

**Northern Ireland Branch of the British  
Psychological Society**

**Careers Events  
4<sup>th</sup> March 2017**



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# Forensic Psychology as a Career Choice

## Overview

What is Forensic Psychology?

What do Forensic Psychologists do?

Who employs Forensic Psychologists?

How do I become a Forensic Psychologist?

# So Which Character Are You?



Forensic psychology has become an increasingly popular career choice and subject of study due to television shows such as:

- CSI
- Numbers
- The Wire
- Castle
- Law and Order (UK)
- Criminal Minds

# What is Forensic Psychology?

A branch of applied psychology that is concerned with the collection, examination & presentation of evidence for judicial purposes

More specifically, it is concerned with the assessment and treatment of offenders providing:-

- ◆ case formulations on offenders
- ◆ evidence & expertise for other professions such as **Police, Probation, Courts, Prison, Social Workers etc...**

# What do Forensic Psychologists do?

- ◆ Assessment of offenders
- ◆ Assessment & management of risk & dangerousness
- ◆ Court reports
- ◆ Work with life sentence prisoners
- ◆ Staff training
- ◆ Development of prison regimes
- ◆ Development of offending behaviour programmes
- ◆ Research & evaluation
- ◆ Contribution to policy

# Core Practice

**Inform** decision making

**Expert** resource for specialist assessment

- : civil & criminal courts, solicitors, parole boards, insurance companies, police, health and social care agencies
- : risk assessment, motivation to address offending behaviour, evidence of therapeutic change, sentencing recommendations, incapacity, litigation etc

**Treatment & Rehabilitation**

- : offence focused &/or Mental Health

# Major Areas of Intervention

## Problems of anger & violence

: behavioural control & cognitive intervention

## Sexually Inappropriate behaviour

: deviance, dis-inhibition, social inadequacy

## Mental Health issues

: psychosis & dangerousness, learning disability

## Criminal careers & lifestyle

: offending behaviour

# Summary of Psychological Roles

## **Practitioner**

- \* Direct involvement with client
- \* Advises on disposal and treatment
- \* Management of difficult clients
- \* Rehabilitation/therapeutic process & evaluation of outcome



# Issues in Forensic Psychology

- \* Is there a treatment plan for this sex offender which could be carried out during a noncustodial sentence?
- \* Are there any psychological factors relevant to the prisoner which could justify bail?
- \* Is the defendant fit to plead? Counsel have advised us that such a formal intellectual assessment should be carried out.

# Issues in Forensic Psychology

- \* Can you complete a risk assessment on our client with a view to assessing suitability for a move to supervised accommodation in the community?
- \* Can you give an account of the defendant's mental state leading up the alleged offence?
- \* Can you advise on a management strategy for this aggressive prisoner/patient?

# Who Employs Forensic Psychologists?

Prisons

Special Hospitals

Youth Treatment Centres

Health Authorities

Probation Services

Regional Secure Units

Police Forces

Universities

# Being A Forensic Psychologist with the Probation Board for N. Ireland

- Extremely challenging
- Wide range of diversity
- Requires specialist skills
- Hard work, but rewarding!

# Role of a Probation Psychologist

- **Risk** Assessments: pre-sentence & case management
- **Lifer** Work
- Offending Behaviour Programmes
- **Contribute** to policy & shaping of future services

# How Do I Become A Forensic Psychologist?

Undergraduate BA/BSc in Psychology

Applied Masters or Doctorate in Forensic Psychology - ie Clinical, Educational, Occupational plus Diploma in Forensic Psychology

MSc/Doctorate Forensic Psychology  
Chartership/HCPC Registration

# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 1: Psychology, the Legal System & Criminology**

Psychology & the Legal Process  
Introduction to Criminology  
Explaining crime  
Victims of crime  
Punishment

# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 2: Psychology of Criminal Behaviour**

Cognition & Crime

Social Factors

Criminal Behaviour & Theory

Personality & Crime

Brain injury & offending

Violent offending



# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 3: Psychology & Investigation**

Offender Profiling & Crime Scene Analysis

Memory & interviewing

Evaluating evidence

Psychology & confessions

Assessment of mental state

Policing

# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 4: Psychology & the Courtroom**

Expert psychological testimony  
Jury Behaviour  
Child Witness in Court  
Reasoning & decision making  
Eyewitness memory

# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 5: Management/Treatment of Offenders**

Assessment & treatment of mentally disordered offenders

Assessment & treatment of violent offenders & sex offenders

Assessment & treatment of young offenders

# Typical Forensic Psychology Course Content

## **Module 6: Research Methods & Dissertation**

# BPS Accredited Forensic Courses

University Of Bedfordshire	MSc Forensic Psychology
University Of Birmingham	MSc Criminological Psychology
University Of Birmingham	MSc Forensic Practice
University Of Birmingham	Doctorate in Forensic Practice
University Of Birmingham City	MSc Forensic Psychology
Cardiff Metropolitan University	Doctorate in Forensic Psychology
Coventry University	MSc for Psychology
Coventry University	MSc Forensic Psychology & Crime
University of Cumbria	MSc Applied Forensic Psychology
Glasgow Caledonian	MSc Forensic Psychology
University of Gloucestershire	MSc Forensic Psychology
University of Huddersfield	MSc Investigative Psychology
University Of Lancashire	MSc Forensic Psychology
University Of Leicester	MSc Forensic Psychology
University Of Leicester	MSc Applied Forensic Psychology

# BPS Accredited Forensic Courses

University Of Kent

University Of Leicester

University Of Leicester

University of Lincoln

University Of Liverpool

University Of Liverpool

University Of Liverpool

University Of Liverpool

London Metropolitan University Forensic Psychology Doctorate

London Metropolitan University MSc Forensic Psychology

Kings College London

MSc Clinical Forensic Psychology

University of Nottingham

Doctorate in Forensic Psychology

**Institute Of Psychiatry**

**MSc Clinical Forensic Psychology**

**London Metropolitan**

**MSc Forensic Psychology**

**Manchester Metropolitan**

**MSc Forensic Psychology**

**Middlesex University**

**MSc Forensic Psychology**

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Applied Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Investigative Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Investigative Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

# BPS Accredited Forensic Courses

**Manchester Metropolitan**

**Middlesex University**

Newcastle University

University Of Portsmouth

Royal Holloway

University Of Surrey

Teesside University

University of Winchester

University Of York

**MSc Forensic Psychology**

**MSc Forensic Psychology**

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Forensic Psychology

MSc Applied Forensic Psychology

All Accredited Forensic Psychology Programmes by BPS & HCPC

# Suggested Reading Material

- **Hess & Weiner** (1998) The Handbook of Forensic Psychology 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
- **Adler, J.R** (2004) Forensic Psychology.  
Devon: Willan
- **Brown, Shell & Cole** (2015) Forensic Psychology:  
Theory, research, policy and practice





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