Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for a postgraduate award
MSc Forensic Psychology (2852)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found here. Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found here.

The MSc Forensic Psychology is designed to give students in-depth insights into topical issues and the latest research in forensic psychology, in line with the British Psychological Society curriculum requirements. Modules are taught with an emphasis on group discussions and the development of independent thought and analysis, appropriate to such an advanced level of study. The research project offers students the opportunity to carry out an independent piece of research of high quality, in an area of interest to them.

The course will equip students with knowledge about cutting edge developments and issues in forensic psychology, as well as an array of analytical, methodological, and statistical research skills. These skills will be useful for pursuing further academic research such as a PhD or a research assistantship and it is anticipated that some of the course participants will pursue this career path. Accredited by the British Psychological Society, this course will comprise the first Stage of professional training towards qualification as a Forensic Psychologist and it is anticipated that many students will want to pursue this career path. However, many skills that the course will equip the students with are transferable and will also add value in settings of non-academic employment (e.g. numeracy, how to organise complex information, critical analysis, work to deadlines).

Your degree courses at Royal Holloway, University of London, will be delivered over one year, which normally involves modules to the value of 180 credits (which is equivalent to 90 ECTS credits[1]).

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

[1] The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer. ECTS credits reflect the total workload required to achieve defined learning outcomes and their associated workload, including teaching hours and guided independent study. 15 UK credits is equivalent to 7.5 ECTS. 30 UK credits is equivalent to 15 ECTS. Further details on ECTS can be found within the ECTS User Guide 2015.

Degree course – Also referred to as ‘programme’, this term refers to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies. ‘Courses’ were formerly known as ‘programmes’ at Royal Holloway.
Module – This refers to the credits you will study each year to complete your degree course. Postgraduate taught degrees at Royal Holloway comprise 180 credits. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title. ‘Modules’ were formerly known as ‘course units’ at Royal Holloway.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	December 2025	**Location of study**	Egham
Course award and title	MSc Forensic Psychology	**Level of study**	Postgraduate
Course code	2852	**Year of entry**	2027/28
Language(s) of Tuition	English		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department	Royal Holloway Law School	**Other departments involved in teaching the course**	Psychology
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time and part time	**Duration of the course**	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two to five years (104 - 260 weeks) part-time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	British Psychological Society. Successful completion of the MSc in Forensic Psychology fulfils stage one of the requirements towards Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society and full membership of the Division of Forensic Psychology. Please note that the exit awards referenced in section 10 of this course specification are unaccredited by the BPS.		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	**For queries on admissions:**	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

Section 3 – Degree course structure

3.1 Mandatory module information

The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study

Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC
CR5101	Forensic Psychology and the Legal and Criminal Justice Context	15	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
CR5102	Forensic Psychology Practice with Adults	30	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
PS5204	Advanced and Applied Research Techniques	15	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
PS5302	Statistics for Research	30	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
PS5303	Forensic Investigations	15	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
CR5103	Forensic Psychology Practice with Young People and Families	15	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable
CR5100	Dissertation	60	7	Mandatory Non-Condonable

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

3.2 Optional modules

In addition to mandatory modules, there may be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered, or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example, where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed

necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection; please contact the Department for further information.

There are no optional modules on the MSc Forensic Psychology.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's Academic Regulations.

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to be awarded. The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who otherwise meet the requirements for award as stipulated in the Academic Taught Regulations but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

The course can be taken part-time over two to five years beginning in September of year one. Part-time students studying over two years normally take modules as listed in the paragraph below on Part Time Mode. Students who take courses over more than two years should discuss with the department the order in which to take the modules. The dissertation is normally taken in the final year of study.

In the first year:

- PS5204 Advanced and Applied Research Techniques (15 credits) (non-condonable)
- PS5302 Statistics for Research (30 credits) (non-condonable)
- CR5103 Forensic Psychology Practice with Young People and Families (15 credits) (non-condonable)
- PS5303 Forensic Investigations (15 credits) (non-condonable)

In the second year:

- CR5101 Forensic Psychology and the Legal and Criminal Justice Context (15 credits) (non-condonable)
- CR5102 Forensic Psychology Practice with Adults (30 credits) (non-condonable)
- CR5100 Dissertation (60 credits) (non-condonable)

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

- To provide students with advanced knowledge and understanding of the principles in research and practice of forensic psychology in accordance with the knowledge base components required by the Division of Forensic Psychology of the British Psychological Society
- To train students in the informed and systematic application of the scientist/research-practitioner model involving problem analysis and formulation, intervention, assessment and evaluation
- To expose students to the major theoretical formulations and models in the area of forensic psychology in order to provide a conceptual underpinning to inform their approach to research and practice
- To develop employability, interpersonal, technical and creative skills required for the effective transition to the world of work by opportunities to take personal control of their own development, promoting individual and team working, enhancing decision making skills and facilitating a range of placement opportunities in forensic settings
- To prepare students to conduct research by giving them the appropriate technical and critical thinking skills in design and analytical procedures
- To facilitate self-reflection in support of personal and professional development via constructive feedback
- To model a professional and ethical approach to colleagues and potential clients mindful of equality issues and acknowledging human rights of those with whom they come into contact
- To enable students to communicate the results of research to a variety of audiences
- To develop further the students' written and oral communication skills, required for further research and many senior professional positions
- To hone a range of other transferable skills, e.g. how to organise complex information, critical analysis, deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, solve problems in a self-directed and original fashion, plan and implement tasks autonomously, work to deadlines.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes

In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (*Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)*)

Level 7

1. Acquire advanced knowledge of theory and evidence base of practice in forensic psychology.
2. Develop skills relevant to the breadth of forensic psychological practice (as well as personal development objectives) including advanced statistics for psychology.
3. Have a critical awareness of the range of techniques and research methods applicable to forensic psychological enquiry.
4. Develop an ability to apply relevant ethical, legal and professional practice frameworks to research and practice in forensic psychology.
5. Have an awareness of a developing professional identity as a trainee forensic psychologist.
6. Critically evaluate the quality of applied psychological research.

7. Carry out original research projects independently, including conception, literature review, study design data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and dissemination.
8. Ability to work collaboratively within a group and work to deadlines and to communicate clearly and professionally in both written and oral form.
9. Apply advanced numerical skills to a range of issues.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning are mainly by means of sessions lasting between two and three hours; a combination of lectures, seminars and practical sessions. The assessment pattern has been developed to capture a broad range of skills development relevant to forensic psychological theory and practice and is clearly aligned with learning objectives. The assessment pattern promotes advanced critical evaluation through engagement with theory explicitly (e.g. essays, research methods evaluation, research report, , critical review, examination, dissertation) and implicitly (e.g. case report, reflective report, peer assessment, small group presentations). Transferable skills are developed through: engagement with the reflective process (e.g. linking reflection with observations of criminal cases, reflecting on the relationship between research and practice in forensic psychology); psychological report writing and formulation (e.g. case report, formative assessments through workshops); oral presentations (group and individual across formative and summative assessments); professional practice skills (through workshops, formative assessment and professional writing skills in summative assessments such as case reports). The assessment pattern addresses the learning objectives (theory, knowledge and skills) of the British Psychological Society Standards for Masters Courses in Forensic Psychology.

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online Royal Holloway Curriculum Catalogue. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this course.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	7
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10– Intermediate exit awards (where available)

You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
PG Diploma in Forensic Psychology (Banner code 2966) This award is not accredited by the British Psychological Society	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 30 credits condonable (with the exception of any course specific requirements).	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
PG Certificate in Forensic Psychology (Banner code 2967) This award is not accredited by the British Psychological Society	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College


ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON