



## **National Unit specification: general information**

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

**Unit code:** H1WP 12

**Superclass:** EE

**Publication date:** July 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### **Summary**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with an introduction to the work of Forensic Psychologists in the Police, Courts and the Prison Estate. The candidate will develop an understanding of different psychological theories of criminal behaviour, including psychopathy. The candidate will also have the opportunity to explore extraordinary criminal behaviour. This Unit is suitable for school leavers and adult returners.

Progression opportunities on successful completion of this Unit: may be HN level study. This Unit is part of the NC in Social Science at SCQF level 6 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

### **Outcomes**

- 1 Describe the roles of Forensic Psychologists.
- 2 Evaluate psychological explanations of criminal behaviour.
- 3 Examine extraordinary criminal behaviour.

### **Recommended entry**

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no formal entry requirements. However, it would be beneficial if candidates had achieved the following, or equivalent:

A social subject or an English Unit or Communication at SCQF level 5.

## **General information (cont)**

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

### **Credit points and level**

One National Unit credit at SCQF level 6 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### **Outcome 1**

Describe the roles of Forensic Psychologists.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Describe the role of forensic psychologists in the Police Service.
- (b) Describe the role of forensic psychologists in the Court System.
- (c) Describe the role of forensic psychologists in the Prison and Probation Service.

### **Outcome 2**

Evaluate psychological explanations of criminal behaviour.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Differentiate between nature and nurture explanations of criminal behaviour.
- (b) Evaluate nature and nurture explanations of criminal behaviour.

### **Outcome 3**

Examine extraordinary criminal behaviour.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify key features of an extraordinary criminal.
- (b) Describe what can be learned from the study of extraordinary criminals.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Written and/or recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Assessment for all Outcomes is under closed-book conditions.

#### **Outcome 1**

Candidate evidence must include:

An accurate description of the role of forensic psychologists in the Police Service which includes: UK bottom-up offender profiling, US FBI top-down offender profiling, alternatives to the Standard Police Interview including the Cognitive interview and forensic hypnosis, interrogation.

An accurate description of the role of forensic psychologists in the Court system which includes: Eyewitness Testimony, expert testimony, assessment of accused.

An accurate description of the role of forensic psychologists in the Prison and Probation Service which includes: Assessment of prisoners, treatment programmes, rehabilitation programmes, prison environment for staff and prisoners, assessment for probation and maintenance of treatment.

#### **Outcome 2**

Candidate evidence must include:

A description of psychological explanations of criminal behaviour which differentiates between the nature view and the nurture view with reference to theory.

An evaluation of psychological explanations of criminal behaviour which includes: evidence of research work that both supports and refutes nature and nurture theorists.

#### **Outcome 3**

Candidate evidence must include:

An examination of extraordinary criminal behaviour which includes:

Identification of at least two features that make an extraordinary criminal; a description of the crime which includes conviction and defence arguments for the particular criminal selected as well as what psychologists can learn from the study of extraordinary criminals.

## National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit can be taught as a free standing Unit or as part of the NC Social Science Level 6 Group Award.

The aim of this Unit is to provide an overview of forensic psychology in terms of practical occupational roles, psychological explanations of crime with supporting research evidence and applications through the study of, for example, psychopathology and the interest in serial killers.

#### Outcome 1

The three main areas to be considered are the role of a Forensic Psychologist within the Police Service, Court System and Prison and Probation Service.

Within the Police Service, content could include the role psychologists play in Offender Profiling with reference to David Canter's UK 'bottom up' approach contrasted with the 'top down' FBI approach in the US. Hazelwood's (1987) classification of organised and disorganised murderers could be described and discussed, perhaps alongside Groth *et al's* (1977) categorisation of rapists. There could also be delivery and discussion of the different styles of interview that Police Officers can use depending on which person of interest is being interviewed.

Within the court system, the focus could be on the type of expert testimony a Forensic Psychologist could be required to provide, the role of Forensic Psychologists in assessing defendants (for example where an insanity defence has been entered) and the work of Loftus and Palmer (1974) regarding Eyewitness Testimony and the effect of leading questions. Consideration could also be given to differences between the UK and US court systems. US differences could include their admissibility of polygraph evidence (case study of Fred Ely would be of potential interest in this context) and Jury Selection, where Forensic Psychologists for both sides attempt to select a more favourable jury.

Within the Prison and Probation Services delivery could include the work of Forensic Psychologists in Carstairs State Hospital, local prisons, specialist prisons and top end Units which prepare prisoners for release. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is a useful starting point when considering treatment of offenders, as is psychotherapy. Addiction therapy can also be considered. The work of Forensic Psychologists also includes prison staff's working environment and this could also be considered. The assessment of treatment, suitability for early release and ongoing rehabilitation of offenders once back in the community could also be addressed.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

### Outcome 2

The two main categories of psychological explanations of crime are nature and nurture. It could be helpful to provide historical context for the nature view through phrenology and the work of Dr Clarke. Two main nature theorists could be considered. Logical choices could include Eysenck's personality theory, research and measurement (including psychopathy) and Yochelson and Samenow's 'Criminal Personality' theory, research and findings. To consider the nurture argument, candidates could be encouraged to consider the contributions of Bowlby's '44 Thieves' study and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT).

Hare's psychopathy scale could be included here in delivery. It can be used to introduce Outcome 3 where serial killers can be discussed. Common misperceptions such as 'all psychopaths are serial killers' and vice versa could be explored. The Bulger killers could be discussed in terms of SLT and imitation of violent video films.

### Outcome 3

Extraordinary criminals can include serial killers (such as Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, Fred and Rosemary West, Aileen Wuornos and her nature/nurture argument); child killers (such as Mary Bell, the Bulger killers); hostage takers (such as Wolfgang Priklopil abducting Natascha Kampusch, Josef Fritzl and his daughter Elizabeth, Phillip and Nancy Garrido abducting Jaycee Lee Dugard) or any other appropriate current or historical case studies.

The role of the media in reporting crime introduces sociological aspects without introducing new terminology.

## Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

This Unit can be delivered by tutor-led information sessions, class discussions, research through small group workshop sessions and formative tests.

It should be noted that if the Higher Psychology Unit (F5B4 12) is delivered as part of the NC in Social Sciences at SCQF level 6, along with this Unit, there is commonality in terms of Eyewitness Testimony in court (where the F5B4 12 topic of memory is delivered) and also transatlantic differences in admissible evidence (polygraph evidence is based on the 'Fight or Flight' short term stress response delivered as part of the F5B4 12 Stress topic). By observing this thread of commonality a greater understanding of the interplay between different strands of social sciences can be discussed.

With regard to the role of a Forensic Psychologist in court, prison and probation systems, there is commonality with aspects of the *Criminology: Crime Control Strategies* Unit. This may help determine order of delivery within a course although each Unit remains a freestanding Unit.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

### Ethical considerations

Teachers/lecturers should be aware that candidates with personality disorders and those on the autistic spectrum may score highly on psychopathy measurement scales.

Care should also be given if delivering content relating to rape and/or murder as these issues may have directly or indirectly affected candidates. It is good practice to indicate content to candidates in advance to allow them to discuss any concerns they may have prior to delivery of that session. Teachers/lecturers should be sensitive to learners' concerns while maintaining citizenship delivery.

There are significant opportunities to explore the role of forensic psychologists in current court cases. Reports on expert witnesses, questions asked of witnesses and suspects are frequently reported in the media.

There is a wealth of information available online including: podcasts, interviews with extraordinary criminals including serial killers and the police officers and legal staff who worked on their conviction; documentaries and clips concerning actual and sensationalised forensic psychologists and their research.

Victims of extraordinary criminals have contributed to our knowledge through interviews, articles and even autobiographies. This information helps to provide insight into the victim experience as well as providing their take on their abductors/attackers.

### Essential Skills

By adopting the above learning and teaching approaches and through the Outcomes and corresponding Evidence Requirements, the Unit should provide candidates with opportunities to develop the following essential skills for life, learning and work:

- ◆ Employability — through addressing the breadth of Forensic Psychology's career options, areas of expertise and areas of responsibility within the judicial and legal systems. It is possible to consider the training requirements to become a Forensic Psychologist (clinical and non-clinical) as well as career options.
- ◆ Citizenship — the Unit provides opportunities to demonstrate citizenship skills specifically in terms of describing the treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners alongside international comparisons. There is the opportunity to develop critical thinking and debate through discussion of such as nature/nurture crime views; treatment versus punishment; cost of prison and cost to society. Candidates should be encouraged to think of their attitude to criminals, society's attitude to criminals and cross-cultural attitudes to criminals.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Criminology: Forensic Psychology (SCQF level 6)

### Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the knowledge and skills/Performance Criteria for this Unit.

Likely evidence types for this Unit could include: written essays or structured questions or individual oral presentation or poster exhibition including oral explanation of poster. Candidates could also provide the Evidence Requirements in the form of an individual blog or creation of a website. Evidence can be provided in one form or in a combination of the suggested forms or any other method that meets the Evidence Requirements.

A suitable assessment instrument should be chosen to allow the candidate to demonstrate knowledge across the Evidence Requirements. It is anticipated that a closed-book assessment instrument could cover all or some of the Outcomes and provide demonstrable individual evidence while reducing the risk of plagiarism. Assessors should bear in mind that oral evidence must be recorded (either digitally/mechanically or scribed) to allow external verification.

Alternatively, candidates could examine a famous criminal through a case study (Outcome 3) suggesting how the person came to be arrested and tried, the Outcome of the court case, possible causes of their criminal behaviour in terms of nature/nurture (Outcome 2), how they could be treated/rehabilitated (Outcome 1) and why there is lasting interest in their case (Outcome 3).

### Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit the candidate will develop a knowledge of different psychological theories of criminal behaviour, including psychopathy.

Candidates will:

- ◆ Describe the role of forensic psychologists in the Police Service, the Court System and the Prison and Probation Service
- ◆ Differentiate and Evaluate nature and nurture explanations of criminal behaviour
- ◆ Describe what can be learned from the study of extraordinary criminals

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit they will be developing aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving*.



## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

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Candidates should be encouraged to undertake individual and group presentations to develop oral communication skills.

Critical thinking is developed through the nature-nurture debate and the consequences in terms of incarceration/treatment of offenders.

In addition candidates may develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* through group research and presentations.

### **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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