

# Postgraduate Programme Specification

## MSc Forensic Psychology

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

GENERAL INFORMATION			
<b>Programme Title</b>	MSc Forensic Psychology		
<b>Final Award</b>	Master of Science in Forensic Psychology		
<b>Awarding Body</b>	Glasgow Caledonian University		
<b>School</b>	School of Health and Life Sciences		
<b>Department</b>	Psychology		
<b>Mode of Study</b>	Full-time		
<b>Location of Delivery</b>	Glasgow Campus		
<b>UCAS Code</b>	N/A		
<b>Accreditations (PSRB)</b>	British Psychological Society		
<b>Period of Approval</b>	<b>From:</b>	September 2024	<b>To:</b> August 2029

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
<p>The overarching aim of the MSc Forensic Psychology is to provide students with an opportunity to broaden and enhance specialist and critical knowledge, understanding, and skills in the area of forensic psychology. In doing so the programme supports students in achieving professional Stage 1 forensic psychology training. This provides a foundation for graduates who wish to continue to Stage 2 of their training to work towards becoming a registered Forensic Psychologist.</p> <p>More specifically the programme objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage student to understand, critically interrogate and apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks in forensic psychology.</li> <li>• Provide students with opportunities to develop critical analysis skills to interpret, evaluate, synthesise, and present relevant ideas, arguments, and empirical data from research and secondary sources.</li> <li>• Create a learning environment that highlights the reciprocal relationship between academic study and practice to test and inform theory and policy.</li> <li>• Promote critical understanding of psychological models of offending and interventions to reduce offending.</li> <li>• Promote critical understanding of the complex diagnostic issues in forensic psychology and their impact on assessment and treatment.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in risk assessment and risk management of offenders in a variety of forensic settings.</li> <li>• Promote the importance of risk assessment and appropriate risk management.</li> <li>• Promote reflective and ethical practice frameworks with opportunities for students to participate and engage in both.</li> <li>• Across all programmes, the Department of Psychology (DoP) at GCU takes accountability for continuous monitoring and improvements in matters relating to Equality, Diversity</li> </ul>

and Inclusion (EDI), guided in our ethical practices by our links with professional and statutory bodies. We commit to representing historically-excluded groups and addressing inequalities in our recruitment and retention processes, and across our research projects and learning and teaching practices. We are cognisant of, and deliberately embrace, the diversity of our staff, student body and the wider psychology community in terms of demographics and protected characteristics, and we seek to actively reflect that diversity throughout our work. Practically, we will transfer our EDI priorities into each module by regularly seeking perspectives from our diverse staff, student and client groups, and using these to inform the development of curricula, applied practice and engagement activities. This includes periodic auditing of our recruitment, progression and attrition rates with a focus on under-represented groups, ongoing evaluation of diversity among our invited speakers, and sharing of best practice in these areas across our programmes. In every module, we will ensure the resources and reading that we recommend come from increasingly diverse sources, and that the learning activities and applied examples provided in teaching materials and assessments explicitly reference a wide range of socio-cultural groups and perspectives.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

### **A: Knowledge and understanding;**

- A1 Critically understand and appraise current theories and debates regarding the causes and nature of offending and the associated impacts (such as trauma).
- A2 Critically understand and appraise approaches to assessment and intervention with forensic clients, including the role of formulation, case management and interviewing.
- A3 Identify and critically evaluate ethical, legal, policy issues and evidence pertaining to best practice working in a range of forensic settings and with a range of client groups.
- A4 Identify and critically discuss the features of vulnerability within forensic client groups (including individual, systemic and organisational influences).
- A5 Critically evaluate approaches to developing, training, communicating with, and supporting staff working in forensic settings.
- A6 Demonstrate extensive knowledge of different methodologies in the context of particular forensic research tasks or areas of study.

### **B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;**

- B1 Systematically gather and critically review evidence and translate this into evidence based practice recommendations including those relating to assessment and intervention.
- B2 Present critical evaluations suitable for a range of forensic audiences, including when data is incomplete, complex or conflicting.
- B3 Critically evaluate the influence of social, political, cultural and organisational factors in relation to the provision and delivery of forensic services to a range of clients across a range of settings.
- B4 Demonstrate a critical understanding of the need to support staff through training and other developmental opportunities.
- B5 Demonstrate the ability to apply a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods available to researchers and practitioners.

- B6 Develop and apply the research skills required for service development, evaluation, and audit.

**C: Generic cognitive skills;**

- C1 Identify and critically evaluate opportunities for change within a range of forensic settings.
- C2 Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues of relevance to a range of forensic issues including assessment and intervention, supporting staff, identifying vulnerabilities in clients and providing consultancy.
- C3 Develop original, creative and critical evidence based responses to problems and issues in relation to forensic settings or specific forensic concerns through the application of academic knowledge in line with a scientist-practitioner model.
- C4 Deal with complex issues and make informed judgments in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information, such as when required to make assessment or intervention decisions.
- C5 Understand the roles, remits, and forms of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary working and the relevance of this to case and care management and other elements of forensic practice.
- C6 Demonstrate the ability to identify areas of personal strength and need via critical reflection in relation to personal and future professional practice.

**D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills**

- D1 Use a wide range of ICT applications to support and enhance work, including adjusting features to support oral presentations, written reports and statistical analysis.
- D2 Generate and present graphical data derived from data collected during the course of their studies.
- D3 Plan and communicate conclusions, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise of forensic psychology.
- D4 Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists through a range of mechanisms, such as written reports, oral presentations and reflective accounts.
- D5 Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of data derived from both primary and secondary sources.
- D6 Demonstrate advanced skill in a range of research analysis techniques (including those involving both qualitative and quantitative data).

**E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.**

- E1 Demonstrate substantial authority and responsibility for own work (this includes time management, organising and planning work).
- E2 Practice critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.
- E3 Plan, monitor, review and evaluate own learning and development in relation to potential employment as a Forensic Psychologist, including an understanding of when they need supervision and support.
- E4 Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative through making an identifiable contribution to change and development of ethical forensic practice.
- E5 Make informed judgments on issues that require the application of current professional and/or ethical codes, legislation and professional practice requirements.
- E6 Demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of inter-professional and multidisciplinary working within forensic settings.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Placements
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Written coursework (essays, reports, case studies, dissertation, literature review)
- Oral coursework (presentations, structured conversations)
- Practical Assessment (Placement, VIVA, Laboratory work)
- Group work
- Blogs and Wikis
- Portfolio Presentations
- Formal Examinations and Class Tests

The above assessments may be delivered either in person and online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-forensic-psychology-glasgow>

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS<sup>1</sup>

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

Module Code	Module Title	Core or Optional	SCQF Level	Credit Size	Coursework %	Examination %	Practical %
MMC825483	The Psychology of Criminal Behaviour	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825484	Psychology and the Legal Process	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825485	Working in Forensic Settings	Core	11	15	100		
MMC826510	Analytical Methods	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825502	Psychological Assessment	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825505	Principles of Forensic Practice	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825503	Psychological Interventions	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825504	Vulnerable Groups in Forensic Settings	Core	11	15	100		
MMC825509	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 1 (M)	Core	11`	60	100		

Students undertaking the programme on a full-time basis commencing in September of each year will undertake the modules in the order presented above.

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme<sup>2</sup>:

**Postgraduate Certificate in Forensic Psychology** - *achieved upon successful completion of 60 credits*

**Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology** - *achieved upon successful completion of 120 credits*

**Master of Science in Forensic Psychology** - *achieved upon successful completion of 180 credits*

<sup>1</sup> Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here:

[www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes)

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the [GCU Qualifications Framework](#) for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

## ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at: [www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulationsandpolicies](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulationsandpolicies)

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions:

- Case No: 51  
Details: IELTS requirement of 7 (no single element below 6.5)
- Case No: 182  
Details: No compensation is permissible across any modules at SCQF level 11: all modules must be passed at 50%

## VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)

**Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.**

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0	Transfer of PSP to new template produced as a result of programme review.	April 2024	AY24/25

## Appendix 2b: Curriculum Map

Modules			Programme Learning Outcomes																																
	Code	Title	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6			
SCQF 11	MMC825483	The Psychology of Criminal Behaviour	X					X		X						X		X							X		X	X							
	MMC825484	Psychology and the Legal Process			X	X				X										X							X	X	X						
	MMC825485	Working in Forensic Settings		X	X	X	X		X		X				X	X							X				X	X		X		X			
	MMC826510	Analytical Methods						X					X	X							X	X			X	X	X								
	MMC825502	Psychological Assessment	X	X		X				X					X	X	X	X							X		X								
	MMC825505	Principles of Forensic Practice			X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			X	X	X			
	MMC825503	Psychological Interventions	X	X		X			X						X	X	X	X						X			X								
	MMC825504	Vulnerable Groups in Forensic Settings	X	X		X				X	X	X			X	X			X	X			X				X	X	X	X	X	X			
	MMC825509	Advanced Research in Applied Psychology 1 (M)						X						X	X							X	X			X	X	X			X				