Buckinghamshire New University

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	MSc Applied Forensic Psychology
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Psychology
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	MSc Applied Forensic Psychology
Pathways (if applicable)	
FHEQ level of final award:	7
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	Postgraduate Certificate Postgraduate Diploma
Accreditation details:	Accredited with the British Psychological Society
Length of programme:	1 year Full time 2 years Part time
Mode(s) of Study:	Full Time Part Time
Mode of Delivery:	Blended learning
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	Psychology (2019) Forensic Science (2022)
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	BPS Standards for Masters & Doctoral programmes in forensic psychology (2019);
Course Code(s):	MSAPFPBF / MSAPFPBP
UCAS Code(s):	
Approval date:	August 2023
Date of last update:	October 2024

2. Programme Summary

Our specially-developed blended learning Master's offers the convenience of being able to complete forensic psychology studies alongside your current employment. As a Forensic Psychologist, you may work directly with prisoners on treatment and rehabilitation programmes, and be involved in psychological interventions designed to modify criminal behaviour. You may also be called upon to give expert evidence to various audiences, including courts, and parole and mental health boards. Within the programme you will develop an applied theoretical skills base for the practice of Forensic Psychology, with curriculum covering 8 key areas; 1. Research and research methods (including an

independent dissertation) 2. The legal and criminal justice context (incl. investigative psychology) 3. Assessment and formulation (tools for risk evaluation) 4. Interventions (managing prisoners, patients, victims, professional and organisations) 5. Client groups (with a focus on vulnerable individuals) 6. Forensic settings (e.g. prisons, secure units, criminal and civil courts) 7. Development and training (professional development and reflective practices) 8. Advice and consultancy (communication principles for practice and policy). One of the few courses of its kind to be offered as a blended learning Master's, the programme will allow you to work through materials online, while also attending three, one-week blocks on campus. You can choose to complete the course full time over a year, or part time, fitting in the training more easily alongside your current work. Buckinghamshire New University has strong links with a number of different prison establishments (based on category and population). In the course, therefore, you will hear from qualified Forensic Psychologists, prison officers and senior managers, as well as have interactions directly with prisoners. In addition, there may be some attendance sessions where the forensic setting will be different, for example a courtroom or police/emergency services setting. This level of industry insight and contact will be invaluable in securing work and developing your confidence as a Forensic Psychology practitioner.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Prepare learners to undertake the next stage of their training to be a forensic psychologist
2. Apply the core skills required to be a forensic psychologist, as outlined in Stage 2 of the British Psychological 's route to chartership - assessment and intervention, research skills, consultancy and training

3. Provide learners with an understanding of, the requirements of a Masters degree in Forensic Psychology detailed by the British Psychological Society
4. Develop a critical awareness and systematic understanding of the current knowledge, theory and evidence based practice relevant to the discipline of forensic psychology, as well as an ability to evaluate and analyse the related research

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Demonstrate critical evaluation of current psychological theory and evidence based practice.
K2	Develop awareness and understanding of ethical principles and codes of conduct and demonstrate these in relation to research and be able to discuss how they apply in forensic environments.
K3	Reflect on yourself and your learning - a key attribute of psychologists.
K4	Establish a critical understanding and evaluation of various interventions and models of change (processes and their effect) available within applied forensic psychology.

K5	Demonstrate an in-depth critical understanding of a chosen aspect of forensic psychology through an extended research project.

Analysis and Criticality (C)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Appraise and use a variety of numerical, statistical and other forms of data (and software or hardware), particularly in the context of presenting and analysing complex data sets.
C2	Analyse patterns of behaviour in individual, group, and organisational behaviour and evaluate their significance, utilising theoretical perspectives to systematically analyse the relationships between them.
C3	Differentiate how to use risk assessment tools, evaluate their use, and analyse critically their findings within a forensic population.
C4	Examine psychological theory to improve policies, the legal process, and provide consultancy work to legal professionals and multi-disciplinary working.

Application and Practice (P)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Apply grounded strategies to reduce the risk to the public of offending, by developing working relationships with individuals, and groups to the benefit of the self, wider communities and society.
P2	Demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning, how they are conceptualised in forensic psychology, and how they interrelate with offending behaviour.
P3	Execute psychologically informed conclusions in both an adversarial legal context and academic forum.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

On successful completion of the programme you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
T1	Progress further onto the route to becoming a forensic psychologist (in accordance with the academic requirements of the Division of Forensic Psychology of the British Psychological Society), or related work.
T2	Demonstrate greater self awareness and an ability to be reflective.
T3	Analyse, criticise, synthesize and formulate information, in order to draw conclusions, problem solve, and identify pathways forward.
T4	Communicate effectively and confidently with a variety of client groups, in a flexible, responsive manner.

Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens.

On this programme, attributes are developed through learning to apply theoretical knowledge in order to gain skills and awareness to progress towards a career as a Forensic Psychologist. There is a focus on self-development and self awareness (K2, K3, T2), whilst ensuring ethical considerations (K3) are prioritised. With a focus on the key areas of competence for Forensic Psychologists in training(T1), in research skills (K5, C1) , consultancy, assessment and intervention (C2, C3), and training, graduates gain attributes such as leadership, responsibility and creativity, in order to be ready to apply for key roles in the 21st Century Labour market.

4. Entry Requirements

The University's general entry requirements will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

- The Course Team expects an entrant to a Master's programme to be eligible for the Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC). This means the applicant must have gained at least a Lower Second Class Honours (or its equivalent) in a BPS accredited degree and must have passed the empirical psychology project in that degree. Applications are accepted, however, specifically from practitioners who are currently working in a forensic setting who may not have eligibility (i.e. who have entered forensic-setting employment via a different route). As part of the application process, any additional academic support may be identified which will be provided as part of the course.

If you do not meet the entry requirements you may, if you have relevant professional experience, still be invited for interview, where you will be required to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding for entry onto the course.

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules in accordance with our accreditation of prior learning (APL) process.

5. Programme Structure

Pathway 1 or stand-alone course **[add further tables for each additional pathway]**

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Level 7	**Core modules:** EDU7008 Extended Research Project (60 credits) PSY7016 Professional Practice Skills, Issues and Ethics (20 credits) PSY7017 Applied Forensic Research Skills (20 credits) PSY7020 Assessment and Management (20 credits) PSY7021 Journey of Change – Forensic Focus (20 credits) PSY7018 The investigative & Criminal Justice Context (20 credits) PSY7019 Vulnerable Groups in Forensic Settings (20 credits) **Option modules:** No option modules **Opportunity modules:** No Opportunity modules are available at this level.	**Masters Degree**, awarded on achievement of 180 credits at Level 7, of which 60 credits via an Extended Research Project **PG Certificate** 60 credits **PG Diploma** 120 credits

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to changes in the subject area.

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and teaching

This programme is predominantly via online sessions, distance learning, which is student-led and allows learners to participate and learn in ways that suit them best and allow them to study alongside working. Learners can participate either synchronously ('live') or asynchronously (via recordings, online content), webinars and workshops, face to face attendance weeks, and online discussion boards. Learners can study Full-Time over the course of a year, or Part-Time over 2 or 3 years.

Assessment

A reflective approach to assessment is used throughout the programme, giving Learners the opportunity to apply theory and research findings to forensic clients and settings. Assessments are a mix of written assignments in a report format, presentations, simulations, and discussions of a reflective nature. Learners are also encouraged to build on earlier assignments as they progress through the programme in order to develop expertise in all areas of importance to future forensic psychologists. This culminates in an extended research project that brings together learning from across the programme.

Contact Hours

Learners can expect to receive on average approximately 2-4 hours of scheduled learning activities per week. These hours will include 'live' online teaching (webinars, workshops), online reflective and discussion-based activities, either individually or as class discussions. As each 20-credit module equates to 200 notional learning hours, the majority of these will come via independent study and work towards assessment tasks.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (2023)

8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies

- Library resources, include access to books, journals and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable
- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of learners and course administration
- Central student services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, student finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has a number of ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in external surveys
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Education Committee
- Review by the relevant PSRB(s)
- Periodic Subject Review events held every five years
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement – see detailed mapping below
- The QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement
- The BNU Qualifications and Credit Framework
- The BNU Grading Descriptors
- The University Strategy

Mapping of Subject Benchmark Statement and any relevant Apprenticeship Standard to Programme Learning Outcomes

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
understand the scientific underpinnings of psychology as a discipline, its historical origins, development and limitations	x								x		x	x								
recognise the inherent variability and diversity of psychological functioning and its significance				x			x					x								
demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical understanding of a range of influences on psychological functioning, how they are conceptualised across the	x	x		x		x			x			x				x		x		

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
core areas and how they interrelate																				
demonstrate detailed knowledge of several specialised areas and/or applications, some of which are at the cutting edge of research in the discipline	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x					x		
demonstrate a systematic knowledge of a range of research paradigms, research methods and measurement techniques, including statistics and probability, and be aware of their limitations					x	x							x					x		
reason scientifically, understand the role of evidence and make		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x		x	x	

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
critical judgements about arguments in psychology																				
adopt multiple perspectives and systematically analyse the relationships between them	x			x			x					x						x		
detect meaningful patterns in behaviour and evaluate their significance				x			x											x		
recognise the subjective and variable nature of individual experience	x						x					x							x	
pose, operationalise and critique research questions	x				x	x		x	x		x		x					x		

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
demonstrate substantial competence in research skills through practical activities					x	x			x		x		x					x		
reason analytically and demonstrate competence in a range of quantitative and qualitative methods				x	x	x					x							x		
competently initiate, design, conduct and report on an empirically-based research project under appropriate supervision, and recognise its theoretical, practical and methodological implications and limitations					x	x							x					x		

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
be aware of ethical principles and approval procedures and demonstrate these in relation to personal study, particularly with regard to the research project, and be aware of the ethical context of psychology as a discipline		x							x								x		x	
communicate ideas and research findings by written, oral and visual means	x				x	x	x		x				x					x	x	
interpret and use numerical, textual and other forms of data					x	x			x									x		

Subject Benchmark Statement / Apprenticeship Standard:	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
be computer literate, for the purposes of furthering their own learning and in the analysis and presentation of ideas and research findings					x	x														
solve problems by clarifying questions, considering alternative solutions and evaluating outcomes					x	x			x				x					x		
be sensitive to, and take account of, contextual and interpersonal factors in groups and teams	x			x			x					x								
undertake self-directed study and project management, in order to meet desired objectives			x			x			x							x				
take charge of their own learning, and reflect and evaluate personal strengths and			x		x		x		x							x	x			

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Benchmark / Standard requirement	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
weaknesses for the purposes of future learning																				

Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
Module Code (Core)	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Level 7																				
Professional Practice Skills, Issues and Ethics		x	x				x				x		x				x	x		
Assessment and Management				x				x	x		x	x						x	x	
Applied Forensic Research Skills	x				x	x					x							x	x	
Vulnerable Groups in Forensic Settings	x			x			x	x			x	x	x					x	x	
Journey of Change – Forensic Focus	x		x	x		x	x					x				x	x			
Extended Research Project	x				x	x	x				x		x					x	x	
Legal and Criminal Justice Context		x							x		x		x					x	x	