

Definitive Programme Document

MSc Investigative Forensic Psychology



Awarding institution	Bath Spa University
Teaching institution	Bath Spa University
School	School of Sciences
Main campus	Newton Park
Other sites of delivery	N/A
Other Schools involved in delivery	N/A
Name of award(s)	Investigative Forensic Psychology
Qualification (final award)	MSc
Intermediate awards available	PgCert Investigative Forensic Psychology PgDip Investigative Forensic Psychology
Duration of award	1 year full-time, 2 years part-time
Sandwich period	No
Modes of delivery offered	Campus-based, Online
Regulatory Scheme ¹	Taught Postgraduate Framework
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation	N/A
Date of most recent PSRB approval (month and year)	N/A
Renewal of PSRB approval due (month and year)	N/A
Route code (SITS)	MSIFP/IFP
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements (including date of publication)	Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (2020) The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)
Date of most recent approval	October 2025
Date specification last updated	October 2025

Exemptions

The following exemptions are in place:

Programme/Pathway	Regulations/Framework	Brief description of variance	Approving body and date
N/A			

¹ This should also be read in conjunction with the University's Qualifications Framework

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Programme Overview

The MSc in Investigative Forensic Psychology provides an advanced, practice-focused exploration of how psychological theory, research, and methods are applied within criminal justice and investigative contexts. Designed for students interested in crime, law, and psychological inquiry, the programme equips graduates with the critical skills to understand, investigate, and respond to complex offending behaviour and systemic challenges.

Throughout the programme, students engage with key psychological frameworks, including biological, cognitive, developmental, and sociocultural theories of crime, and the application of psychology to serious crime investigation, courtroom processes, and post-sentencing contexts. Specialist modules develop advanced research design and analysis skills using quantitative and qualitative methods, supported by training in appropriate software.

Students also complete a substantial independent dissertation project, applying research skills to a relevant professional and academic topic. Across all modules, emphasis is placed on ethical awareness, reflexive practice, and the development of professional competencies (e.g. communication, digital fluency, psychological literacy, and collaboration) essential for careers in forensic psychology, criminal investigation, and related sectors.

The programme is suited to students aiming to pursue employment in criminal justice, investigative services, policy, or mental health settings or further doctoral training and research roles. With a strong applied focus and critical lens, the MSc in Investigative Forensic Psychology provides a multidisciplinary foundation for impactful and ethically informed professional practice.

Programme Aims

1. To provide students with opportunities to explore and critically engage with psychological theories, research, and practices relevant to the investigation and prosecution of crime.
2. To develop students' advanced research skills and methodological understanding, enabling them to undertake ethically sound and academically rigorous research in investigative forensic psychology.
3. To create opportunities for students to apply psychological knowledge in real-world contexts, including investigative, legal, and multidisciplinary professional environments.
4. To support students in developing critical awareness of contemporary issues, ethical dilemmas, and systemic complexities within investigative forensic psychology.

5. To foster the development of key professional competencies, such as communication, teamwork, digital fluency, and psychological literacy, essential for careers in forensic psychology, criminal justice, and related sectors.
6. To encourage students to think creatively and innovatively in designing evidence-based approaches to understanding and addressing crime, offending behaviour, and victimisation.

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
(NB These ILOs are at level 7 of the FHEQ)

A Subject-specific Skills and Knowledge

	On achieving Level 7 you will be able to:
A1	Understand Crime Theories and Processes Demonstrate a deep and critical understanding of key psychological theories and models of criminal behaviour and forensic processes and critically evaluate their application in contemporary forensic contexts.
A2	Apply Psychology to Investigations Apply forensic psychological knowledge and techniques across investigative settings, demonstrating a critical understanding of their limitations while adapting methods to complex, real-world scenarios and case challenges.
A3	Conduct Rigorous Research Design and conduct rigorous advanced research using specialised quantitative and qualitative methodologies relevant to investigative forensic psychology.
A4	Integrate Theory and Practice Synthesise psychological theory and practical skills to develop evidence-based strategies for intervention, assessment, and consultation in legal, correctional, and community contexts.
A5	Act Ethically and Professionally Demonstrate ethical competence and professional integrity by critically engaging with legal, regulatory, and moral issues in forensic psychological practice.

B Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

	On achieving Level 7 you will be able to:
B1	Synthesise and Evaluate Evidence Critically evaluate and synthesise psychological literature to inform decision-making and support the development of innovative approaches in investigative forensic psychology.
B2	Evaluate Research Quality and Relevance

	Assess the validity, reliability, and relevance of contemporary research and theories using advanced understanding of methodological and conceptual issues.
B3	Solve Complex Problems Ethically Formulate original, ethical responses to complex and uncertain challenges in forensic psychology, demonstrating sound judgment and creative problem-solving within professional boundaries.
B4	Analyse and Present Data Analyse, interpret, and present forensic psychological data with clarity and rigour, contributing to academic knowledge, professional practice, and policy development.

C Skills for Life and Work

	On achieving Level 7 you will be able to:
C1	Work Independently Act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in a professional context.
C2	Work with Others Plan for and actively engage in inclusive collaboration with others to tackle and solve complex problems and develop original insights.
C3	Communicate with Impact Communicate complex ideas clearly, effectively and impactfully with specialist and non-specialist audiences.
C4	Demonstrate Digital Fluency Use digital skills productively, critically and ethically to enhance creativity and communication in a professional context.

Intermediate awards

PgCert Intended Learning Outcomes

A1, A2, A4, A5

B1, B3

C1, C3

PgDip Intended Learning Outcomes

A1, A2, A3, A4, A5

B1, B2, B3, B4

C1, C3

Graduate Attributes

At Bath Spa University, you are part of a **Professionally Creative** community. You are challenged to realise your talent and thrive, not just for your own benefit, but for the wider good as well. During your journey at BSU, the graduate attributes are your companions. They are designed to inspire and guide your personal and professional growth. You are encouraged to embrace, interpret and integrate these attributes in your own unique way.

Graduate Attributes describe the ways in which you can develop personally and professionally during your time with Bath Spa University. Developing these attributes happens not only through your curriculum, but also by actively seeking opportunities beyond the formal curriculum, such as joining clubs and societies, gaining work experience, volunteering, and engaging in personal projects. Additionally, part-time work and personal activities outside the university can further enhance your skills and prepare you for a successful future. University support services, such as ASk and Careers and Employability, can support you in understanding how you can develop these attributes throughout your time with us.

Graduate Attribute	While at Bath Spa, I will develop my ability to:	This programme will help me to do this through:
Confidently Self-Aware	Reflect on and recognise my unique skills, strengths, and values and be able to apply and articulate them in a range of different contexts.	Engaging in critical self-reflection through case analysis, feedback, and personal development planning embedded across modules and assessments.
Emotionally Attuned	Be mindful of how my actions and emotions impact those around me so I can better navigate difficult situations and build effective interpersonal relationships.	Developing emotional intelligence through role-plays, ethical dilemmas, and critical engagement with trauma, victim experiences, and practitioner impact.
Inclusive Collaborator	Contribute independently to collaborative projects while working effectively with others, valuing diversity and respecting individual differences.	Participating in group-based research, collaborative case discussions, and problem-solving tasks involving diverse forensic contexts.
Adaptable Innovator	Embrace challenges, taking risks where needed and applying individual and collective problem solving.	Tackling complex, ambiguous case studies and investigative scenarios using creative thinking and interdisciplinary approaches.
Critical Thinker	Keep an open mind, ask curious questions and think	Analysing global forensic literature, questioning

	creatively to gain a deeper and broader understanding of global perspectives and the world around me.	assumptions, and evaluating the ethical and practical implications of psychological practices.
Forward Thinker	Set goals, plan ahead and utilise resources to support my personal ambitions and achieve my own version of success.	Planning independent research, setting personal goals during dissertation supervision, and engaging in career-focused and reflective development activities.
Ethical Leader	Act with empathy, making decisions grounded in ethical principles while advocating for sustainability and positive social change.	Applying professional ethical frameworks to forensic dilemmas and cultivating professional responsibility in criminal justice, mental health, and investigative settings.
Responsible Self-Starter	Be accountable for my actions and decisions while demonstrating creativity, proactivity, and a focus on solutions.	Taking ownership of learning through applied projects, independent research, and self-directed inquiry in real-world forensic contexts.
Compassionately Resilient	Respond to setbacks with a reflective and positive attitude, flexibility and a self-caring approach.	Building resilience through reflective practice, peer feedback, and learning from emotionally-demanding content and case materials.
Digitally Resourceful	Utilise and responsibly leverage existing and emerging technologies to solve problems and communicate.	Gaining advanced skills in digital tools for data analysis, qualitative research, and professional communication in academic and applied settings.

Programme content

This programme comprises the following modules

Key:

Core = C

Required = R

Required* = R*

Optional = O

Not available for this status = N/A

If a particular status is greyed out, it is not offered for this programme.

Subject offered as single programme

MSc Investigative Forensic Psychology				Status
Level	Code	Title	Credits	Single
7	IFP7001-30	Understanding Crime: Psychological Perspectives, Offenders, and the Legal System	30	C
7	IFP7002-30	Investigating Crime Through Theory and Research	30	C
7	IFP7003-30	Psychology of Serious Crime Investigation	30	C
7	IFP7004-30	Advanced Research Methods	30	C
7	IFP7005-60	Forensic Psychology Dissertation	60	C

Assessment methods

A range of summative assessments will be used to evaluate the Intended Learning Outcomes for each module, as outlined in the programme's assessment map. Assessments are designed to reflect real-world psychological practice and promote the development of transferable, research-informed, and professionally relevant skills.

Students will be supported through formative activities that build confidence, enhance well-being, and enable them to articulate psychological knowledge to diverse audiences. These approaches align with the University's commitment to applied, inclusive, and flexible education that nurtures resilience, curiosity, and career readiness.

Please note: if you choose an optional module from outside this programme, you may be required to undertake a summative assessment task that does not appear in the assessment grid here in order to pass that module.

Work experience and placement opportunities

There are no formal work experience or placement opportunities within the programme, but the final 60-credit project module offers the option of, and support for, designing a research project in consultation and collaboration with external agencies or employers.

Additional Course Costs

There are no additional costs associated with this course.

Module Code & Title	Type of Cost	Cost

Modifications

Module-level modifications

Code	Title	Nature of modification	Date(s) of approval and approving bodies	Date modification comes into effect

Programme-level modifications

Nature of modification	Date(s) of approval and approving bodies	Date modification comes into effect

Attached as appendices:

1. Programme structure diagram
2. Map of module outcomes to level/programme outcomes
3. Assessment map
4. Module descriptors

Appendix 1: Programme Structure Diagram – MSc

Full Time		
Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Core Modules		
IFP7001-30 Understanding Crime: Psychological Perspectives, Offenders, and the Legal System (PgCert, PgDip, MSc)	IFP7003-30 Psychology of Serious Crime Investigation (PgDip, MSc)	IFP7005-60 Forensic Psychology Dissertation (MSc)
IFP7002-30 Investigating Crime Through Theory and Research (PgCert, PgDip, MSc)	IFP7004-30 Advanced Research Methods (PgDip, MSc)	
Rule Notes:		

Part Time		
Year 1		
Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Core Modules		
IFP7001-30 Understanding Crime: Psychological Perspectives, Offenders, and the Legal System (PgCert, PgDip, MSc)	IFP7003-30 Psychology of Serious Crime Investigation (PgDip, MSc)	
Year 2		
Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Core Modules		
IFP7002-30 Investigating Crime Through Theory and Research (PgCert, PgDip, MSc)	IFP7004-30 Advanced Research Methods (PgDip, MSc)	IFP7005-60 Forensic Psychology Dissertation (MSc)
Year 3		
Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
Core Modules		
IFP7005-60 Forensic Psychology Dissertation (MSc)		
Rule Notes: IFP7005-60 Forensic Psychology Dissertation (MSc) will be taken over the third trimester of the second year and the first trimester of year 3.		

Appendix 2: Map of module outcomes to level/programme outcomes

Map of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) against modules MSc Investigative Forensic Psychology



Level	Module Code	Module Title	Status (C,R,R*,O) ²	Intended Learning Outcomes												
				Subject-specific Skills and Knowledge					Cognitive and Intellectual Skills				Skills for Life and Work			
				A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4
7	IFP7001-30	Understanding Crime: Psychological Perspectives, Offenders, and the Legal System	C	x	x			x	x				x		x	
7	IFP7002-30	Investigating Crime Through Theory and Research	C			x		x		x			x		x	x
7	IFP7003-30	Psychology of Serious Crime Investigation	C	x	x		x	x	x		x			x	x	x

² C = Core; R = Required; R* = Required*; O = Optional

7	IFP7004-30	Advanced Research Methods	C				x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x
7	IFP7005-60	Forensic Psychology Dissertation	C	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Appendix 3: Map of summative assessment tasks by module

MSc Investigative Forensic Psychology



Level	Module Code	Module Title		Assessment method	
				Coursework	Practical

			Status (C,R, R*,O) ³	Workbook	Dissertation	Essay	Research Journal	Portfolio	Report	Practical Project	Practical skills	Presentation
7	IFP7001-30	Understanding Crime: Psychological Perspectives, Offenders, and the Legal System	C			1 x 3,500 words			1 x 2,500 words			
7	IFP7002-30	Investigating Crime Through Theory and Research	C	1 x 3000 words				1 x 3000 words				
7	IFP7003-30	Psychology of Serious Crime Investigation	C							1 x 3,500 words		1 x 2,500 words
7	IFP7004-30	Advanced Research Methods	C				1 x 2,000				1 x 4000 words	
7	IFP7005-60	Forensic Psychology Dissertation	C		1 x 7000 words							1 x 10%

³ C = Core; R = Required; R* = Required*; O = Optional