



## Programme Specification (PG)

Awarding body / institution:	Queen Mary University of London
Teaching institution:	Queen Mary University of London
Name of final award and programme title:	MSc Forensic Psychology and Mental Health
Name of interim award(s):	Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma
Duration of study / period of registration:	1 year full-time, 2 years part-time
Queen Mary programme code(s):	PSPDM - A3CG   A3CH
QAA Benchmark Group:	Medicine
FHEQ Level of Award:	Level 7
Programme accredited by:	British Psychological Society (BPS)
Date Programme Specification approved:	3/10/2024 (FMD TLC)
Responsible School / Institute:	Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine

Schools / Institutes which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Institute of Population Health Sciences

Collaborative institution(s) / organisation(s) involved in delivering the programme:

### Programme outline

The MSc in Forensic Psychology and Mental Health will provide a new generation of forensic clinicians and researchers with the skills needed to work safely, ethically and effectively with offenders who pose a risk to others due to their mental disorder. Through a combination of taught theoretical and practical, placement-based learning, it will provide students with an opportunity to learn both as students, but also as active staff participants in the forensic mental health system.

Different from other taught postgraduate programmes in the field, the course will offer students a distinctive psychosocial focus that will inform not just the theoretical material but also the practice-based learning. This approach recognises that all individuals come from a particular environment, which will inform their early development as well as their relationships in later life. As well as providing a framework for safe and therapeutic work with offenders, the psychosocial approach can help those on the course to reflect on their own experiences and practice in a way that is directly linked to further developing their skills as clinicians, researchers and leaders in the field.

The course is aimed primarily at aspiring psychologists and trainee psychiatrists seeking to broaden their experience of forensic settings and gain a formal qualification in forensic psychology and mental health, as well as students who may wish to go on to conduct high-quality research in the field.

## Aims of the programme

This programme aims to:

- 1) Develop the clinical skills and academic knowledge of a future workforce for forensic psychology and mental health services in the UK and overseas.
- 2) Provide a route for aspiring psychologists and psychiatrists seeking to work in forensic services to obtain an academic qualification through taught and self-directed learning; and also the experience of reflecting on their own practice in forensic settings.
- 3) To provide a route for those interested in becoming future research leaders in forensics with both the methodological skills and the clinical experience to pursue this goal.
- 4) To enhance the level of understanding of research evidence and research methodologies in individuals seeking to work in a forensic mental health context.
- 5) To promote and develop the psychosocial approach to work with offenders - a key component of current Ministry of Justice and Department of Health Policy - through both teaching and opportunities for reflective practice.

## What will you be expected to achieve?

Students will be expected to learn about the legal, ethical and theoretical frameworks underpinning forensic psychology and mental health services, to apply these principles with a supervised clinical placement, and to reflect on this placement. They will learn the skills necessary work as part of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) within a forensic setting, and how to work in partnership with other organisations and pathways relevant to forensic mental health, such as the criminal justice system, probation services and local authorities. Students will also produce an original thesis, which can be oriented towards clinical or research knowledge, and will be encouraged to publish and disseminate this work.

### Academic Content:

A 1	To develop a basic understanding of the English Legal System with a focus on the forensic mental health system, including pathways, risk assessment and risk management.
A 2	To understand the clinical features of mental disorder and their implications for management of offenders with criminal justice and mental health services.
A 3	To acquire the research skills necessary to understand and utilise the best available evidence for forensic psychology and mental health practice.
A 4	Apply research and/or skills in the production of a dissertation.

### Disciplinary Skills - able to:

B 1	Understand best practice in risk assessment and formulation and their application to offenders with mental disorder.
B 2	Work in clinical settings with offenders safely and with confidence.
B 3	Appreciate the implications of a psychosocial focus on working with offenders and apply psychosocial principles in clinical practice.
B 4	Understand the legal and ethical bases of forensic psychology and mental health practice and maintain a working professional knowledge of applicable legal frameworks.

Attributes:	
C1	Understands professional responsibility and teamworking in forensic psychology and mental health services.
C2	Able to maintain an open-mind in working with offenders with a range of mental disorders and offending histories.
C3	Develops personal resilience and appropriate, positive psycho-social relationships with both offenders and other staff members.

### How will you learn?

The course is designed to prepare students for the kind of challenges and models of practice they would encounter if working professionally in forensic psychology, mental health or criminal justice settings, and to equip them with the skills to make best use of evidence in their practice and future research. Students will learn through a combination of formal lectures; reflective practice groups; seminars; supervised placements in forensic mental health services; and completion of a final dissertation which is expected to make a contribution to knowledge in forensic services.

Students will encounter a combination of a traditional academic structures involving formal lectures, and flipped classrooms in addition to group tutorials which will encourage collaborative learning. They will also undertake discussion seminars where they will have an opportunity to engage in joint learning, facilitated by an experienced clinician, which will help enhance understanding of material gained during the clinical placements. Seminar groups are expected to contain approximately 12 students; for tutorials and work discussions students will be split into smaller groups of 4-8 students each to enable students to bring clinical material in for discussion. Students will also have the opportunity to undertake a clinical placement within a forensic setting, in addition to related on-site lectures and workshops focusing on the skills and knowledge needed to work in such settings.

Students will be provided with reading lists identifying both essential and further reading around the topics discussed, and will be expected to spend a significant amount of time in self-directed study.

### How will you be assessed?

Assessment strategies will include oral and written examinations; written papers; reflective essays and reports by tutors on the course, as well as a final dissertation.

Specific assessments will be in line with individual module learning outcomes.

### How is the programme structured?

Please specify the structure of the programme diets for all variants of the programme (e.g. full-time, part-time - if applicable). The description should be sufficiently detailed to fully define the structure of the diet.

The MSc Forensic Psychology and Mental Health comprises two 30-credit modules, four 15-credit modules, and a dissertation valued at 60 credits, all of which are compulsory. Full-time students will complete all modules within one year of study, for a total of 180 postgraduate credits. Students will be expected to identify potential topics for a dissertation (Module 6) early in Semester One and to pursue this topic diligently throughout all three semesters of the programme.

For part-time students, the pathway is designed to fit with the requirements of professionals (such as psychiatry trainees and assistant psychologists) already working in forensic mental health or comparable services. Students will complete core clinical and theoretical learning in their first year of study, and then proceed to complete the research and dissertation components in their second. Depending on their employment/study arrangements students will be permitted to undertake the module that can feature a placement in either the first or second year. Students will be encouraged to identify potential dissertation topics in their

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first year of study, but there will not be the same expectation that they are able to devote significant amounts of time to this module during the first year.

Academic Year of Study FT - Year 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Selection Status	Academic Year of Study	Semester
Introduction to Forensic Psychology & Mental Health	WOFM955	30	7	Core	1	Semester 1
Applied Research Methods 1: Theory	WOFM983	15	7	Core	1	Semester 1
Applied Research Methods 2: Practical Application	WOFM959	15	7	Core	1	Semester 1
Professional Practice in Forensic Psychology & Mental Health	WOFM958	30	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Psychological, Psychosocial, and Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Working with Offenders	WOFM956	15	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Investigative & Legal Processes in Forensic Psychology & Mental Health	WOFM957	15	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Dissertation	WOFM953	60	7	Core	1	Semester 3

Academic Year of Study PT - Year 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Selection Status	Academic Year of Study	Semester
Introduction to Forensic Psychology & Mental Health	WOFM955	30	7	Core	1	Semester 1
Professional Practice in Forensic Psychology & Mental Health (can be taken in year 2)	WOFM958	30	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Psychological, Psychosocial, and Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Working with Offenders	WOFM956	15	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Investigative & Legal Processes in Forensic Psychology & Mental Health	WOFM957	15	7	Core	1	Semester 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Selection Status	Academic Year of Study	Semester
Applied Research Methods 1: Theory	WOFM983	15	7	Core	2	Semester 1
Applied Research Methods 2: Practical Application	WOFM959	15	7	Core	2	Semester 1
Professional Practice in Forensic Psychology & Mental Health (if not taken in Year 1)	WOFM958	30	7	Core	2	Semester 2
Dissertation	WOFM953	60	7	Core	2	Semester 3

### What are the entry requirements?

Applicants should have a strong first degree (high 2:2 or better) in psychology or a cognate discipline (e.g. sociology; criminology; psychosocial studies), or be a graduate medic with an MBBS or equivalent in their Core Training (CT1-3) or Specialist Training (ST4-6) years. Applicants with a professional qualification (e.g. CQSW) and equivalent experience will be considered; however all applicants must demonstrate aptitude to meet the demands of such a course.

International students are required to meet standard 7.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). For further information, please refer to English language requirements for admissions to Queen Mary University of London: <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/international/englishlanguage/requirements/>

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (Applicants will be asked to produce their clearance at enrollment; students will be expected either to provide evidence of their DBS clearance or application, or sign a waiver form indicating that such an application has been made.)

### How will the quality of the programme be managed and enhanced? How do we listen to and act on your feedback?

We will provide the opportunity for students to provide feedback through QMPlus for individual lectures and at the mid-module point, as well as formally through the QMUL post-module feedback system Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), which takes place annually.

Both written feedback and student comments, problems or suggestions will be discussed at a monthly Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). The SSLC provides a formal means of communication and discussion between Schools and its students. The committee consists of student representatives from each year in the school/institute together with appropriate representation from staff within the school/institute. It is designed to respond to the needs of students, as well as act as a forum for discussing programme and module developments.

Each school operates a Learning and Teaching Committee, or equivalent, which advises the School/Institute Director of Taught Programmes on all matters relating to the delivery of taught programmes at school level including monitoring the application of relevant QM policies and reviewing all proposals for module and programme approval and amendment before submission to Taught Programmes Board. Student views are incorporated in this Committee's work in a number of ways, such as through student membership, or consideration of student surveys.

All schools operate an Annual Programme Review of their taught undergraduate and postgraduate provision. Students' views are considered at these reviews through analysis of the PTES and module evaluations.

## What academic support is available?

For all modules students will attend a series lectures. Students will also be provided with compulsory group tutorials, and later in the academic year tutorials will take place on a 1:1 basis. All lecture materials, including presentation handouts and other lecture content will be made available to students on the QMPlus Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) prior to the on-site learning. Students will also be assigned an academic advisor who will be available to discuss academic or other issues that a student may wish to discuss.

Students will also have access to the Queen Mary Student support services, including eligibility for membership of the Queen Mary Students' Union, access to the careers service, and the Advice and Counselling services. The School of Medicine and Dentistry has its own student support officer who is able to advise students on specific issues impeding their ability to study successfully.

## Programme-specific rules and facts

BPS accreditation requirements do not permit for condoned failure of any modules (specific assessments are permitted providing the module is still passed at a 50 or above). Therefore, all modules must be taken and passed for the intended award.

Students who do not meet the requirement for the intended award, may be issued an alternate award where requirements are met:

Passes in 150 or 65 credits = MSc Forensic Mental Health: Research & Practice (where the criteria for condonement are met)

Passes in 90 or 120 credits = PgDip Forensic Mental Health: Research & Practice (where the requirements for condonement are met).

Passes in 45 or 60 credits = PgCert Forensic Mental Health: Research & Practice (where the requirements for condonement are met).

## How inclusive is the programme for all students, including those with disabilities?

Queen Mary has a central Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) that offers support for all students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties and mental health issues. The DDS supports all Queen Mary students: full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, UK and international at all campuses and all sites.

Students can access advice, guidance and support in the following areas:

- Finding out if you have a specific learning difficulty like dyslexia
- Applying for funding through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Arranging DSA assessments of need
- Special arrangements in examinations
- Accessing loaned equipment (e.g. digital recorders)
- Specialist one-to-one "study skills" tuition
- Ensuring access to course materials in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
- Providing educational support workers (e.g. note-takers, readers, library assistants)
- Mentoring support for students with mental health issues and conditions on the autistic spectrum.

## Links with employers, placement opportunities and transferable skills

The MSc will provide graduates with a comprehensive introduction to the theory, practice and delivery of forensic mental health services; however, it will also provide students with links to two of the largest forensic mental health providers in London: East London NHS Foundation Trust and Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Foundation Trust. The course organisers will continuously seek to establish links beyond these organisations for potential placements to provide placements in a greater range of services and with different populations.

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## Programme Specification Approval

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**Person completing Programme Specification:**

Dr Hannah Jones

**Person responsible for management of programme:**

Dr Hannah Jones

**Date Programme Specification produced / amended by  
School / Institute Learning and Teaching Committee:**

25 September 2024

**Date Programme Specification approved by Taught  
Programmes Board:**

3/10/2024 (FMD TLC)