

## Programme Specification

### Award and title: Forensic Psychology BSc (Hons)

<i>School:</i>	Education, Language and Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Psychology
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2024-25
<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 (BPS)
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Psychology Diploma of Higher Education Psychology BSc (Ord) Forensic Psychology
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	C800
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	None
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Psychology 2023
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	<a href="#">Undergraduate periods of study</a> <sup>1</sup> 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
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	Yes

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## Introduction and special features

The BSc Forensic Psychology offers an exciting opportunity to pursue an accredited Psychology programme, alongside learning about its applications to criminal justice contexts. You will receive a comprehensive education in the scientific foundations of Psychology, an introduction to applied psychology across multiple domains, and an insight into Forensic Psychology.

Forensic Psychology is the application of psychological knowledge to criminal justice systems and processes. This includes a range of contexts, from recruitment of criminal justice agents (e.g., police officers) to support for victims of crime. In the BSc Forensic Psychology, you will gain a comprehensive education in the scientific foundations of Forensic Psychology, with a specialist focus on the application of psychological principles to criminal and legal contexts. Your knowledge, understanding, and critical application of these issues will be reflected in the range of assessments you will complete, particularly at levels 5 and 6. You will study the behaviours of offenders, the impact of crime on victims; the processes of

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<sup>1</sup> The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

criminal investigation and legal proceedings; and the role of demographic factors, mental health, and learning difficulties within the criminal justice system. As such, assessments at level 6 will focus on transferable skills and will include authentic assessment, making this programme 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.

### **Work-related Experiential Learning (WREL)**

The psychology programme at York St John University incorporates work-related experiential learning at all levels, providing you with invaluable real-world experience and career-related skills. This hands-on approach, integral to your timetable, allows you to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations, and enhance your psychological literacy in real-life contexts. You will also acquire essential transferable skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork, which are critical for professional success. Additionally, these experiences facilitate networking opportunities and can often lead to future employment prospects. By engaging directly with employers, you will gain a deeper appreciation of the relevance and application of your studies, boosting your confidence and preparedness for future employment. This blend of academic learning and practical experience ensures that you are not only knowledgeable but also well prepared to apply your skills in diverse professional settings, particularly those related to criminal justice.

### **Diversity of Assessment and Scaffolded Learning**

The variety of assessments on the psychology programme at York St John University offers you significant benefits, both academically and personally. This diversity in assessment types – encompassing essays, research reports, reflections, case studies, career pathway plans, and presentations – caters to the varied strengths and learning styles of students, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable educational experience. Such a range allows you to demonstrate your understanding and skills in multiple formats, thus more accurately reflecting your learning and capabilities. This approach not only assesses academic knowledge but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and practical application skills, crucial for real-world problem-solving beyond your degree programme. Furthermore, the scaffolded approach to learning, where concepts and skills are built progressively, enhances your academic confidence and allows you to grow and develop as the course progresses. It provides a structured yet flexible learning pathway, enabling you to gradually develop and deepen your understanding, while simultaneously acquiring and refining skills essential for your academic and professional growth. This methodical progression through increasingly complex and challenging assessments ensures that you are well-prepared for the demands of both higher education, further study, and your future career, thus aligning your academic development with your professional preparedness.

### **Research Support and Resources**

Research is a key component of BPS accredited Psychology programmes and one which makes Psychology graduates highly valued and sought after. Developing your research skills in the psychology programme at York St John University helps to develop your psychological literacy and equips you with the ability to critically analyse, interpret, and apply psychological theories and concepts. It helps you to foster a deeper understanding of evidence and ethical thinking, enhances your problem-solving and analytical abilities, and prepares you for professional roles. This includes, with the requisite post-graduate qualifications, 'forensic psychologists'. Moreover, research proficiency promotes intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning, essential traits for success in an ever-changing world with unanticipated challenges and opportunities.

Throughout your degree you will have access to a suite of dedicated Psychology laboratories that you will use to develop your research skills, participate in cutting-edge research, and conduct your own original research.

Our laboratories comprise:

- A large 48-computer lab used for research methods training;
- Three group labs, each equipped with wall-mounted HD cameras, microphones and a screen capture device, for recording focus groups, interviews and behavioural observation studies;
- An adjacent video control room for storing and analysing video recordings;
- An electroencephalography (EEG) lab, for recording electrical activity in the brain;
- An eye-tracking lab, for recording precise gaze locations and durations;
- A virtual reality (VR) and pain perception lab, for exploring immersion within VR and whether this modulates pain perception;
- Six further test labs for running experiments, conducting interviews, and analysing data.

In addition to the specialist equipment housed within our laboratories, you will also have access to psychophysiological measures for recording heart rate and electrodermal activity; an extensive test library including measures of language ability, memory, personality, and mental health; and specialist software to support both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. You will be supported in using our research facilities by a dedicated team of specialist technical staff.

### **Final Year Option Module**

Whilst the first two years of the programme contain a compulsory set of modules providing an excellent understanding of a broad range of psychological theory and practice, the final year focuses on forensic modules, with one additional optional choice. The compulsory modules are designed to provide a diverse overview of psychological applications to forensic contexts, including victim studies. It encourages critical thinking about the meaning of crime and how it intersects with social justice in varied and complex ways. As such, the programme covers contemporary topics, emerging trends, and professional pathways. Final year options reflect staff research expertise and, as such, are subject to change each year. All modules in the final year are capped to ensure that class sizes are allow for greater interaction with, and support from, staff as you prepare to leave the course and seek further study or employment.

### **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 (2023) and are:

1. 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.
2. To promote the application of psychological understanding to real-world questions relating to forensic contexts.
3. To produce critical, ethical, 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, learning and employment.

### **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, including within the field of forensic psychology.
- 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 your knowledge and skills relating to psychology.
- 5.6 Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment.

### **Level 6**

- 6.1 A systematic and relativistic understanding of key aspects of psychological knowledge, including within the field of forensic psychology, some of which is at the forefront of the discipline.
- 6.2 Accurate and appropriate application of empirical research techniques and enquiry, including within the field 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	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
PSY4013M	4	1	Biological Bases of Behaviour	20	C	X
PSY4014M	4	1	Differential Psychology	20	C	X
PSY4015M	4	1	Foundations of Research 1	20	C	X
PSY4016M	4	2	Cognition and Development	20	C	X
PSY4017M	4	2	Psychology at Work	20	C	X
PSY4018M	4	2	Foundations of Research 2	20	C	X
PSY4019M	4	1&2	Psychology Professional Development and Participation 1	0	C	X
PSY5009M	5	1	Developmental Psychology	20	C	X
PSY5016M	5	1	Applying Psychology in Forensic Settings	20	C	X
PSY5011M	5	1	Psychological Research 1	20	C	X
PSY5017M	5	2	Brain and Forensic Behaviour	20	C	X
PSY5013M	5	2	Social Psychology	20	C	X
PSY5014M	5	2	Psychological Research 2	20	C	X
PSY5015M	5	1&2	Psychology Professional Development and Participation 2	20	C	X
PSY6036M	6	1&2	Research Paper	40	C	NC
PSY6037M	6	1&2	Psychology Professional Development	0	C	X
PSY6052M	6	1	Perspectives on Crime	20	C	X
PSY6053M	6	2	Investigative Psychology	20	C	X
PSY6054M	6	2	Theories of Offending	20	C	X
<p><b>Choose 1 module in semester 1 from the following*:</b>  <i>*Please note that not all options will be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability. Students will be given the opportunity to state their preferences and the School will do its best to accommodate these. A minimum of three optional modules will be available.</i></p>						
PSY6038M	6	1	Neuropsychology	20	O	X
PSY6039M	6	1	Interactional Psychology	20	O	X
PSY6040M	6	1	Memory Improvement	20	O	X
PSY6049M	6	1or2*	Adolescent Development and Behaviour	20	O	X
PSY6050M	6	1or2*	Data Analysis for the Real World	20	O	X
PSY6051M	6	1or2*	Virtual Reality and Human Behaviour	20	O	X
PSY6044M	6	1or2*	Clinical Psychology	20	O	X
PSY6045M	6	1or2*	Health Psychology	20	O	X
PSY6046M	6	1or2*	Critical Approaches to Mental Health	20	O	X
PSY6047M	6	1or2*	Mind, Mood and Tomorrow	20	O	X
PSY6048M	6	1or2*	Victim Perspectives	20	O	X

*\* The intention is to offer the modules in this configuration but have the flexibility to be able to change the semester of delivery for each module without having to change the documentation. The number and range of optional modules offered each year may vary.*

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 is structured such that your knowledge and skills continually develop across the different levels of the programme and assumes no prior knowledge of psychology.

Level 4 is designed to introduce key concepts of psychology and psychological investigation so that you can begin to develop your generic and psychology-specific skills and knowledge.

Level 5 builds on the solid foundation of the previous level to provide more challenging content and skills, expanding many of the core concepts delivered in level 4 by encouraging further intellectual challenge and curiosity. There are additional study abroad opportunities at level 5 which you can take part in for a semester – usually at partner institutions in the United States. In order to keep BPS accreditation whilst studying abroad you must take comparable modules at the partner institution; if these are not available then you may still choose to study abroad but with the loss of BPS accreditation. Psychology staff will be on hand to provide guidance and support for this decision.

Level 6 will primarily focus on applying knowledge to date in forensic psychology-based modules. These modules, alongside one optional module, will be complemented by self-directed research in the Research Paper module whilst also choosing from modules which reflect both postgraduate training routes and the individual research expertise within the staff team. This approach enables you to identify and follow your own interests and to prepare for life as a York St John Psychology graduate.

Alongside the formal content of the programme at all levels are two parallel development programmes; the Personal and Professional Development programme contained within timetabled academic tutorial sessions and the Research Participation Scheme which encourages you to become involved in student and staff research as a participant.

More specifically, each module provides structured learning utilising a variety of assessment techniques. Module-based learning activities will include formal lectures, seminars, supported open learning, independent study, and the use of virtual learning environments (i.e. Moodle). Assessment activities are designed to enable you to receive relevant feedback about your learning before submitting assessments for marking.

In creating assessments for the modules, great thought has been given to providing a range of assessment types to meet the differing strengths, weaknesses and preferences of all our students in order to help you reach your full potential, whilst also being challenging in order to help develop important skills expected of all graduates.

## 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:

- PSY6036M 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](#)

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*Date written / revised: February 2024*  
*Programme originally approved: 19 April 2024*