement

The programme learning outcomes are achieved through activities that are based in, or are derived from, students' professional context and practice. All module assessments are located in the specific work-based context of the student. The PGDip in Forensic Psychology Practice requires students to reflect explicitly on their current professional role and their future personal and professional development. Formal and informal links with employers and alumni are maintained through workshops, events and networking opportunities.

The department has a Placement and Employability Advisor who is linked to a faculty group supporting placements. The group is made up of academic staff with a dedicated responsibility for study visit / observation opportunities, placements and employment in the department in addition to the Science Faculty Careers advisor. Meetings with course leaders and external employers are a function of this group to ensure that the course content and structure are in line with the ever-changing needs of the employment market.

The structured tutorial programme provides several opportunities for Personal Development Planning (PDP). This centres on students' identifying their strengths, weaknesses and interests and then reflecting on what their future aims and goals are for their degree and beyond.

All students are supported beyond graduation via reference writing from personal tutors and access to the Departmental Careers Tutor and University's Careers Service for support. Tutors also continue to provide informal support and advice to ex-students where requested. Graduates of the Department are also able to keep in touch through the university Alumni service. Alumni members are often invited to return to the department to support activities aimed at fulfilling our employability strategy (e.g., by giving talks to current undergraduates).

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- Students are supported by a coordinating supervisor, practice placement supervisor(s) and research supervisor(s)
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance – separate from their research supervisor
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- Faculty Learning Support Tutors
- Excellent library facilities

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

- Student course and module handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations
- Feedback is provided for all assessments
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards

21. Admissions Criteria

As the programme is likely to involve working with children and/or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service check will be a requirement of admission. Legislation that came into effect on 29th May 2013 allows for some old or minor convictions and cautions to be exempt from disclosure under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended). This means that under the new filtering rules, applicants will no longer need to declare certain old and minor convictions or cautions when completing a DBS application form, as they will not appear on the DBS disclosure certificate, and the University cannot take these into account in their decisions. This process is referred to as the "filtering" of convictions and more information can be found via DBS filtering guidance

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

All applicants are interviewed prior to entry on to the programme. For entry onto the programme the following are required:

- A 2:1 in a BPS accredited BSc (Hons) degree in Psychology or Forensic Psychology (or related degree title) which confers Graduate Basis for Chartered Status OR
- A 2:1 undergraduate degree and a BPS accredited Conversion Course in Psychology, AND
- A BPS accredited MSc in Forensic Psychology
- Demonstration of at least 1 year experience in a relevant setting
- Ability to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no sub-element below 7.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Where applicants do not hold the above qualifications they will be counselled to undertake the relevant qualifications which are available within the department.

The Course team will assess the suitability of students at an assessment day following selection via application form. The assessment day which will include some group exercises and a formal interview with transparent assessment criteria employed by the Course Team to determine suitability for the programme.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Module and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies
- Module Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports

- Periodic Programme Review
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees
- Staff Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review and Development Framework
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Module Co-ordinators for module content and delivery
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Department
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Module, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Module and Course level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee module assessment and usually attend Module Assessment Boards
- Review module assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts

² www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

- Present report to Module Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

Accreditation for this course is provided by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which is the only professional body for approving courses of this nature in the UK. This course will provide students with eligibility to enrol on the HCPC's register of practitioner psychologists. As a high-quality benchmarking process, accredited courses also provide the widest range of training, development and employment opportunities for graduates delivered in partnership with current staff who are Chartered Psychologists.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The course will be subject to normal monitoring and review policy and procedures and as a new course, is yet to undergo a Periodic Review.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*³).

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)⁴ and [Department](#)⁵ websites

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/contacts-and-departments/