

Module specification

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Module Code	PSYON703
Module Title	The Psychology of Criminal Conduct
Level	7
Credit value	15
Faculty	FSLS
HECoS Code	100497
Cost Code	GAPS
Pre-requisite module	N/A

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
MSc Forensic Psychology	Core

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	15 hrs
Placement tutor support hours	0 hrs
Supervised learning hours e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision hours	0 hrs
Active learning and teaching hours total	15 hrs
Placement hours	0 hrs
Guided independent study hours	135 hrs
Module duration (Total hours)	150 hrs

Module aims

To develop an advanced understanding of the contribution psychology can make to understanding and addressing particular forms of criminal behaviour and the efficacy of forensic approaches to managing those behaviours.

Module Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Demonstrate in depth knowledge of psychological models for understanding and responding to general offending behaviour.
2	Demonstrate in depth knowledge of psychological models for understanding and responding to sexual and violent offending.
3	Critically assess the efficacy of interventions that seek to prevent reoffending.

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

This section outlines the type of assessment task the student will be expected to complete as part of the module. More details will be made available in the relevant academic year module handbook.

Assessment 1: Case Study (1500 words) Students to identify a known violent or sexual offender, provide psychological insight into how the offence came to be perpetrated and apply one model for understanding the offence to the case.

Assessment 2: Essay (1500 words) exploring the efficacy of interventions that seek to prevent reoffending.

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Weighting (%)
1	1,2	Written Assignment	50%
2	3	Written Assignment	50%

Derogations

The minimum mark you need achieve for each module will be one of the following:

- 50%.
- A pass grade (normally only in place where an assessment is competency-based)

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The overall learning and teaching strategy will include a series of lectures with accompanying media devices. There will be a mix of supporting notes/along with directed study for students to complete as they work through the material and undertake the assessment tasks. The use of a range digital tools within the virtual learning environment together with additional sources of reading will also be utilised to promote breadth and depth of learning.

Welsh Elements

Students can present their work, access forms, resources, email correspondence, placement support and personal tutorials in Welsh.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- Correlates of offending behaviour
- Cognitive Behaviour theory and models
- The general offending behaviour cycle
- Anger and the violent offending cycle
- Domestic violence and abuse
- The psychology of sexual offending
- Sexual offending cycle
- What works with offenders
- Desistence
- Offending behaviour interventions

Indicative Bibliography

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update.

Essential Reads:

Ireland, J.L., Ireland, C.A., & Birch, P. (2018) *Violent and Sexual Offenders: Assessment, Treatment and Management*. London: Routledge

Other indicative reading:

Bush, J. (1999) 'Teaching self-risk management to violent offenders', in McGuire, J. (ed.) *What Works: Reducing Reoffending – Guidelines from Research and Practice*. Chichester: Wiley, pp. 139–154.

Canter, D. (2017) *Criminal Psychology*. London: Routledge.

Cortoni, F., Beech, A.R. and Craig, L.A. (2017) 'Sexual offenders', in Browne, K.D., Beech, A.R., Craig, L.A. and Chou, S. (eds.) *Assessment in Forensic Practice: A Handbook*. Chichester: Wiley.

Craig, L.A., Beech, A.R. and Cortoni, F. (2013) 'What works in assessing risk in sexual and violent offenders', in Craig, L.A., Dixon, L. and Gannon, T.A. (eds.) *What Works in Offender Rehabilitation: An Evidence-Based Approach to Assessment and Treatment*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Davies, G. and Beech, A. (2017) *Forensic Psychology: Crime, Justice, Law and Interventions*. Chichester: British Psychological Society and John Wiley & Sons.

De Haan, W. and Vos, J. (2003) 'A crying shame: The over-rationalised conception of man in the rational choice perspective', *Theoretical Criminology*, 7(1), pp. 29–54.

Harris, D.A., Mazerolle, P. and Knight, R.A. (2009) 'Understanding male sexual offending: A comparison of general and specialist theories', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36(10), pp. 1051–1069.

Haylseth-McCall, K. and Bernard, T. (2002) 'Attachment, masculinity and self-control: A theory of male crime rates', *Theoretical Criminology*, 6(1), pp. 5–33.

Madoc-Jones, I. (2006) 'A working model for cognitive behavioural practice', *Practice: A Journal of the British Association of Social Workers*, 18(1), pp. 31–46.

Marshall, W. and Marshall, L. (2000) 'The origins of sexual offending', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 1(3), pp. 250–263.

Administrative Information

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Initial approval date	June 2026
With effect from date	September 2026
Date and details of revision	
Version number	1