



**UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH**

COURSE SPECIFICATION

BSc (Hons) Criminology and Forensic Investigation

COURSE SPECIFICATION

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| Course Title | BSc (Hons) Criminology and Forensic Investigation BSc (Hons) Criminology and Forensic Investigation with Foundation Year |
| Final Award | BSc (Hons) |
| Exit Awards | CertHE, DipHE |
| Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable) | U3576PYC / LF30 U3822PYC / LF31 |
| Mode of study | Full time |
| Mode of delivery | Campus |
| Normal length of course | 3 years, 4 years with placement, 4 years with foundation year, 5 years with foundation year and placement |
| Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies | September 2025 intake onwards |
| Awarding Body | University of Portsmouth |
| Teaching Institution | University of Portsmouth |
| Faculty | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| School/Department/Subject Group | School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ) |
| School/Department/Subject Group webpage | https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/organisational-structure/our-academic-structure/faculty-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/school-of-criminology-and-criminal-justice |
| Course webpage including entry criteria | https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/bsc-hons-criminology-and-forensic-studies |
| Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations | None |
| Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level | Level 6 |

This course specification provides a summary of the main features of the course, identifies the aims and learning outcomes of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods used by teaching staff, and the reference points used to inform the curriculum.

This information is therefore useful to potential students to help them choose the right course of study, to current students on the course and to staff teaching and administering the course.

Further detailed information on the individual modules within the course may be found in the relevant module descriptors and the Course Handbook provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the [Course and Module Catalogue](#) for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

The Criminology and Forensic Investigation degree aims to:

- With Foundation Year - To prepare students to an appropriate standard for entry into the course at Level 4.
- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment, based upon quality learning and teaching practice.
- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a coherent programme of study within the field of criminology and forensic investigation.
- To enable students to study a multi-disciplinary subject and develop specialist interests in key areas of criminology and forensic investigation, including the roles and professional practices of forensic and criminal justice agencies, and other statutory and third sector agencies working in the criminal justice and forensic arenas.
- To enable students to exercise choice in their studies, drawing upon the expert knowledge and research of academics teaching in the department.
- To provide an opportunity for students to create and understand links between the disciplines making up the field of criminology and forensic investigation.
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop key academic skills, enabling critical thinking, data/evidence collection and analysis, and the ability to undertake independent research.
- To provide students with the knowledge, experience, practical and employability skills required to maximise career and postgraduate study opportunities.
- To provide a broad education presenting multiple and comparative global perspectives on criminology and forensic investigation, acknowledging issues relating to diversity, social justice, human rights, and forensic legislation.
- To foster knowledge of criminology and criminal justice in a multi-disciplinary and global context and critical engagement with its subject areas.
- To provide an understanding of the role of empirical research in challenging existing theories and creating new theories.
- To enable an understanding of real-life applications of theory to problems of crime causation and solution, forensic detection and the subsequent development of new policies, practices and legislation in a comparative international context.
- To facilitate students' understanding of competence in and evaluation of a range of qualitative and quantitative research skills for exploring crime and its management.
- To provide the opportunity to pursue specialist knowledge and interests through volunteering, placements and research.
- To provide the opportunity to develop transferable skills required for future professional success.

The degree also provides an opportunity for students to gain experience and skills relevant to employment (or further study) within the criminology, criminal justice and forensic sectors by choosing relevant work-based learning modules, placement year or study abroad year options.

Course Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) sets out a national framework of qualification levels, and the associated standards of achievement are found in their [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) document.

The Course Learning Outcomes for this course are outlined in the tables below.

| A. Knowledge and understanding of: | | | |
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| LO number | Learning outcome | Learning and Teaching methods | Assessment methods |
| A1 | Core aspects of criminological theory and the criminal justice process including a range of contributing 'sub' disciplines | At all levels, lectures deliver core theory, with weekly workshops and seminars providing forums for discussion and debate. | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans) with summative essays, presentations and quizzes. |
| A2 | Specialist areas of forensic investigation, crime scene examination, intelligence, analysis, and interpretation | Lectures at all levels, accompanying theoretical and practical seminars and laboratory sessions. Also, at optional placement. | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative portfolios, reports and essays. |
| A3 | Theoretical and practical processes of investigations | Lectures at all levels, accompanying theoretical and practical seminars and workshops. | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative reports and essays. |
| A4 | Basic principles of crime scene and forensic analysis (including key tools and methods of evidence collection, analysis and interpretation) | Lectures at all levels, accompanying theoretical and practical seminars and workshops. In accordance with the application of appropriate industry standards and legal frameworks | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative portfolios, reports and essays. |
| A5 | A range of criminological research paradigms and methods | Lectures at all levels, accompanying workshops and seminars. | Formative feedback in class, summative reports. |
| A6 | The inherent variability of crime causation explanations and the way in which practical and digital methods are adding to the understanding of crime detection and classification and, more generally, causative theories of crime, including understanding values - public, political and social - in relation to these. | Lectures at all levels, accompanying workshops and seminars. | Formative feedback in class, summative essays. |
| A7 | The range of crime causation theories and the way the criminal justice system responds to crime | Lectures at all levels, accompanying workshops and seminars. | Formative feedback in class, summative essays. |
| A8 | The changing nature of criminal justice and the application of forensic investigation methods, including the use of digital technologies. | Lectures at all levels, accompanying workshops and seminars. | Formative feedback in class, summative essays. |
| A9 | Quantitative and qualitative research methods | Lectures at all levels, accompanying practical workshops and seminars. | Formative feedback in class, summative reports. |

| B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) skills, able to: | | | |
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| LO number | Learning outcome | Learning and Teaching methods | Assessment methods |
| B1 | Generate and explore creative and original ideas and develop the ability to problem solve | At all levels, lectures, practical seminars, workshops and tutorials enable discussion and debate | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B2 | Apply multiple and competing perspectives to historic, emerging and existing criminological and forensic issues and debates | Workshops, theoretical and practical seminars at all levels | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed presentations and essays |
| B3 | Properly and safely, gather, retrieve and synthesise information from a range of sources, recognising the validity and reliability of some sources over others in practical and laboratory settings. | Lectures, workshops, seminars, laboratory sessions and tutorial classes at all levels | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B4 | Think analytically and critically about the multidisciplinary nature of criminological and forensic publications | Lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorial classes at all levels | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B5 | Select appropriate theories in developing ethical research methodologies to support projects, dissertations and other written work and to recognise issues, including cognitive bias, relating to these. | Lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorial classes at all levels | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B6 | Evaluate evidence from a range of sources and make informed judgements as to the evidentiary and intelligence value of sources and evidence, including interpreting and where appropriate replicating results from forensic equipment to protocols. | Lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorial classes at all levels | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B7 | Develop and sustain reasoned arguments to a range of audiences | At all levels, lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials enable discussion and debate | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
| B8 | Identify and focus on topical and pertinent issues, placing debates in their wider social and political contexts | At all levels, lectures and seminars enable discussion and debate | Formative and summative essays and quizzes |

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| B9 | Use evidence-based reasoning to reflect on practical, theoretical and ethical issues involved in criminology, criminal justice and forensic related research | At all levels, lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials enable discussion and debate | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, portfolios and essays |
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| C. Practical (Professional or Subject) skills, able to: | | | |
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| LO number | Learning outcome | Learning and Teaching methods | Assessment methods |
| C1 | Communicate criminological, forensic and criminal justice related ideas in both written and oral formats, including reports, portfolios and presentations | At all levels, workshops and seminars across all subject areas | Formative feedback on discussions, assessed reports, and presentations |
| C2 | Problem solve and develop reasoned argument | At all levels, lectures, workshops and seminars across key subjects. | Formative feedback on essay plans, summative essays, reports, portfolios and dissertation. |
| C3 | Retrieve and organise information effectively from a range of reliable and valid sources | Workshops and seminars across all levels, tutorials in L6 to discuss dissertation work. | Formative feedback on essay plans, summative essays, reports, portfolios and dissertation. |
| C4 | Work effectively under pressure and exercise effective time management skills | Workshops and seminars across all levels, tutorials in L6 to discuss dissertation work. Also, optional placement. | Formative feedback on essay plans, summative essays, reports, portfolios and dissertation. Pass/fail placement portfolio. |
| C5 | Work effectively in a team, being sensitive to environmental and interpersonal aspects | Workshops and seminars across all levels. | Formative feedback on essay plans, summative essays, presentations, posters, reports and portfolios. |
| C6 | Conduct a substantial piece of criminological, forensic and / or criminal justice related research, under appropriate supervision | Lectures, seminars and tutorials in L6 to discuss dissertation work. | Formative feedback on drafts and plans, summative dissertation. |

| D. Transferrable (Graduate and Employability) skills, able to: | | | |
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| LO number | Learning outcome | Learning and Teaching methods | Assessment methods |
| D1 | Contribute orally to group discussions and debates about a complex subject, involving the management of tasks and problem-solving skills | At all levels, lectures, theoretical and practical seminars | Formative assessment at all levels, summative presentations, reports, portfolios, and essays. |
| D2 | Make a presentation focussing on a complex subject, using presentational skills and different forms of media to communicate and illustrate complex points | At all levels, lectures, workshops and seminars, as well as tutorials. | Formative feedback at all levels, summative presentations and posters. |
| D3 | Research, read and synthesise information from a range of sources and documents about a complex subject, making decisions regarding the reliability and validity of the sources used | At all levels, lectures, workshops, tutorials and seminars | Formative assessment at all levels, summative presentations, reports, portfolios, and essays. |
| D4 | Develop written communication skills by employing different types of written documents (essays, reports, articles, dissertation) to convey knowledge and understanding of complex subjects and debates | At all levels, lectures, workshops, tutorials and seminars | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative portfolios, reports and essays. |
| D5 | Present information from a range of sources for different purposes and audiences | At all levels, lectures, workshops, tutorials and seminars | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative portfolios, reports, presentations, posters and essays. |
| D6 | Recognise, explore and describe a problem, agree standards and outcomes for its solutions, involving team working and problem-solving skills | At all levels, workshops, tutorials, theoretical and practical seminars | Formative assessment at all levels (verbal feedback, essay plans), summative portfolios, reports and essays. |
| D7 | Work towards achieving agreed objectives, seek to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships in meeting responsibilities | At all levels, tutorials and seminars, and through optional placement | Formative feedback at all levels, summative essays and reports. Pass/fail placement portfolio. |
| D8 | Make use of feedback to plan, organise and review own performance, using analytical and reflective skills | At all levels, workshops, individual tutorials, theoretical and practical seminars | Formative feedback at all levels, summative essays, self-reflective writing and reports. |

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| D9 | Identify and demonstrate skills, interests and motivations in a career management context | At all levels, tutorials, workshops and seminars, and through optional placement | Formative feedback at all levels, summative presentations and portfolios. Pass/fail placement portfolio. |
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Academic Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth [Academic Regulations: Examination & Assessment Regulations](#) will apply to this course. Approved course exemptions can be found [here](#)

Support for Student Learning

The University of Portsmouth provides a comprehensive range of support services for students throughout their course, details of which are available at the [MyPort](#) student portal.

In addition to these University support services this course also provides the following:

- The course is managed by a Course Leader.
- A Course Induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a nominated Personal Tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance. This role will then be taken over by the dissertation/major project supervisor once allocated. Placement and study abroad tutors guide students through those activities.
- Within SCCJ there are also Learning Development Tutors for both academic skills and research support, and Student Engagement Officers for further academic and pastoral needs.
- Guest lecturers are employed widely across many modules, so students benefit greatly from being taught by current practitioners and experts in the field and from industry

Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

The University of Portsmouth undertakes comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation of courses within clearly assigned staff responsibilities. Student feedback is a key feature in these evaluations, as represented in our [Policy for Listening to and Responding to the Student Voice](#) where you can also find further information.

Reference Points

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

Insert additional reference points or delete as required

- [University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Vision](#)
- [Office for Students Conditions of Registration](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Qualification Characteristic Statements](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement for Criminology](#)
- Vocational and professional experience, scholarship and research expertise of the University of Portsmouth's academic members of staff
- [The School of Criminology and Criminal Justices' Core Values](#)

Changes to your course / modules

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information provided in this Course Specification and will endeavour to deliver this course in keeping with this Course Specification. However, changes to the course may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of modules and courses.

Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University of Portsmouth will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students.

It is also possible that the University of Portsmouth may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University of Portsmouth will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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