

Module specification

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Module Code	PSYON710
Module Title	Forensic Psychology in the Criminal Justice Process
Level	7
Credit value	15
Faculty	FSLS
HECoS Code	100387
Cost Code	GAPS
Pre-requisite module	N/A

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
MSc Psychology with Forensic Principles	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 provide a detailed and critical exploration of the contribution forensic psychology can make to criminal investigations and of the processes by which guilt or innocence is established in court.

Module Learning Outcomes

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

1	Compare and contrast competing models for offender profiling and assess the efficacy of profiling as an investigative tool
2	Compare and contrast approaches to police interviewing and evaluate the implications of each in relation to the reliability of the evidence collected and impact on vulnerable suspects/witnesses
3	Critically evaluate how miscarriages of justice might arise as a result of court proceedings and how a knowledge of forensic psychology might reduce the potential for this to occur

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: Oral presentation of a given case study (10 minutes)

Assessment 2: Essay applying psychological approaches to evaluate forensic psychology process (1500 words)

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Duration/Word Count	Weighting (%)	Alternative assessment, if applicable
1	1	Written Assignment	1000	40%	N/A
3	2,3	Written Assignment	1500	60%	N/A

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 adherence to the asynchronous elements of Active Learning Framework via a series of micro-lectures, directed reading and activities. There will be a mix of supporting materials along with directed study for students to complete as they work through the material and undertake the assessment tasks. The use of a range of 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

In line with the University's Welsh Medium Scheme, students will be offered the opportunity to submit assessments through the medium of Welsh. This will be drawn to the attention of students through the student handbook.

For those students wishing to engage with the subject area via the medium of Welsh, additional resources will be made available via www.porth.ac.uk, which is the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol resource portal

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- Investigative psychology
- Theories of Criminal Behaviours
- Geographical profiling
- Offender profiling
- Vulnerability
- Leading questions, false memories and confessions
- Interviewing techniques
- Implications for memory, bias, and attribution
- The expert witness in court
- Case studies of constructing guilt and innocence

Indicative Bibliography:

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

Essential Reads

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

Other indicative reading

Alison, L., Smith, M.D. and Morgan, K. (2003) 'Interpreting the accuracy of offender profiles', *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 9. London: Brunner-Routledge.

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

Canter, D. and Youngs, D. (2009) *Investigative Psychology: Offender Profiling and the Analysis of Criminal Action*. Chichester: Wiley.

Griffiths, A. and Milne, R. (2021) *The Psychology of Criminal Investigation: From Theory to Practice* (Issues in Forensic Psychology). London: Routledge.

Leahy-Harland, S. and Bull, R. (2017) 'Police strategies and suspect responses in real-life serious crime interviews', *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 32(2), pp. 138–151.

Loftus, E.F. (2019) 'Eyewitness testimony', *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 33(4), pp. 498–503.

Loftus, E.F., Loftus, G.R. and Messo, J. (1987) 'Some facts about weapon focus', *Law and Human Behaviour*, 11(1), pp. 55–67.

Porter, S., Brinke, L. and Gustaw, C. (2010) 'Dangerous decisions: The impact of first impressions of trustworthiness on the evaluation of legal evidence and defendant culpability', *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 16(6), pp. 477–491.

Sigall, H. and Ostrove, N. (1975) 'Beautiful but dangerous: Effects of offender attractiveness and nature of the crime on juridic judgement', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31(3), pp. 410–414.

Walsh, D. and Bull, R. (2010) 'What really is effective in interviews with suspects? A study comparing interviewing skills against interviewing outcomes', *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 15(2), pp. 305–321.

Wise, R.A. and Kehn, A. (2020) 'Can the effectiveness of eyewitness expert testimony be improved?', *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 27(2), pp. 315–330

Indicative Journals

- Legal and Criminological Psychology
- Psychiatry, Psychology and Law
- Criminal Justice and Behaviour
- Journal of Criminal Psychology

Administrative Information

For office use only	
Initial approval date	June 2026
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