Programme Specification

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER⌗

Course record information

Name and level of final award	• Master of Science - Forensic Psychology The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible
Name and level of intermediate awards	• Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Forensic Psychology • Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Forensic Psychology
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-psychology.pdf?sfvrsn=6935c881_15 Psychology
Professional statutory or regulatory body	British Psychological Society - Pending
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	• Forensic Psychology, Full-time, September start - 1 year standard length • Forensic Psychology, Part-time day, September start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2025/6

Additional Course Information

Our MSc in Forensic Psychology program is designed to meet the British Psychological Society's (BPS) standards, offering a holistic education that covers core curriculum areas critical for professional practice. It integrates key concepts of development, training, research methodologies, and applying psychological principles within the legal and criminal justice systems. The curriculum emphasises research, assessment, formulation, interventions, and understanding diverse client groups and forensic settings, preparing students for varied professional roles. Adhering to BPS standards, we aim to develop proficient, ethical practitioners who are well equipped to make significant contributions to forensic psychology.

The program is underpinned by the School of Social Sciences' commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the decolonisation of the curriculum, promoting a learning environment that values a plurality of identities and perspectives. We encourage students to engage fully with the material, bringing their unique backgrounds to enrich class discussions, group activities, and assessments. Our teaching methods are designed to be authentic and inclusive, supporting career advancement and professional practice in forensic psychology by engaging with issues of sexuality, gender, diversity, and culture.

Part-time students have a tailored pathway, starting their forensic research project in the first year and completing it over two years alongside other modules that span quantitative and qualitative research, sexual and violent crime, and other specialised areas.

Teaching and learning methods across the program are varied and aligned with the University's strategy, emphasising collaborative interaction, independent study, and developing critical evaluation skills through extensive reading and practical application. This approach prepares students for practitioner status and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning community where respect and vibrant discussion facilitate deeper understanding and professional growth.

Applicants to the course must submit a 500-word research proposal as part of their application. This proposal should outline a potential research idea demonstrating your interest and understanding of forensic psychology. It is important to note that the topic proposed in this initial stage may or may not be the same as the one pursued for actual research within the program. This flexibility allows for the refinement of ideas and alignment with the program's objectives and available resources.

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply.

Aims of the programme

Forensic Psychologists work empirically and theoretically as scientist-practitioners in the domains of criminal investigation, policing, courts, probation, criminal and civil justice systems, secure clinical settings, offender management and private practice. The primary aim of this British Psychological Society (BPS) accredited (pending) MSc Forensic Psychology course is to provide students with Stage 1 empirical and theoretical knowledge to enable them to move to complete the next stage of professional training (BPS Stage 2 or Health Care Practitioner Council (HCPC) route). In doing so this programme aims to i) provide students with a critical academic understanding of factors that may contribute to a wide variety of forms of offending, ii) encourage students to consider the role and limitations of causal explanations for offending in the development of offender treatments and services iii) introduce basic professional competencies for working in settings where forensic psychology is practised, including skills related to inter-disciplinary working, risk assessment, vulnerability, ethics, continuing professional development, report writing, and iv) equip students with knowledge of the legal system and the role of forensic psychology and how theory and research in psychology can be applied to legal issues.

This Forensic Psychology programme is dedicated to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion as integral components of the field. The curriculum prioritises diverse perspectives, incorporating case studies and research reflecting real-world diversity encountered in forensic settings. The learning environment actively encourages inclusive discussions, collaborative projects, and assessments to prepare students for culturally complex forensic contexts. Moreover, the module addresses biases within research and practice, fostering critical thinking to ensure graduates are knowledgeable and socially responsible forensic psychologists. Ultimately, our commitment is to nurture professionals who understand and value diversity, contributing to a more inclusive and ethical forensic psychology community.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

This course will provide students with the Stage 1 empirical and theoretical knowledge to enable them to move to complete the next stage of professional training (BPS Stage 2 or Health Care Practioner Council (HCPC) route).

The University of Westminster and the Forensic Psychology course team are committed to supporting you in enhancing your employability and helping you develop professionalism in your field of choice.

The employability elements of the MSc in Forensic Psychology are skills, knowledge and competencies, including the development of psychological knowledge and ethical awareness, the work-based forensic placement module, teamwork, forensic report writing skills, presentation and networking skills, time management, literacy and numeracy, and being locally and globally engaged citizens. Guest presentations by professionals working in several forensic fields will provide further knowledge and guidance in professional settings. Students will also have the opportunity to connect to a number of employability resources available at the University.

Please note - all students will be required to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (BDS) certificate from their work placement organisation, unless they already have a valid up-to-date one.

Graduates from the course will be equipped to work in various settings, including prisons, probation services, forensic mental health units, the NHS and various charities. Graduates may also be eligible for further study opportunities and advanced training in research and practice, such as a professional doctorate in Forensic Psychology.

The development of employability and further study opportunities are therefore evidenced by the following:

- the engagement of theory and practice in taught modules

- experience of placement under supervision

- the development of relevant skills throughout

- careers advice from tutors and university employability services

- a dedicated forensic psychology research suite containing equipment and resources relevant to the pursuit of a research/academic career in forensic psychology

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 Critically evaluate the historical, theoretical, and contemporary foundations of forensic psychology from a scientist-practitioner perspective. (KU)

- 002 Apply a broad range of advanced research methodologies and analytic techniques commonly employed by forensic psychologists to critically evaluate existing research. (KU KTS SS)

- 003 Develop a deep and specialized understanding of key theoretical and practical issues within forensic psychology, demonstrating a systemic awareness of their interconnectedness. (KU PPP SS CS)

- 004 Synthesise and critically reflect on key themes in Forensic Psychology. (KU PPP KTS SS)

- 005 Apply relevant ethical and professional practice skills to understand the challenges of legal processes, systems and practices. (PPP KTS SS)

- 006 Critically analyse and interpret relevant material and experiences and communicate effectively to academic and forensic practitioner audiences. (PPP KTS SS)

- 007 Critically evaluate and select appropriate methods for researching questions in forensic psychology. (PPP SS CS)

- 008 Independently organize, synthesize, and present complex research findings in both written and oral formats, demonstrating clear, concise, and persuasive communication skills. (KTS)

- 009 Independently identify and define complex problems within forensic psychology practice, critically evaluate alternative solutions, and propose innovative approaches for addressing them. (CS)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

Various methods are used to facilitate the development of learning and achievement. There is an emphasis on providing students with a broad base of knowledge attained through enquiry-based learning and active engagement in problem-solving activities in seminars and tutorials, consistent with the practice of forensic psychology in the workplace. The learning is particularly focused on the applied nature of the issues encountered by forensic psychologists within professional environments, including but not limited to risk assessment, vulnerability, ethics, and related elements. Students will be encouraged throughout the course to reflect on their own personal standpoints within the topics covered. Learning occurs through lectures, seminars, tutorials, forensic work placement, personal tutorials, peer reviews, formative assessments, and independent studies.

Lectures are interactive and facilitate reflection on the theoretical and practice-based material presented. Seminar sessions involve active engagement and participation in exploring diverse forensic case studies, risk assessments, ethical issues related to practice, discussion and debate, and presentations.

The work placement opportunity involves increasing knowledge and experience of working in a forensic setting and facilitates knowledge and understanding of the professional contexts in which forensic psychologists work. Personal tutorials provide one-to-one meetings between the student and their personal tutor so that students can raise issues around their learning and progression.

Students also engage in continuous independent learning through additional reading, peer review, formative assessment, and working on authentic assessments.

The University provides AI-driven writing support tools which are available to all students, offering personalised, real-time suggestions for grammar, punctuation, style, and vocabulary. This innovative technology not only aids in improving the quality of written assignments but also contributes to developing effective writing skills. We encourage students to leverage this powerful resource as part of their learning, ensuring their academic work reflects the highest standards of clarity, coherence, and precision.

Teaching methods

Teaching in the programme aims to develop the students as trainee forensic psychologists. The teaching focuses on integrating theories with practice and supports students in developing their professional competencies and ethical behaviours. Teaching includes on-site lectures and synchronous and asynchronous online resources delivered via the Blackboard virtual learning environment. Small group seminars allow tutors to check and deepen students' understanding of topics covered in lectures using debates, practical demonstrations and discussions. Blackboard will be used for various teaching activities, including small-group activities and discussions, peer and teacher-reviewed suggestions and activities.

Building on our commitment to embracing innovative technology in education, the University is exploring further opportunities to integrate generative AI into our teaching methodologies. This cutting-edge approach will assist in creating dynamic and engaging case studies and developing tailored quiz questions for formative assessment purposes. By leveraging generative AI, we aim to enrich our curriculum with relevant and customised materials to meet our students' learning needs. These AI-generated resources promise to offer a more interactive and personalised learning experience, enhancing understanding and retention of course content. We are excited about the potential of generative AI to transform teaching materials and assessment methods, ensuring our students are equipped with the knowledge and skills required in an increasingly digital world.

Assessment methods

The MSc in Forensic Psychology aims to satisfy the academic component of professional training in forensic psychology. A variety of assessments are used in the course and reflect authentic activities that students are likely to encounter in the role of forensic psychologists. Examples of assessments are written coursework, forensic reports and risk assessments, assessment and formulation of case studies, an extended forensic assessment report, discussions and presentations. Empirical research is assessed by a written research dissertation on your chosen topic., and a self-reflective research log.

Students will be working on their dissertations throughout the duration of the entire course. In addition to the above, each module contains several formative assessments that enable students to prepare for and feel confident moving toward their summative assessments. Formative assessment activities include peer assessment, self-assessment and tutor-led group assessment. Feedback from tutors and peers will enable students to improve and enhance their knowledge, understanding and practical skills on given tasks.

Feedback and feedforward are provided through a variety of means. Feedback is provided in written or verbal (recorded) form online for online assessment. Additionally, tutors and peers provide students with formative feedback in seminars and tutorials. When students take up a work placement, feedback will also be provided by the work placement supervisor.

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	004, 005, 006, 007, 009
Literate and effective communicator	003, 006, 008
Entrepreneurial	006, 008
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	001, 002, 003
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	001, 003, 005, 007, 009

Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

Please note - all modules on this course are core.

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7PSYC038W	Forensic Data Analysis: Real World Applications	Core	1	20	10
7PSYC044W	Research Based Project: Forensic Psychology	Core	1	60	30
7PSYC040W	Sexual and Violent Crime: Risk Assessment and Interventions	Core	1	20	10
7PSYC041W	Criminal Justice: Vulnerability and Neurodiversity	Core	2	20	10
7PSYC042W	Forensic Volunteering Work Experience	Core	2	20	10
7PSYC043W	Investigative Forensic Psychology	Core	2	20	10
7PSYC039W	Professional Ethical Forensic Practice	Core	2	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces

may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

British Psychological Society accredited training (pending) to satisfy the academic component of professional training in Forensic Psychology

Course management

The Course is hosted in the School of Social Sciences, one of the four Schools within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on Cavendish Campus. The Course is directly managed by the Course Leaders within the School of Social Sciences. Each module on the course also has a designated Module Leader responsible for the administration and monitoring of its design and delivery. The Head of School has overall responsibility for all academic provision in the School.

The course teaching team consists of staff from the School of Social Sciences. Key members of the course team meet regularly to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of the course. Staff involved in the course undergo annual appraisal and peer development of their teaching practice, which is provided by the Academic Engagement and Learning Development Team within the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation (CETI). Staff also engage in their own research and/or scholarly activity. Staff teaching on the course also attend workshops organised by Academic Standards and the Teaching and Learning Groups for continuous development in teaching, learning and assessment approaches.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students1 can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university. a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.

- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.