

Programme Specification

Award and title: BSc (Hons) Forensic Psychology

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| <i>School:</i> | Education, Language and Psychology |
| <i>Subject area:</i> | Psychology |
| <i>Entry from academic year:</i> | 2023-24 |
| <i>in the month(s) of</i> | September |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | British Psychological Society |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | Certificate of Higher Education in Psychology Diploma of Higher Education in Psychology BSc (Ord) Forensic Psychology |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | C820 |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i> | Psychology |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |
| <i>Paired with Foundation Year</i> | Yes |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i> | Yes |
| <i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i> | Yes |

Introduction and special features

Psychology is the scientific study of the human brain and behaviour. Psychological science is applied to many everyday contexts with the aim of improving outcomes for individuals and groups of people. In the BSc Forensic Psychology, you will gain a comprehensive education in the scientific foundations of Psychology, with a specialist focus on the application of psychological principles to criminal and legal contexts. You will study the behaviours of offenders, the impact of crime on victims; the processes of criminal investigation and legal proceedings; and the role of demographic factors, mental health and learning difficulties within the criminal justice system. As such, the programme is ideal for those aiming to pursue careers in forensic psychology, police work, the probation service, social work, teaching and research.

The BSc Forensic Psychology is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and confers eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Chartership (GBC), provided the minimum standard of second-class honours and a pass in the final-year empirical project (Research Paper) is achieved. GBC is the first step towards becoming a Chartered Psychologist and is essential if you wish to pursue a career in Psychology, including as a forensic psychologist.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

Work-related Experiential Learning (WREL)

WREL is implemented across all levels of our Psychology programmes. Students are encouraged to start thinking about employability early on through the creation of an employability focused portfolio that is built upon and developed throughout each year of the programme. Research Methods modules will provide you with the skills required for careers involving data analysis and interpretation, with the use of real-world data and contexts provided where appropriate. Specialist modules build skills needed for careers relating to mental health, counselling, forensic settings, neurodiversity and neuropsychology. These skills are measured through authentic assessments where appropriate. Many of our modules are enhanced with guest speakers from a broad range of psychology-related careers to build student knowledge of career options and create networking opportunities.

Student support

You will be well supported to develop your skills, knowledge and interests as student on the BSc Forensic Psychology. You will be allocated an academic tutor in your first week of study and be able to develop that supportive relationship throughout the duration of your degree whilst working on a set programme of Personal, Academic and Professional Development (PAPD). Through PAPD you will have access to careers workshops and activities and an opportunity to participate in a number of careers related events which can be combined to contribute to a York St John University Employability award.

Student opportunity

You will have access to, and are actively encouraged to use, two well-resourced Psychology laboratories, which are permanently staffed by our technical team. Our technicians are on hand to offer support and guidance at the point of need. There is a range of continually updated technical resources for you to use in your practical work, including portable and static eye-tracking equipment, surveillance rooms equipped with HD cameras and ceiling-mounted microphones, virtual reality headsets and motion sensors, an electroencephalography (EEG) lab, Biopac physiological recording equipment, specialist software for creating, recoding and analysing experimental stimuli, and a wide range of questionnaires and psychometric tests.

The programme is designed to encourage you to become involved in psychological research as a researcher, participant and disseminator, both through your academic modules and a formal Psychology Research Participation Scheme (PReP) which is supported by specialist SONA software. The PReP is administered through two year-long modules during the first and second years of your degree; in order to pass these modules, you can choose to participate in research studies, accruing a target number of research participation points set on an annual basis, or complete an alternative assessment (an online research skills portfolio).

Participation in the scheme will help prepare you for conducting your own research projects and provide you with an insight into the experience of being a participant in research in psychological science. The research projects that you can partake in are a combination of final-year student research projects, postgraduate student research projects and staff research projects which can act as a catalyst for your own research ideas. As a final-year student you will also have the opportunity to advertise your own project in the PReP system if required.

Additionally, at all levels of the degree you are encouraged to apply to the Students as Researchers scheme giving the opportunity to work alongside psychology staff as a research assistant on current research programmes; this could involve collecting and analysing data and could lead to co-authoring a research paper or presenting it at a national conference. In your final year you'll engage in a year-long research project which culminates in presenting your findings as a research poster in a Psychology Research Conference, which is open to all psychology students.

In the second year of your degree, you will be supported to arrange 75 hours of work experience relevant to your career aspirations through the Psychology Work Placement. You can choose to complete these hours in a block of full-time work during the university holidays or through regular part-time work. Engaging in

learning in the workplace alongside your academic studies will help prepare you for the next steps after completing your degree.

Student choice

The first two years of the programme comprise a compulsory set of modules providing you with an excellent grounding in a broad range of psychological theory and research practice. The final year includes a specialist curriculum of core modules in forensic psychology alongside an optional module, which you can select from a range of related topics (e.g., neuropsychology, critical approaches to mental health).

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The aims of the programme are in accord with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmark document for Psychology (QAA, 2016) and are:

1. To produce a scientific understanding of the mind, brain, behaviour and experience and the complex interactions between these and the environments in which they exist.
2. To present multiple perspectives of psychology in a way that fosters critical evaluation and reflection.
3. To lead to an understanding of real-life applications of psychological theory within the full range of experiences and behaviour, especially as applied to forensic settings.
4. To promote the application of psychological understanding to real-world questions relating to forensic contexts.
5. To develop knowledge such that it leads to an appreciation of theory and research, including relevant ethical and socio-cultural issues.
6. To develop an understanding of the role of empirical evidence in the creation and constraint of theory and how theory guides the collection and interpretation of empirical data.
7. To develop a range of research skills, methods and knowledge for investigating experience and behaviour, culminating in the ability to conduct independent research.
8. To produce critical and reflective graduates with the knowledge and skills to compete effectively in a global graduate market.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to demonstrate:

Level 4

- 4.1 Knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles relating to Psychology.
- 4.2 Evaluation and interpretation of psychological concepts and principles.
- 4.3 Accurate presentation, evaluation and interpretation of research data.
- 4.4 Structured, accurate and coherent presentation of arguments relating to Psychology.
- 4.5 Evaluation of different theoretical approaches to psychological problems.
- 4.6 Qualities and skills required for continual development and learning within structured environments.

Level 5

- 5.1 Critical knowledge of the principles and limits of Psychology.
- 5.2 Application of psychological principles outside of the context in which they were first studied.

- 5.3 Knowledge and critical scientific evaluation of the main methods of psychological enquiry.
- 5.4 Effective communication of complex information in a variety of audience-appropriate forms.
- 5.5 Reflective practice related to the limits of their knowledge and skills relating to Psychology.
- 5.6 Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring personal responsibility and decision-making.

Level 6

- 6.1 A systematic and relativistic understanding of key aspects of psychological knowledge as applied to forensic contexts, some of which is at the forefront of the discipline.
- 6.2 Accurate and appropriate application of empirical research techniques and enquiry relevant to the study of forensic psychology.
- 6.3 Critical evaluation of knowledge and data in order to frame empirical questions and identify solutions.
- 6.4 Clear communication of uncertain or ambiguous knowledge to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 6.5 Reflective practice related to your specific and generic skills and knowledge in relation to graduate career opportunities.
- 6.6 Qualities and transferable skills necessary for roles requiring initiative, personal responsibility and decision making in complex or unpredictable contexts.

Programme structure

| Code | Level | Semester | Title | Credits | Module status | |
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| | | | | | Compulsory (C) or optional (O) | non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X) |
| PSY4001M | 4 | 1 | Exploring Social Psychology | 10 | C | X |
| PSY4002M | 4 | 1 | Cognition | 10 | C | X |
| PSY4003M | 4 | 1 | Biological Bases of Behaviour | 20 | C | X |
| PSY4004M | 4 | 1 | Experimental Research Methods & Statistics | 20 | C | X |
| PSY4005M | 4 | 2 | Current Psychology | 10 | C | X |
| PSY4006M | 4 | 2 | Foundations of Human Development | 10 | C | X |
| PSY4007M | 4 | 2 | Personality & Individual Differences | 20 | C | X |
| PSY4008M | 4 | 2 | Survey Research Methods & Statistics | 20 | C | X |
| PSY4012M | 4 | 1&2 | Psychology Professional Development and Participation | 0 | C | X |
| PSY5001M | 5 | 1 | Social Psychology | 20 | C | X |
| PSY5002M | 5 | 1 | Infant & Child Development | 20 | C | X |
| PSY5003M | 5 | 1 | Qualitative Research Methods | 20 | C | X |
| PSY5004M | 5 | 2 | Assessment of Individual Differences | 10 | C | X |
| PSY5005M | 5 | 2 | Advanced Topics in Brain & Behaviour | 10 | C | X |
| PSY5006M | 5 | 2 | Investigating Cognition | 20 | C | X |
| PSY5007M | 5 | 2 | Advanced Research Methods | 20 | C | X |
| PSY5008M | 5 | 1&2 | Psychology in Practice | 0 | C | X |
| PSY6001M | 6 | 1&2 | Research Paper | 40 | C | NC |
| PSY6008M | 6 | 1 | Investigative Psychology | 20 | C | X |
| PSY6016M | 6 | 2 | Theoretical Perspectives on Offending Behaviour | 20 | C | X |

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| PSY6029M | 6 | 1 | Victims and the Criminal Justice Experience | 20 | C | X |
| PSY6030M | 6 | 2 | Perspectives on Crime | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6003M | 6 | 2 | Contemporary Issues in Quantitative Psychology | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6005M | 6 | 2 | Memory Improvement | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6015M | 6 | 2 | Neuropsychology | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6024M | 6 | 2 | Critical Approaches to Mental Health | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6032M | 6 | 1 or 2 | Mind, Mood and Tomorrow | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6034M | 6 | 1 or 2 | Origins of the Human Mind | 20 | O | X |
| PSY6035M | 6 | 1 or 2 | Interactional Psychology | 20 | O | X |

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40 in order to progress).

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme assumes no prior knowledge of Psychology and is structured such that your knowledge and skills are continually scaffolded across the three levels of study.

At Levels 4 and 5, modules are delivered through a combination of large-group lectures, small-group seminars and laboratory workshops, and supported open learning activities via the virtual learning environment. The first year of the programme introduces you to key concepts of Psychology and psychological investigation and encourages you to get involved in staff and student research through the Current Psychology module and Psychology Research Participation Scheme. At second year, you will deepen your critical understanding of the core areas of Psychology with an increased emphasis on the practical skills underpinning psychological research. The second-year Psychology in Practice module focuses on your professional and academic development through a work experience component and further engagement with research participation.

You can opt to study abroad at one of our international partner institutions during the first semester of your second year; in order to maintain British Psychological Society accreditation, we will work with you to ensure that you take comparable modules at the partner institution. You also have the option to apply for a placement year between the second and third years of study, which allows you to develop employment-relevant skills and experience, while getting a first-hand insight of the sectors and job roles most relevant to your career aspirations.

At Level 6, you will study modules relevant to the study of forensic psychology and aligned to the individual research expertise of the academic team. Class sizes are capped for third-year modules allowing for a more discursive teaching approach, which provides a bridge to post-graduate level study. You will also engage in a substantial piece of self-directed research, working under the supervision of a member of the academic team, within the Research Paper module. This empirical project allows you to bring together and demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have gained throughout your degree. As a Forensic Psychology student, you are guaranteed the opportunity to conduct a forensic-relevant project for the Research Paper module, but you have the freedom to choose to undertake your empirical project in another area of Psychology if you choose. The final year of your undergraduate programme therefore allows you scope to tailor your studies to your own particular interests and to prepare for life as a York St John Psychology graduate.

You will be assigned a personal academic tutor from among the academic team on arrival at university. Through the three years of your undergraduate degree, you will meet regularly with your academic tutor to discuss your progress and to work through the Personal, Academic, and Professional Development programme. This programme aims to help you to reflect on your strengths, weaknesses and preferences,

identify strategies to further develop weaker skills, and consider the next steps in your academic and/or professional career after graduation.

A range of assessment types is used across the degree programme to allow you to demonstrate knowledge and skills across multiple domains and to excel in areas of particular strength. At level 4, assessments are designed to appraise the breadth of your understanding of core areas of Psychology (e.g., multiple-choice examination, portfolio) and to allow you to practise the foundational academic skills that you will need throughout your degree (e.g., essay, lab report, group presentation). At level 5, you have the opportunity to demonstrate critical depth in your psychological knowledge (e.g., essay-based exam, critical essay) and build a range of key empirical research skills in preparation for your final-year empirical project (e.g., research proposal, research report, data skills portfolio). At level 6, many modules incorporate 'authentic assessments', which allow you to practise work-relevant skills (e.g., clinical report, information sheet for practitioners, individual presentation). In addition, in the final-year Research Paper you can evidence the range of skills you have developed in your degree through a write-up of your empirical project in the format of a peer-reviewed journal article.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- PSY6001M Research Paper must be passed in order to achieve an honours degree and to be eligible for the graduate basis for chartership with the British Psychological Society.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- British Psychological Society Undergraduate Accreditation Handbook

Date written / revised: December 2021

Programme originally approved: 23/02/2022