

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1. Awarding Institution: Nottingham Trent University
2. School/Campus: School of Social Sciences; City Campus
3. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: MSc Forensic Psychology (FT / PT)
4. Normal Duration: 1 year Full-time & 2 years Part-time
5. UCAS Code:

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The MSc in Forensic Psychology is designed to provide Psychology graduates with the academic knowledge and practical skills that are necessary to conduct practical work and research within a forensic context. The course focuses on and values the blending of research and practical expertise, which is reflected in the Programme team consisting of forensic practitioners/academics who each have considerable experience working with offenders and victims in a range of forensic contexts. Attached to the MSc in Forensic Psychology is the Sexual Crimes and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU), which incorporates a group of active researchers currently engaged in collaborative work with HM Prison Service, Police Service, NHS, High Secure Hospitals and the FBI.

The generic aim of the MSc Forensic Psychology is to produce students who will progress to become independent, ethical practitioners who are sensitive to diversity issues and adhere to an amalgam of the Science-Practitioner and Reflective Practitioner models. It is envisaged that you will achieve this through the following primary course objectives which aim to:

- 1) Develop students' academic knowledge base in forensic psychology;
- 2) Equip students with the necessary research knowledge and skills to apply a range of appropriate research methods and techniques in response to specific research problems in forensic psychology;
- 3) Develop students understanding of the science-practitioner and reflective practitioner models of working through teaching and experiential learning;
- 4) Equip students with the knowledge and skills to be independent, ethical and culturally sensitive in their learning and future application of psychology.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

A. Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Critically understand the academic knowledge base associated with the context of practice in forensic psychology;
2. Critically appraise key debates and synthesis these into their application of psychology when considering a range of forensic contexts and client groups;
3. Identify and critically assess the methodological issues relevant to psychology and forensic psychology;
4. Demonstrate an integrative understanding and critical appreciation of the

<p>ethical, cultural, internationalisation, sustainability and legal issues arising forensic psychological practice and research;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Synthesize theoretical knowledge with an experiential understanding of reflective practice and make theory-to-practice links; 6. Critically appreciate a wide range of research designs, methods and analytic techniques applicable to advanced scholarship in forensic psychology. 7. Meet the professional criteria necessary for Stage 1 of the DFP Diploma in Forensic Psychology;
<p align="center">B. Skills, qualities and attributes</p> <p>By the end of the course you should be able to:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make contemporary theory-to-practice links by critically applying academic knowledge and research skills to assess, conceptualise and intervene to solve common problems encountered within a forensic psychology; 2. Select, justify and apply relevant and contemporary psychological theory and research knowledge to understand and conduct forensic research; 3. Provide integrative accounts of forensic psychological theory and practice, with a advanced appreciation of any associated ethical, diversity and professional issues; 4. Apply psychological knowledge and research in an independent, ethical, culturally sensitive and reflective manner; 5. Translate and apply a range of integrative skills necessary for employment as a professional Forensic Psychologist.
<p>8. Teaching and learning methods</p>
<p>A variety of teaching methods have been selected to accommodate a range of student learning styles, such as lectures to facilitate theoretical and auditory learners, workshops to facilitate activist and kinaesthetic learners, etc. Reinforcement of key learning points will also be facilitated through different teaching modes, whilst minimising the sense of repetition. Students in this programme will benefit from the Reflective Practice Group which will underpin the entire programme. This module is based on an experiential learning strategy, in that students will be asked think about their developing professional identity, course material and independent study, their personal experiences of the course, ethical issues and so on. This module will be facilitated by forensic psychologists, with a gradual movement towards students taking a more self-directed mode of reflective practice as the course progresses. Also teaching with other postgraduate courses supports shared learning and experiences.</p>
<p>9. Assessment methods</p>
<p>The Psychology Division pursues a policy of establishing a varied, fair and rigorous assessment regime based upon clearly specified criteria. The programme duly makes use of a variety of assessment practices across its modules. The main assessment methods on the MSc in Forensic Psychology are practical reports, assessed essays, examinations, consultancy report, reflective practice diary and the Forensic Research Project.</p> <p>Teaching materials and the course/module handbooks with the marking criteria anchor students understanding and expectations about assessments. It is recognised that the practice assignments are novel to the students but contribute to the learning experience of the students (e.g. diary, risk assessment report, consultancy report), therefore these are scaffolded by the practitioner staff on the course. For example, the risk assessment report is divided into sub-tasks which are discussed in lectures, the diary is</p>

submitted in May/June but the students submit the first half of the diary at the end of Christmas for formative feedback; overall these assignments are regularly discussed in reflective practice groups to help learning and the students to develop their understanding of these assessment practices. Furthermore, Explanations of Crime is one of the first modules the students attend on the course, which has two assessments attached to it. The first assignment is where students can gauge how MSc assessments are 'different' and they can use the feedback from this first piece of work for the second and subsequent assignments supporting the development of their understanding of assessment practices. Finally, mixed methods is a novel approach to conducting research and the assessment involves conducting and interpreting a Repertory grid, once again students are supported within the sessions to understand this novel assessment approach.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The MSc Forensic Psychology consists of 180 credits. Each module in the programme is compulsory, although the forensic research project module allows students the opportunity to tailor their studies in order to focus on a particular area of interest. For full-time students all 180 credits will be completed during a single academic year, whereas for part time students these will be completed over two academic years. The MSc in Forensic Psychology course includes the following modules:

Explanations of Crime, Criminal Behaviour and Victimology will provide students with a conceptual basis for understanding crime, criminal behaviour and victimisation. This module also provides them with the theoretical basis for more applied modules such as Assessment, Formulation and Treatment, and Professional Forensic Practice.

Police, Justice System and Psychology is the first of two modules exploring a forensic context. This module will permit students to develop current knowledge about how psychology can be applied to the civil and criminal justice system, in particular the role of psychology in police and legal processes.

Assessment, Formulation and Treatment of Offenders and Victims module will explore conceptual and applied issues associated with the core practitioner skills of assessment, formulation and treatment. Students will gain a critical knowledge of assessment methods and tools, and develop an understanding of how this assessment information can be integrated with conceptual explanations of criminal behaviour and victimisation to develop coherent clinical interventions. Cases studies of common issues presented by offending and victim populations will be utilized to illustrate the integration of theory into practice.

Prison, Rehabilitation and Aftercare is the second module exploring a forensic context. This module will allow students to develop knowledge about forensic settings commonly encountered by offenders post-sentencing, in particular prisons, secure hospital settings and community initiatives. The role of the victim in post-sentencing initiatives will also be explored, e.g. victim-offender mediation.

The Professional Forensic Practice module allows students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the BPS' and Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC) standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Students will consider how these guidelines can be applied and understood in terms of their

developing professional practice and research skills. They will consider core practitioner and research skills, such as developing and maintaining healthy therapeutic relationships, interviewing, psychometric testing, risk assessment, choosing appropriate research designs, working with specialist groups (e.g. children) and organisation consultancy. This module also provides students with a theoretical and experiential understanding of reflection and its importance in professional practice.

Advanced Experimentation & Statistics modules (1 and 2) examine the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of statistics used in experimental research. The module also covers application of various experimental designs and statistical techniques and computer software, such as SPSS.

Qualitative Research Design & Analysis 1 module aims to provide students with a comprehensive philosophical and methodological grounding in qualitative research. Additionally students will develop the necessary skills to manage and handle qualitative data, alongside a range of data analytic techniques used by qualitative researchers in psychology.

Mixed Methods module considers the ontological, epistemological, practical, and theoretical issues involved in combining qualitative and quantitative research in psychology. It demonstrates some of the most effective ways in which quantitative and qualitative research techniques can be employed together within a single research programme, and it will also introduce some unusual methods which combine quantitative and qualitative elements within a single procedure (for example, repertory grids or Q methodology).

The Forensic Research Project module allows students the opportunity to design, carry out and write-up a personally selected piece of empirical forensic research to a standard suitable for submission to a peer reviewed journal. This task will be carried out under the supervision of an individual staff member with specialist knowledge in their chosen area and/or method of study.

For part time students, the modules Explanations of Crime, Criminal Behaviour and Victimology; Assessment, Formulation and Treatment of Offenders and Victims; and Professional Forensic Practice module will be taken in the first year of study, together with the qualitative and mixed methods and analysis modules. In their second year, part-time students will take modules relating to the Police, Justice System and Psychology; Prison, Rehabilitation and After-care, together with both advanced experimentation and statistic modules. In terms of the Forensic Research project, full time students will commence this upon starting the course, whilst part-time students will commence their research project (approaching supervisors, thinking of possible projects) at the end of their first year of study.

An MSc, Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) and Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Psychology and Crime are also available as interim awards for those students who do not progress through all stages of the programme. Students achieving 60 credits will be awarded a PGCert, 120 credits are required for award of a PGDip.

11. Admission to the course

The programme is designed to attract high calibre students with appropriate academic skills. Prior to undertaking the MSc in Forensic Psychology applicants are required to possess an Honours degree in psychology which

confers eligibility for Graduate Basis of Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society. A pass mark of 2:1 or better (or its equivalent), is preferred. Applicants holding a 2:2 degree (or equivalent) may apply and cases will be considered on their individual merits.

To apply for the course students are required to complete the NTU standard postgraduate application form, and the admissions process thereafter will involve a face-to-face interview with members of the programme team, a written task and a group exercise. Appropriate theoretical knowledge, work experience or an interest in working with forensic populations will be considered advantageous, alongside personal attributes, such as resilience and good communication skills, which are central for a career in forensic psychology. All students wishing to join the programme (UK, EU or overseas) will need to be accepted by the Programme Leader – neither the general admissions team nor the overseas admissions teams are permitted to make any offers to potential students.

Accreditation of Prior Learning for Admission (with Advanced Standing)

The Division of Forensic Psychology at the British Psychological Society requires that all students admitted to an accredited MSc in Forensic Psychology hold a GBC accredited undergraduate degree in psychology at 2:2 or above. Therefore, it is not possible for the programme team to accredit prior learning that has been acquired prior to the student gaining eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the British Psychological Society. Accreditation of prior learning, gained after GBC status, will be compared against the learning outcomes for the MSc in Forensic Psychology by the programme team and in accordance with NTU regulations. If a student has completed specific Forensic Psychology modules, then this will only be considered for accreditation of prior learning if they can verify that this work was undertaken on a BPS accredited MSc in Forensic Psychology.

International Students

The course requires students to have a BPS accredited undergraduate degree in Psychology, but is open to overseas students who hold the entry requirements. Applicants from overseas are expected to have a good command of spoken and written English. International applicants will be required to have IELTS 7.00. Non UK academic qualifications will be assessed in comparison to their UK equivalents. The Division of Psychology has its own international student officer who looks after the interests of international students within the Division.

12. Support for learning

Students are assigned a personal tutor who provides pastoral and academic support throughout their study; this is usually their project supervisor as per standard academic practice. Students meet their potential tutor and other teaching staff during an induction event. Additionally, students also meet with the Programme Leader and/or Associate Programme Leader on a weekly/monthly basis at a reflective practice group, which is part of the Professional Forensic Practice module. A weekly reflective session is akin with the support available in clinical practice, and aims to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their development, practice and experiences during this initial stage of their journey towards becoming a professional psychologist. Also an aspect that students have reported is helpful from these groups in terms of their personal development, is these groups consisting of

students in full time education and (usually) part time students who are engaging in practice; those in full time education learn about practice issues from those within part-time study, and those in part-time study gain support with the academic aspects of the course often; consequently a mutually supporting and developmental experience for all involved. This reflective practice group is eventually student lead and therefore students have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and development. Furthermore students submit their reflective diary as part of this process for formative feedback in December, following which they meet with their reviewer (one of the staff facilitating their reflective practice group) to discuss their development and engagement with the reflective process. Other teaching methods and course content such as student lead presentations and role-plays where they deliver assessments to 'clients' are also unique opportunities for student development.

The programme team recognise the additional hurdles that part-time students are likely to face in terms of juggling work responsibilities with those attached to their studies. Particular attention will be given to part-time students in terms of supporting them in relation to their planning and use of time. The programme leader will ensure that international students will be put in touch with the International Student Support Service and our own divisional representative prior to their arrival.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

The MSc in Forensic Psychology will enable you to develop a wide range of analytical abilities, and the core academic knowledge and research skills necessary to work in the discipline of Forensic Psychology. The MSc programme is ideally suited to individuals seeking a career as a Forensic Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, Researcher or Criminal Justice/Mental Health worker. Graduates may gain employment with: the Police, Prison or Probation Services; NHS; the Ministry of Justice; the private sector or in academia. Successful completion of the MSc in Forensic Psychology will also confer eligibility for Stage 1 of the BPS' Diploma in Forensic Psychology.

14. Course standards and quality

The external examiners for the course have a key role in quality management and enhancement. At a more local level, quality assurance and enhancement issues are monitored by Module Leaders, who are encouraged to position themselves as 'reflective practitioners', critically evaluating the quality of their modules. Part of this role involves their writing an annual report on their module, which requires them to reflect, on the basis of evidence, on the module's strengths and potential areas for development. Psychology Module Leaders' Reports have been praised by External Examiners as 'a model of good practice' and as 'refreshingly self-critical'.

The course has a number of student representatives that discuss quality and enhancement issues within the course committees and the overall Postgraduate Course Committee. The students also complete module and course evaluations, as well as the Postgraduate Survey (PTES) where they can report on quality and enhancement issues.

Finally, the course is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS), so the course is designed around the BPS core curriculum and standards for accredited programmes. Furthermore, the BPS make regular accreditation

<p>visits (every 5 years), so they continue to contribute to the development of the course and quality management.</p>								
<p>15. Assessment regulations This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>								
<p>The programme complies with the university's common assessment regulations and operates within the school's framework for assessment practice (see sections 15 and 16 of the Academic Standards and Quality Handbook). The only piece of assessment that seeks exemption from the CAR is the Reflective Practice diary which is part of the Professional Forensic Practice module (20 credits). The reflective diary will only be judged to have reached an appropriate standard (PASS or FAIL).</p>								
<p>16. Additional Information</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="352 757 1358 1025"> <tr> <td>Collaborative partner(s):</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statements:</td> <td>Psychology</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course recognised by:</td> <td>British Psychological Society</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date this course specification approved:</td> <td>23 May 2018</td> </tr> </table>	Collaborative partner(s):	None	Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	Psychology	Course recognised by:	British Psychological Society	Date this course specification approved:	23 May 2018
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<p>Any additional information:</p> <p>Potential applicants may also wish to view the Programme Specification for the MSc in Forensic Mental Health. For further information or to receive an application pack please contact us: by email at: s3.postgrad@ntu.ac.uk or telephone: +44 (0) 115 848 5628</p>								