

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

As a forensic psychologist you will work in the criminal justice system applying psychological theory to criminal investigation, understanding psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour. You will offer treatment for those who have committed offences to reduce the impact of their experiences and to reduce chances of reoffending.

Forensic psychologists also work in the treatment of offenders in a range of areas, including work on sexual offending, violence and aggression, interpersonal and social skills and intervention to help stop illicit drug and or alcohol use.

Forensic psychologists have made significant contributions to international research. Here they have focused on a range of issues relevant to psychological applications within the criminal justice system using evidence-based practice to guide their approaches as reflective science-practitioners.

WHO CAN TRAIN FOR THIS ROLE?

- Psychology Graduate

REQUIRED TRAINING FOR THIS ROLE



Following your undergraduate study (see below), you will need a master's degree in forensic psychology (approved by the Health and Care Professions Council, HCPC). This provides the necessary underpinning knowledge or 'Stage 1' of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Diploma in Forensic Psychology.

Finally, forensic psychologists complete one of the following: a minimum of a three-year period of evidenced supervised practice during which trainee forensic

psychologists provide evidence of applying psychology appropriately in forensic practice (referred to as 'Stage 2'). Or, a BPS and HCPC accredited/approved 'top-up' doctoral programme covering 'Stage 2', that includes practice placements and a third year doctoral research thesis.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN

QUALIFICATIONS



Forensic psychologists will usually have completed an undergraduate degree in psychology accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) to confer the Graduate Basis for Chartered (GBC) Membership (usually 2:1 or higher).

EXPERIENCE



As a very popular subject as much work experience as possible is crucial to being successful in applying to Forensic Psychology programmes. This can be either paid or voluntary. You'll have an advantage if you can show course tutors that you have mentored young offenders or done voluntary work with organisations such as the Witness Service or Victim Support.

Preference for jobs is usually given to those with experience of working in a forensic setting. This may include work within prisons, probation services or social services, or as a psychological assistant or operational support grade.

You may also get valuable experience in a range of settings such as:

- bail hostels and refuges
- drug or alcohol treatment centres
- secure hospitals and rehabilitation units
- young people's services, such as a regional youth offending service.

Excellent interpersonal skills are essential.



SALARY EXPECTATIONS

Trainee forensic psychologists are typically paid around £26 - £29k pa. Qualified forensic psychologists when employed by NHS services are paid at Band 7 on the NHS Agenda for Change pay scales with other settings paying a similar equivalent amount. Progression to a higher band or salary requires further specialisation, as well as additional management and leadership responsibilities.



FUTURE CAREER OPTIONS

The largest single employer of forensic psychologists in the UK is HM Prison Service, although forensic psychologists are also employed by the NHS and private healthcare providers, in specialist mental health settings (such as 'secure hospitals'), Social Services and Offender Management Services (such as police and probation). They are also employed in academic departments, teaching, supervising, and researching in their area of expertise.



REGISTERING OR ACCREDITING BODY

In order to practice as a forensic psychologist, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).



PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION

Once you qualify, you can apply for chartered status with the British Psychological Society (BPS), and become a full member of the BPS Division of Forensic Psychology.



USEFUL LINKS

[READ MORE: Health Careers NHS](#)

[READ MORE: Prospects Careers](#)

[READ MORE: National Careers Service - GOV.UK](#)

[READ MORE: The British Psychological Society](#)

[READ MORE: Pay scales - NHS Employers](#)

[READ MORE: NHS Jobs](#)