COURSE SPECIFICATION

BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology

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

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COURSE SPECIFICATION

Course specification for *BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology*

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

Course Title	BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology
Final Award	BSc (Hons)
Exit Awards	CertHE, DipHE
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	C2074S (C810)
Mode of study	Full time
Mode of delivery	Campus
Normal length of course	3 years, 4 years with placement
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	2023-24
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	https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/organisational-structure/our-academic-structure/faculty-of-science-and-health/department-of-psychology
Course webpage including entry criteria	https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/bsc-hons-forensic-psychology
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	British Psychological Society (BPS)
Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	Level 6

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 Moodle sites provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the Course and Module Catalogue 2023-2024 for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

General Aims.

- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment.
- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible, coherent programme of study.
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop key transferable skills for lifelong learning, employability and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets.
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge required to maximise career and postgraduate study opportunities.

Subject Specific Aims.

Where relevant, subject specific aims are derived from Section 2.2a to 2.2f (Defining Principles) of the [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (SBS) for Psychology (2019)](.).

- To produce a scientific understanding of the mind, brain, behaviour and experience, and how they interact with the complex environments in which they exist.
- To provide a broad education presenting multiple perspectives in a way which meets the needs of a career in any area of psychology but especially forensic psychology and to prepare for postgraduate study.
- To foster knowledge of psychology and its contexts and a critical engagement with its specialised subject areas, especially forensic psychology, including evaluation of theory, research findings and applications.
- To develop an understanding of the role of empirical evidence in the creation and constraint of theory, and also in how theory guides the collection and interpretation of empirical data via qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
- To cultivate technical and transferable skills required for professional success.
- To provide course content that includes both a broad base of psychology modules(commensurate with BPS requirements) and forensic content at all three levels.
- To encourage an appreciation of the relevance to forensic psychology of theories and findings from a range of other areas of psychology.
- To promote an awareness of ethical issues in relation to research and practice in psychology (with a special focus in forensic psychology).
- To provide an opportunity for students to gain experience and skills relevant to employment (or further study) within psychology or related subject areas by choosing relevant work placement/work based learning/study options and/or completion of an optional sandwich year.

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 document.

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

Where indicated below, the specific Programme Learning Outcomes relate to Section 3 (Subject Knowledge and Understanding), Section 4 (Skills) and Section 6 (Benchmark Standards) of the [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (SBS) for Psychology (2019)](.).

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
A1			

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	The range of approaches to understanding psychological phenomena (and the links between them) including biological psychology, cognitive psychology, individual differences, developmental psychology and social psychology, as well as cultural and historical perspectives.	Content on modules across the programme is delivered through a mixture of lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical workshops and regular individual meetings with staff. At Level 4, the course covers the conceptual, philosophical and cultural history of psychology, including different perspectives; a range of research and analysis techniques, providing opportunities to use this knowledge in research projects including forensic psychology topics; content providing a foundation for exploring psychological processes relevant to crime and the law; and the development of key skills important in the transition to university life. At Level 5, the course develops 'core' aspects of the BPS (GBC) curriculum providing an appreciation of the different perspectives from which human and non-human animal behaviour may be viewed, including links between research and theoretical development within the discipline; advanced research methods and analyses and specific career orientated content covering professional work roles allied to forensic psychology are also examined. At Level 6, content on optional modules provides coverage of specialised and applied areas comprising psychology and forensic psychology modules. The empirical project is completed providing the opportunity to carry out independent research work.	To ensure that the full range of skills and knowledge being developed by the programme can be demonstrated, a variety of forms of summative assessment are used including: essays; portfolios; research reports (including major project); reflective reports, psychometric reports; presentations (oral and poster); interview; examinations, interpretation and application of statistical techniques. All core areas of the BPS (GBC) curriculum are delivered at FHEQ Levels 5 and 6 and are non-optional such that achievement in these modules can contribute to the final award classification. In addition, opportunities for formative assessment are identified throughout the programme so students are able to develop their understanding and application of skills in assessment type activities other than those which are purely summative.
A2	Major theoretical frameworks and research methodologies used in forensic psychology and how theory and research findings are applied to real world problems and forensic practice.		
A3	The different research methodologies used to investigate psychological phenomena, and the range of measurement and analytical techniques, used to interpret different forms of psychological data.		
A4	The conventions and presentation styles used for reporting on academic literature, scientific findings and delivering oral presentations to facilitate effective communication and cogent argumentation.		
A5	The professions, roles and responsibilities relating to different forms of psychological practice and vocations, especially in the area of forensic psychology.		

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment Methods
B1	Generate and explore creative ideas and apply multiple perspectives to psychological		

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		Using an established tradition of empirical enquiry and scientific thought, to examine evidence and critically evaluate academic arguments underpins the delivery of content across the course.	Written feedback is provided to students for coursework-type and examination-type assessments undertaken. Supporting a 'feed forward' approach, markers identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance, and outline priorities for improving their future work.
	issues.		
B2	Develop and sustain reasoned arguments using psychological theories and empirical findings, to formulate and appreciate different opinions.	This approach evolves as the student moves through the three FHEQ levels, including progressive coverage of more advanced content, research methods and methodological issues.	
B3	Evaluate and reflect on different practical, theoretical and ethical issues involved in psychological research with different methodologies.	Basic information literacy skills for finding and evaluating academic literature, as well as basic research and analysis skills to enable examination of trends in human behaviour are examined early in the course. Small group discussion through seminars and tutorials helps to further develop skills in debate and critical evaluation.	Feedback is provided in the context of departmental undergraduate marking criteria which are aligned to the course learning outcomes. The importance of developing different cognitive skills are emphasised (i.e. argumentation, use of supporting literature and evidence to justify opinions or interpretations, application of critical thinking, etc.).
B4	Identify and focus on pertinent issues.	Emphasis is placed on the examination of primary sources. Later in the course, more complex practical and theoretical work is undertaken where students may generate their own arguments or ideas for research and derive rationales for investigations from existing literature.	

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment Methods
C1	Communicate psychological ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means.	Programme learning outcomes specific to the development of psychology specific skills are primarily demonstrated through coverage of methodological and analytical techniques enabling students to practice the application of research skills throughout the programme.	Students complete a range of assessments which are aimed at developing practical skills in study design, ethical processes and data analysis. These are reported using different formats such as poster and oral presentations as well as individual and group research reports which increase in complexity throughout the course.
C2	Reason scientifically using a range of statistical and non-statistical methods with confidence to understand the nature of psychological evidence.		
C3	Conduct independent psychological research, through practical activities, under appropriate supervision.	In the early stages, students work on practical assignments completed periodically throughout the academic year involving experimental and non-experimental methods; design; project planning;	

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment Methods
C4	Be aware of ethical principles, behaviours and as they apply to research and practice.	data collection; data management; and the interpretation and presentation of findings in a range of different professional formats. This culminates with the completion of an original and independently conducted research project at Level 6. Further opportunities to develop subject specific practical skills are also provided by optional work-based and placement learning opportunities at Levels 5 and 6.	Self-tests (with immediate feedback) are also used as part of research-based tuition, as well as other professional formats (e.g. client feedback on psychological tests) Final-year project work is assessed by completion of an empirical dissertation which provides relevant background literature and a rationale for the research conducted, and which explains the conduct and findings of the study and its scientific contribution. Students may also opt for a Level 6 pathway where a panel interview about their study forms part of the assessment of the final year project.

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

LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
D1	Gather, retrieve and synthesise information effectively.	Core modules throughout the course equip students with training in the selection and evaluation of appropriate sources. Research focussed modules support the development of IT and communication skills for study design, data interpretation, presentation and reporting skills. Practical work and tutorial work also provides opportunities for students to work together to develop teamwork skills and produce shared outputs. Practical work becomes increasingly self-directed as students' progress through the programme, leading to the independently conducted	The programme provides both examination-based and coursework-based assessments of problem solving, numeracy and research skills. Through the completion of group work and group assessments there is also provision for assessment of the ability to work collaboratively, manage projects, communicate effectively in different formats, demonstrate IT skills and team working. Where group summative assessments are used, peer evaluations are
D2	Communicate clearly through a range of media, visually, orally, written in a manner appropriate to their audience.		
D3	Demonstrate an ability to use IT effectively, including word-processing, spreadsheets, data analysis software, electronic bibliographic databases and other online resources relevant to psychology.		
D4	Demonstrate effective team-working skills, being sensitive to environmental and interpersonal aspects.		
D5			

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	Take charge of own learning, reflecting and evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses for future learning.	research project at Level 6. The tutorial programme at Levels 4 and 5 also supports the development, within students, of an independent approach to learning, and provides opportunities for discussion, feedback and reflection on learning. Other opportunities for reflective learning are provided through seminars and work-based or placement learning opportunities throughout the course, and the completion of directed activities on which students receive feedback.	integrated into assessment marking and feedback. Portfolio assessments are also used which in some cases incorporate reflexive learning components associated with personal experience, academic and/or career development.

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.

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

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification
- University Vision 2030 and Strategy 2025
- University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning

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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