

# Forensic Psychology

<b>Final award</b>	BSc (Hons)
<b>Intermediate awards available</b>	Cert. HE, DipHE
<b>UCAS code</b>	C816
<b>Details of professional body accreditation</b>	Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society
<b>Relevant QAA Benchmark statements</b>	Psychology
<b>Date specification last up-dated</b>	November 2010

## Profile

### The summary - UCAS programme profile

#### **BANNER BOX:**

- Accredited by the British Psychological Society as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (formerly known as Graduate Basis for Registration), provided the minimum standard of a Lower Second Class Honours is achieved. This is the first step towards becoming a Chartered Psychologist.
- Available for full and part time study; core modules offered as day or evening attendance
- Two entry points, September and February starts
- Our School of Psychology also offers a full range of postgraduate professional training programmes.

#### **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

For admission to the BSc Forensic Psychology programme candidates normally need:

- 240 UCAS tariff points, with at least 140 points obtained from A2 qualifications or new GNVQ equivalent;
- We also accept people with Access, NVQ and a variety of other pre-University level qualifications including International and European Baccalaureate
- We also accept those with relevant professional and vocational qualifications.
- Students may be admitted through Accreditation of Experiential Learning (AEL) or Accreditation of Certificated Learning (ACL) processes.
- In the case of applicants whose first language is not English, then IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) is required.
- International qualifications will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education undergraduate programmes

For further information or clarification, please contact the Psychology Field Administration Team at [psychology@uel.ac.uk](mailto:psychology@uel.ac.uk) or telephone 020 8223 4609

## **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

### **What is Forensic Psychology?**

Forensic psychology is the application of psychological knowledge to the criminal justice system and criminal behaviour. Forensic psychology, as with more mainstream psychology, takes as its subject matter from the empirical study of behaviour. On this programme students will cover the range of topics to be found on any BPS accredited BSc Psychology programme, including the biological basis of behaviour, mental functioning, development and change across the lifespan, individual differences such as personality and intelligence and the influence of social contexts on behaviour. As well as covering key topics in psychology, and their applications to applied contexts such as health, work, education, and therapy, this programme also applies psychological theories to forensic issues. The topics included in the programme are for the most part dictated by what issues forensic psychologists contend with, and how they function on a daily basis. Therefore, students will be introduced to the underlying skills that forensic psychologists use in assessing, interviewing and case formulation, together with related theories and research evidence. Moreover, the programme will examine the contextual aspects of forensic psychology and the applications of psychological theory to the understanding of offending behaviour and criminal conduct. The objective of the programme is to cultivate the intellectual development of students by providing them with a range of theoretical approaches to forensic psychology, and to provide transferable professional and generic skills to help students to work competently within a forensic setting.

### **Psychology at UEL**

- We have successfully run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Psychology for over forty years.
- The BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology degree is accredited by the British Psychological Society as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (formerly known as Graduate Basis for Registration) (for those achieving a Lower Second Class Honours degree or above). This is an essential pre-requisite for continuing onto professional training programme. It is worth noting that many of these now require 'good' degrees (First Class or Upper second Class Honours degrees). On completion of this award you will not be qualified to practice as a Forensic Psychologist without undertaking further postgraduate training.
- As well as our BSc programmes the School of Psychology offers postgraduate programmes in all the main areas of professional applied Psychology: clinical psychology, child & educational psychology, occupational psychology and counselling psychology (as well as having numerous postgraduate research students)
- We also offer post graduate programmes in Counselling, Guidance, Coaching and Positive Psychology.
- The programme has a significant option element, including modules relevant to later professional training.
- Our BSc programmes are available full-time and part-time
- Over 80% of our BSc graduates have found jobs or postgraduate training places within 6 months.
- Several UEL psychology graduates have become professors of psychology and a great many have achieved senior positions in clinical, educational and occupational psychology and, more generally, in industry and commerce.

- Our students come from a wide range of ethnic & cultural backgrounds with a significant proportion of international students. Around 50% are mature students.

## **Programme structure**

BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology is a three-year full-time programme or normally a minimum of four and a half years part-time, though this can often be reduced to four years, depending on previous qualifications and experience.

There are two semesters in each year of study, and in each semester a full-time student would usually study and be assessed in three modules. Each module carries a 20-credit value. At Level 3, however, there is a double, 40-credit research project module, which runs for the entire year.

To be awarded an honours degree in forensic psychology, a student would have completed (or been given prior accreditation in up to two-thirds of) a total of 18 modules, with a value of 360 credits. This would comprise 120 credits at Level 1, 120 at level 2 and 120 at Level 3. The research project Level 3 module must be passed in order to achieve an Honours degree.

A student studying part time would progress at a slower pace. Up to two modules per semester may be followed and assessed in the part time mode.

## **Learning environment**

Teaching methods vary from module to module but include lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical classes, demonstrations, workshops and individual supervision. Student learning is supported by lecture notes, module handbooks and suggested reading. Direct class contact is supplemented by on-line interactive programme materials, individual reading, completion of set exercises and preparation for assignments.

Learning resources include IT and general and specialised psychology laboratories and equipment, access to electronic databases and specialist library facilities.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is by a mix of coursework and examination. Coursework includes essays, research reports, group and seminar presentations and a final year critical project. The majority of assessment at Level 1 is by coursework, to provide maximum formative feedback to students. At Levels 2 and 3, the balance of coursework and examination will depend on option choice, but one-third of Level 3 is given to an empirical research coursework project.

## **Work experience/placement opportunities**

A level 2 work-based-learning module is available as an option for single honours students. Further information is available from the University Employability Unit. Students are also encouraged to undertake relevant voluntary work, and opportunities for this are displayed at the Psychology Help Desk.

## **Project work**

The final year project is a compulsory module for Honours. Students conduct a literature review of an area within forensic psychology of their choice, and design, carry out, analyse and interpret an original empirical investigation in this same area. The student is supported on a one-to-one basis by regular meetings with an academic supervisor with research and/or theoretical expertise in the area. Postgraduate professional training staff are also available to act as supervisors to undergraduate students if appropriate.

### **Added value**

The range of expertise available in the School enables students to choose from a variety of option modules in both forensic psychology and more applied areas of work that will help prepare them for a range of careers. For those achieving a lower second class honours degree or above, the degree confers eligibility for further graduate professional training (Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (formerly known as Graduate Basis for Registration) with the British Psychological Society), which is the first step towards being a Chartered Psychologist.

### **IS THIS THE PROGRAMME FOR ME?**

#### **If you are interested in...**

- The problem of crime and the workings of the Criminal Justice System
- Acquiring knowledge and deep understanding of theories and principles of psychology as applied to forensic contexts
- Analysing the complex interaction between psychological and social factors, crime and the courts
- Applying psychological theory to the understanding of criminal activities and offending behaviour
- Understanding the role of forensic psychologists in modern practice of the discipline
- Working with people in a range of professional settings
- Gaining good, flexible employment related skills

#### **If you enjoy...**

- Keeping abreast of current affairs and investigating the causes of crime
- Engaging in psychological work that focuses on forensic issues such as crime and deviant behaviour
- Investigating the approach of the criminal courts towards suspects/defendants, victims and witnesses
- Designing and carrying out empirical work into forensic issues

#### **If you want...**

- A professionally accredited degree in Psychology
- The opportunity to enter postgraduate training for a career
- Knowledge and skills that can be used in a large range of career settings
- To study in a friendly and informal school

### **Your future career**

A good degree in forensic psychology is the **first step** towards becoming a professional forensic psychologist. A degree in this field would also be a route into other professional psychology fields namely, clinical, educational, occupational, counselling, or health psychology. Those wishing to specialise in these areas undertake further postgraduate training at Masters or Doctorate level.

As well as providing a route into professional forensic psychology, a degree in this field is also relevant to a wide range of other areas of forensic work. Graduates of the programme would be well suited for posts within organizations such as the Police, the probation and prison service, youth offending teams, and drugs referral and treatment agencies to name but a few, many of which incorporate forensic psychological features into their work.

Alternatively, since all graduates will have a BPS-recognised degree, they are not limited to a career in forensic psychology, but may pursue a career in any other area of psychological related employment. Examples of these are social welfare, sport & leisure, education, human resource management, consumer research and advertising, media, market research and community work.

In addition to covering specific areas of psychology, a degree in forensic psychology as with any degree in psychology provides training in data collection and analysis, communication skills and report writing, IT skills and interpersonal awareness. It therefore provides an excellent basis for employment in areas not directly related to psychology.

### **How we support you**

Students joining the programme are offered an induction programme in the week before classes begin. Returning students also receive induction to the next level or year of their programme.

All students are allocated a personal and academic tutor. Additional help is available from year group tutors, the programme leader and leaders of individual modules. The School of Psychology has a well-established mentoring scheme in which volunteers from the second and third years of the programme act as mentors to the first year students.

First year students are supported by a programme designed to help them develop study skills, covering IT skills, library use, report and essay writing, the ethics of study and research, and working in groups. Research Methodology teaching is supplemented by on-line interactive programme materials & discussion groups.

Final year project supervisors also provide personal support and help with career choice, job applications and preparation of CVs.

Students can take advantage of the flexibility of our provision (full-time/part-time, and for core modules day or evening teaching), to adjust their mode of study to suit changes in their financial, occupational or family responsibilities.

Specialist support (for example, for financial advice, careers advice, counselling and learning support) is also available from central University services. The University has a student special needs advisor.

### **Bonus factors**

Students have the chance to participate in and help with real-life research. The best student projects have been accepted for publication in professional journals.

Our Psychology Help Desk offers a valuable one-stop source of information and advice, as well as a centre for handing in and retrieving course work, booking equipment and rooms, and assistance with IT problems.

## **Outcomes**

### **Programme aims and learning outcomes**

#### **What is this programme designed to achieve?**

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- progress to postgraduate study/professional training, by providing the necessary specialised knowledge and skills to gain you the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (formerly known as Graduate Basis for Registration) of the British Psychological Society.
- shape your study towards your career aspirations and interests by providing a range of option choices.
- equip you with the skills that will enable you to pursue successful, responsible and useful careers in a number of areas of employment gain experience of postgraduate practice in Psychology by links with the professional programmes in the School.
- match your mode of study to your needs and responsibilities through our flexibility in programme provision.

#### **What will you learn?**

##### **Knowledge**

- Good understanding both of the core areas of Psychology (including Biological foundations; Cognitive Psychology; Social Psychology; Developmental Psychology; Individual Differences, Emotion & Motivation; Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology; Research Methods) and their relation to forensic contexts.
- Detailed knowledge of specialised areas in forensic psychology and other areas through option choice and in depth work on a piece of empirical research.
- Knowledge of a range of research paradigms, methods and measurement techniques.
- Knowledge of real life applications of theory to behaviour and experience.
- Knowledge of how behaviour and experience can be affected by physical mental illness.

##### **Thinking skills**

- Analysis & interpretation of evidence
- Scientific reasoning
- Critical thinking
- Appreciation of multiple perspectives & approaches

## **Subject-Based Practical skills**

- Ability to conduct literature searches.
- Ability to design & conduct both quantitative and qualitative research.
- Ability to analyse & interpret quantitative & qualitative data.
- Ability to evaluate and write up research in suitable format.
- Awareness of ethical issues & principles in research on human behaviour.
- Awareness of the practicalities associated with conducting research.

## **Skills for life and work (general skills)**

- Clarity in communication, both oral & written
- Computer literacy (word-processing, electronic communication, electronic databases, statistical software, internet searching).
- Interpersonal & group skills
- Numeracy & statistical competence
- Self-knowledge and reflexivity
- Planning & time-management

## **Structure**

### **The programme structure**

#### **Introduction**

All programmes are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

- 0 - equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 - equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 2 - equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 - equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M - equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

#### **Credit rating**

The overall credit-rating of this programme is 360 credits.

#### **Typical duration**

The typical duration of this programme is three years full-time or four and a half years part-time. It is possible to move from full-time to part-time study and vice-versa to accommodate any external factors such as financial constraints or domestic commitments.

Many of our students make use of this flexibility and this may have an impact on the overall duration of their study period.

### **How the teaching year is divided**

The teaching year begins in September and ends in June, but we also allow students to join at the start of Semester B, in February. A typical full-time student will study the equivalent of 120 credits over the year. A typical part-time student will study for two evenings per week and will complete 80 credits over the year.

### **What you will study when**

This programme is part of a modular degree scheme. A student registered in a full-time attendance mode will take six 20 credit modules (or fewer, if any are 40 credit modules) per year. An honours degree student will complete modules totalling 120 credits at level one, modules totalling 120 credits at level 2 and modules totalling 120 credits at level 3.

It is possible to bring together modules from one field with modules from another to produce a combined programme. Subjects are offered in a variety of combinations:

- Single - 120 credits at levels one, two and three

Modules are defined as:

- Core - Must be taken
- Option - Select from a range of identified module within the field
- University Wide Option - Select from a wide range of university wide options

The following are the core and optional requirement for the single, major, joint and minor routes for this programme

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>UEL Module Code</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>SKILLS MODULES (Insert Y where appropriate)</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>STATUS SINGLE</b>
1	PY1101	Research Methods 1	N	20	CORE
1	PY1102	Research methods 2	N	20	CORE
1	PY1103	Individuals, development and social behaviour & skills	Y - Skills for academic learning	20	CORE
1	PY1104	Biological and cognitive bases of behaviour	N	20	CORE
1	PY1105	Thinking like a psychologist	N	20	CORE
1	PY1106	Topics in Psychology	N	20	CORE

2	PY2101 Research methods 3	Y	20	CORE
		Research Skills		
2	PY2103 Cognitive Psychology/ Psychobiology	N	20	CORE
2	PY2104 Individual differences and developmental psychology	N	20	CORE
2	PY2105 Conceptual and Historical Issues in Psychology (CHIPs) and Social Psychology	N	20	CORE
2	PY2106 Mental health	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2107 Brain damage, behaviour and the mind	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2108 Counselling Psychology	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2111 Drugs and Behaviour	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2120 Animal Behaviour Field Trip	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2122 Psychology of Personal Development	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2123 Psychological Perspectives on Work experience	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2124 Introduction to Critical Psychology	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2125 Critical Community Psychology	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2126 The Psychology of Physical Illness	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2127 Child Psychology in Action	N	20	OPTION
2	PY2128 Psychology in the justice system	N	20	CORE
3	PY3103 Occupational Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3104 Critical Social Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3106 Health Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3109 Method and Design Issues in Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3114 Evolutionary Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3115 Forensic Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3116 Advanced Developmental Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3117 Psychology and Difference	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3121 Psychology of Relationships	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3124 Positive Psychology	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3125 Addictive Behaviours	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3131 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3132 Development through the lifespan	N	20	OPTION

3	PY3134 Psychological Perspective on Power Politics and Political Violence	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3135 Psychology of Choice	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3136 Science, Pseudoscience & Paranormal Belief	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3137 Development and difficulties in the Early Years	N	20	OPTION
3	PY3138 Psychology of criminal conduct 1	N	20	CORE
3	PY3139 Psychology of criminal conduct 2	N	20	CORE
3	PY3142 Professional psychological studies for forensic psychology	Y	40	CORE
		Employability Skills		

### Requirements for gaining an award

In order to gain an **honours** degree you will need to obtain 360 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level three or higher

In order to gain an **ordinary degree** you will need to obtain a minimum of 300 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 60 credits at level three or higher

In order to gain a **Diploma of Higher Education** you will need to obtain at least 240 credits including a minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher and 120 credits at level two or higher

In order to gain a **Certificate of Higher Education** you will need to obtain 120 credits at level one or higher.

In order to gain an Associate Certificate you will need to obtain a minimum of 20 credits at level one or higher.

### Degree Classification

Where a student is eligible for an Honours degree, and has gained a minimum of 240 UEL credits at level 2 or level 3 on the programme, including a minimum of 120 UEL credits at level 3, the award classification is determined by calculating:

The arithmetic mean of the best 100 credits at level 3  $\times 2/3$  + The arithmetic mean of the next best 100 credits at levels 2 and/or 3  $\times 1/3$

and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

- 70% - 100% First Class Honours
- 60% - 69% Second Class Honours, First Division
- 50% - 59% Second Class Honours, Second Division
- 40% - 49% Third Class Honours
- 0% - 39% Not passed

## **Assessment**

### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

#### **Teaching and learning**

##### **Knowledge is developed through**

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Guided reading

##### **Thinking skills are developed through**

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Practical classes
- Individual supervision

##### **Practical skills are developed through**

- Practical classes
- IT workshops & exercises
- Project supervision

##### **Skills for life and work (general skills) are developed through**

- Skills tutorials
- IT workshops & exercises
- Course work assignments & feedback
- Project work
- Group work

#### **Assessment**

### **Knowledge is assessed by**

- Coursework
- Examinations

### **Thinking skills are assessed by**

- Coursework
- Examinations
- Project work

### **Practical skills are assessed by**

- Practical reports
- IT exercises
- Statistical examinations
- Project work

### **Skills for life and work (general skills) are assessed by**

- Project work
- Tutorial assignments
- IT exercises

## **Quality**

### **How we assure the quality of this programme**

#### **Before this programme started**

Before the programme started, the following was checked:

- there would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme;
- adequate resources would be in place;
- the overall aims and objectives were appropriate;
- the content of the programme met national benchmark requirements;
- the programme met any professional/statutory body requirements;
- the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This is done through a process of programme approval which involves consulting academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions.

#### **How we monitor the quality of this programme**

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards);

- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate);
- student feedback.

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by the University's Quality Standing Committee.

Once every six years an in-depth review of the whole field is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

### **The role of the programme committee**

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the quality assurance procedures.

### **The role of external examiners**

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme;
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students.

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments;
- Attending assessment boards;
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks;
- Ensuring that regulations are followed;
- Providing feedback through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future.

### **Listening to the views of students**

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

- End of module student feedback
- Student representation on the Programme Committee (meeting three times a year)
- Student representation on School Board (meeting 3 times a year)
- Annual Questionnaire to graduates

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- Minutes of Programme Committee
- Feedback from student representatives
- Minutes of School Board
- Notices on the Help Desk notice boards
- Notices on the Psychology UELPlus pages

### **Listening to the views of others**

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Feedback from External Examiners
- Links with professional training programmes
- Links with British Psychological Society

## **Further Information**

### **Alternative locations for studying this programme**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Which elements?</b>	<b>Taught by UEL staff</b>	<b>Taught by local staff</b>	<b>Method of Delivery</b>
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### **Where you can find further information**

Further information about this programme is available from:

- [The UEL web site](#)
- Module study guides (on CD-rom)
- [UEL General Regulations](#)
- [Academic Framework](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Guide to Single Honours and Combined Programmes](#)
- [School web-pages](#)
- [British Psychological Society web-pages](#)