COURSE SPECIFICATION

MSc Forensic Psychology

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

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COURSE SPECIFICATION

Please refer to the Course Specification Guidance Notes for guidance on completing this document.

Course Title	*MSc Forensic Psychology*
Final Award	*MSc*
Exit Awards	*PGDip, PGCert*
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	*P1348FTC; P1348PTC*
Mode of study	*Full time; Part time*
Mode of delivery	*Campus*
Normal length of course	*1 year Full Time; 2 years Part Time*
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	*From September 2022 intake onwards*
Awarding Body	*University of Portsmouth*
Teaching Institution	*University of Portsmouth*
Faculty	Faculty of Science & Health
School/Department/Subject Group	*Department of Psychology*
School/Department/Subject Group webpage	*http://www.port.ac.uk/department-of-psychology/*
Course webpage including entry criteria	*http://www2.port.ac.uk/courses/psychology/msc-forensic-psychology/*
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	*The British Psychological Society*
Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	*Level 7*

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 Specifications and the Course Moodle site and module sites provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the Course and Module Catalogue 2021/22 for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

1. To equip students with a systematic knowledge and understanding of forensic psychology in accordance with the academic requirements of the Division of Forensic Psychology (DFP) of the British Psychological Society (BPS) for accredited courses and eventual progression to autonomous practice.
2. To build an appreciation of the relevance to forensic psychology of theories, techniques and findings from a range of other areas of psychology in order to provide a basis for creative synthesis in the development of the discipline.
3. To develop a conceptual and practical understanding of processes, methods and analytical techniques employed in research in order to enable research relevant to forensic psychology to be evaluated and conducted.
4. To provide a conceptual and practical understanding of the scientist-practitioner (empirical, analytical and rational) approach to the often complex and challenging problems encountered in forensic psychology.
5. To highlight aspects of the communicative, interpersonal and organisational contexts of practice in forensic psychology necessary to effective engagement and influence within the scientist-practitioner approach.
6. To enable students to adopt an independent, responsible and reflective approach to learning and practice as a basis for continuous development both within and outside of the course.
7. To promote an awareness of ethical issues in relation to research and practice in forensic psychology

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 nature and application of theory, research and practice in forensic psychology ('knowing why').	*Lectures and workshops provide an orientation towards key areas of knowledge and understanding, supported by the Moodle virtual learning environment and contact with tutors.*	*Summative assignments (e.g. court cases and briefing reports) require assimilating, utilising and presenting psychological and systemic knowledge to recipients at a professional level.*
A2	Principles and techniques in research and practice ('knowing how').		
A3	Factual and legal information pertaining to the contexts, concerns and operation of the criminal and civil justice systems ('knowing that').		
A4	Specialist subject knowledge in the area researched for the empirical research project.		*Formative assignments are used to prepare students for summative work.*

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
B1	Critically evaluate and interpret research, practice and policy relevant to forensic psychology from published and unpublished sources.	*Considerable prominence is given to problem-solving and discussion within lectures and workshops and a reflective approach more generally, not least in independent study.*	*Assessments are constructed for realism and authenticity with respect to real world practice (e.g. court case and briefing reports, data analysis reports, case studies, and an empirical research project) and to promote learning as well as reflect it. Commendations have been received from the professional body for the extent to which assignments achieve this.*
B2	Creatively synthesise evidence and ideas from a range of perspectives, levels of analysis, methods and areas of study.		
B3	Devise questions, design and implement strategies for exploratory and hypothesis-centred research and evaluate findings within appropriate frameworks.		
B4	Analyse complex issues and problems and operationalise relevant solutions in a systematic, informed and reflective manner.		

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
C1	Select, implement and evaluate use of a range of research methods with accurate understanding and professional rigour.	*Students are given considerable latitude in choosing the topic of their research project; this is the start of a process that emphasises active engagement, creativity and responsibility. This takes place within a supportive supervisory context also aimed at cultivating further a reflective approach to navigating and negotiating demands.*	*In addition to an empirical research project, students complete a project proposal written from an ethical and methodological perspective, and, a review report based upon analysis (involving a series of decisions) of independently obtained research evidence.*
C2	Analyse and interpret data in a systematic, informed and critical manner.		
C3	Plan work and manage time effectively in the face of competing and complex demands.		
C4	Integrate legal, ethical and contextual issues in planning and evaluating research and practice in forensic psychology.		

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
D1	Demonstrate creativity, clarity and flexibility in the use of principles and methods of problem-solving.	*There is a high degree of continuity between problem- solving, reflection and communication in lectures, workshops and in assignments (accompanied by taught inputs as well as practice in the skills indicated by the learning outcomes. Learning is also supported by a reflective log, in which students summarise feedback on assignments and action plans to address this; this then provides a focus for discussion between student and personal tutor.*	*Group working and presentations are used as formative assignments in three modules, consistent with the course's approach to using assignments to promote development as well as reflect it. Written reports are written for a professional but often non- psychologist reader (e.g. a prison governor or chief constable). Reflective adjuncts to the main summative assignments provide a window on how individuals approached tasks and made decisions, with implications for future personal and professional development.*
D2	Utilise styles and formats for spoken and written communication which are appropriate to the occasion and the recipient.		
D3	Reflect explicitly and systematically on development of skills and understanding.		
D4	Participate actively and constructively in communication and problem- solving in a group setting.		

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.

In addition to these University support services this course also provides students with a personal tutor and a project supervisor, whilst learning is also supported by the Moodle virtual learning environment.

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.

Reference Points

Course specification for *MSc Forensic Psychology*

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

- [University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification](#)
- [University Vision 2030 and Strategy 2025](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Qualification Characteristic Statements](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [British Psychological Society Standards for the Accreditation of Masters & Doctoral Programmes in Forensic Psychology (January 2019)](#)
- [Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for Practitioner Psychologists (September 2023)](#)
- 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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