

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	Postgraduate Diploma
4	Programme Title	Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic Psychology Practice
5	Programme Codes	3504F
6	Programme Accreditation	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approval
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	July 2021

10 Programme Aims

This programme is pending approval by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and, upon completion of the programme, will provide trainees with eligibility to apply to the HCPC register to practise as Forensic Psychologists in the UK. As such, the overall aim of the programme is to provide trainees with the necessary practitioner skills to become qualified forensic psychologists and to become competent and professional scientist-practitioners.

The programme is designed to be work-based with various academic workshops for trainees (delivered in three sets of block teaching) as well as clinical and academic supervision. The more specific aims of the programme are as follows:

- To provide a thorough and comprehensive professional training in the knowledge-base of being a practising forensic psychologist;
- To provide trainees with the opportunity to present detailed examples taken from the workplace, of competence, decision-making, and skills as a forensic psychologist in training;
- To enable trainees to develop an appropriate level of ability in order to meet all Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SoPs);
- To facilitate appreciation of ethical, legal and organisational boundaries together with contextual factors thereby enabling trainees to practise in a safe and effective manner within forensic settings;
- To provide trainees with the necessary skills to enable them to be evidence-based, reflective, responsible and independent forensic psychology scientist-practitioners;
- To provide trainees with the skills and knowledge of working with clients and other professionals, taking account of contemporary issues in culture, equality and diversity, including safeguarding of vulnerable groups within professional practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for trainees to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the area of forensic psychology practice as follows.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme, trainees should be able to:

- A1. Understand how to reflect on their forensic psychology practice;
- A2. Fully understand the HCPC SOPs and organisational context for their professional practice;
- A3. Possess the knowledge-base to be able to practise safely and effectively in their

professional environment using evidence-based and theoretical models/frameworks;
 A4. Understand the principles and application of psychologically-informed research;
 A5. Understand legal and ethical boundaries including the role of confidentiality in professional practice;
 A6. Understand the application of psychology within the legal system;
 A7. Understand social contexts and organisational characteristics in professional practice;
 A8. Understand the importance of building collaborative working relationships with clients and other professionals;
 A9. Identify factors that can impede and improve communication in oneself and others;
 A10. Understand key concepts of knowledge base and apply theory and models to their professional practice;
 A11. Understand the factors that may impact upon individual client groups and adapt assessment and treatment approaches accordingly;
 A12. Understand the impact of health and safety in professional practice.
 A13. Understand of a range of research methodologies and use applicable techniques for research and academic enquiry, including qualitative and quantitative approaches.
 A14. Initiate, design and develop, conduct and critically evaluate psychological research.
 A15. Understand the importance of Quality Assurance (QA), and the importance of monitoring and evaluating practices as part of this;
 A16. Understand a variety of models of supervision and be aware of their value.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Trainees' learning will primarily be facilitated by academic workshops (block teaching) and work-based experience (A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A15, A16), presentations and debates (A2, A6, A8, A9, A11), and the assignments/Professional Practice Portfolio (A1-A16). Trainees will be required to read material (pre-workshops) and also supplement taught material with independent and guided reading (post-workshops). Knowledge and understanding will be further supported by individual supervision of the Professional Practice Portfolio in Years 1 and 2.

Assessment Strategy

There will be a range of different assessments reflecting the range of expertise, knowledge and skills required of trainees, including reports (linking practice to the theoretical [psychological] development-base), in-class presentations, case study, reflective portfolio, and in-class knowledge checks. Feedback on form and content will be used to encourage reflection and improvement in trainees' communication skills.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme, trainees should be able to:

- B1. Identify key issues from the relevant scientific and practice-based research literature and relate these to their professional work;
- B2. Promote psychological services to a range of professional bodies;
- B3. Plan and undertake the most appropriate assessments (including case formulation) and evaluations with client groups using empirical material;
- B4. Understand the importance of having the skills and knowledge in order to give psychologically informed opinion and advice in a variety of settings including private consultancy in order to practise safely and effectively within professional limits;
- B5. Develop psychological training and develop programmes for a multi-agency audience and across different professional contexts;
- B6. Reflect upon and review their own professional practice;
- B7. Assess, formulate and intervene psychologically from a range of possible models of intervention with clients and/or services systems responding to unforeseen problems as they arise;
- B8. Initiate, design and develop, conduct and critically evaluate research;
- B9. Implement psychological treatment of relevance in the field of forensic psychology;
- B10. Direct the psychological work of others.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Trainees will be introduced to the wide range of evidence and opinion by the programme team (B4). Cognitive and critical skills (B1, B2, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8) will be nurtured through workshops, exercises, reports, case studies, in-class knowledge checks, and the Professional Practice Portfolio. Some coursework and teaching sessions will actively facilitate the development of critical thinking in terms of legal and ethical issues (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9, B10).
Assessment Strategy
Intellectual skills (B1 – B10) will be assessed by the in-course/end-course assessments (ICAs) and Professional Practice Portfolio.
Practical Skills
On completing the programme, trainees should be able to: C1. Understand key concepts of knowledge and apply them to professional practice; C2. Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform problem resolution, decision-making and practice; C3. Practise autonomously and make effective decisions with other clients and professionals; C4. Communicate effectively, tailoring the approach taken with organisations, clients and other professionals; C5. Practise within legal and ethical boundaries with due consideration of culture, equality and diversity issues on professional practice; C6. Work collaboratively with service users and other professionals; C7. Apply psychology across a variety of different contexts using a range of evidence-based and theoretical models, frameworks and psychology paradigms.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Students are supported in the development of these skills through five main methods: (i) modelling the practice as demonstrated by teaching and teaching support staff (C1 & C5); (ii) individual supervision (C3, C4, C5); (iii) through team working with peers (C1, C2, C3, C6); (iv); assignments and Professional Practice Portfolio (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6 C7).
Assessment Strategy
Summative assessment is conducted via written coursework, an in-class test/discussions, and Professional Practice Portfolio (C1 – C7).
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme, trainees should be able to: D1. Engage in reflective practice in all aspects of their professional work taking account of current scientific and practice-based research in the wider context of forensic psychology practice; D2. Provide psychologically-informed opinion and advice in a variety of settings including private consultancy in order to practise safely and effectively within professional boundaries; D3. Apply and maintain legal, ethical and organisational boundaries including the role of supervision and confidentiality in professional practice; D4. Act autonomously in order to engage in appropriate and professional CPD activities; D5. Determine their own psychological and physical vulnerabilities, taking the correct course of action where required; D6. Recognise and implement, professional confidentiality, and how to deal with sensitive information and maintain effective records; D7. Ensure quality in practice and understand the role of effective audits in maintaining high quality practice; D8. Possess the skills to and reflect on the effectiveness of their standards of work; D9. Apply evidence-based, professional practice in line with recent developments in the field

of psychology.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The use of advanced competency in reflective skills (D1) will be developed in class discussions, assignments and Professional Practice Portfolio (D1, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9). Communication skills (D2) will be developed in workshops and presentations. Autonomous working, time management and teamwork (D4) will be developed by engagement in the Professional Practice Portfolio, different assignments and also in group work.

Assessment Strategy

Skills D1 – D9 will be assessed by assignments, in class discussions, oral presentations, and the Professional Practice Portfolio.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

This is a two-year full-time integrated programme which combines Forensic Psychology academic study and clinical work-based-activities.

The taught element of the programme is covered in three block teaching sessions in Year One. The Clinical element of the programme spans the duration of the programme and consists of a minimum of 20 hours (2½ days) per week in the trainees' workplace. Trainees are supported by a work-based supervisor and academic supervisor throughout the duration of the programme.

To be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma, trainees must successfully complete all assessments and have also completed the full duration of the work-based element of the programme (minimum of 40 weeks each year of the programme).

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The programme is pending approval by the HCPC and is one of a small number of programmes offered in England, Scotland Northern Ireland and Wales.

Trainees benefit from undertaking an integrated professional programme combining work-based and academic learning. This allows trainees to link theory, covered in the academic learning, to their practice in the workplace.

The academic element of the programme is designed to enable trainees to achieve an all-round educational experience with trainees benefitting from being taught by experts in the field of Forensic Psychology as well as being supervised in the workplace by registered Forensic Psychologists. The design allows for teaching, work-based activities and assessments to be integrated across the discipline, with teaching being front-loaded to enable trainees to absorb the knowledge required to prepare them for their work-based activities and enable them to work effectively within the workplace.

The programme is located in the School of Psychology which has a strong background in clinically related applied psychology training with clear professional routes in Forensic and Clinical Psychology. The academic content of the programme is coherent with the central themes relating to forensic psychology and is provided by members of staff, honorary and guest lecturers with teaching and specialist research interests in these areas. The reflective component of the degree is also rooted in forensic psychological methodology. This programme draws on collaboration between Newcastle University and stakeholders with whom there are strong links, including local forensic psychology practitioners in HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS units, and private forensic units. On completion, graduates will be able to use this programme to apply for registration with the HCPC as Registered Practitioner Psychologists. We operate an integrative, scientist-practitioner approach whereby the study of ethics, practice, reflection and professional skills is embedded throughout the

programme.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

https://teaching.ncl.ac.uk/docs/regdocs2021/documents/-R3504F_vFinal.pdf

13 Support for Student Learning

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

15 Regulation of assessment

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.