

MSc Forensic Archaeology and Crime Scene Investigation Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/forensic-archaeology-crime-scene-investigation/>

Academic Year:	2025/6
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Target degree award:	Master of Science [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level 7]
Interim awards:	Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate [FHEQ Level 7]
Programme Admissions:	September
Programme Duration:	1 year full-time
Programme Accreditation:	The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (see below)
Faculty Board Confirmation:	April 2025

Please note: This programme has been assessed by CSoFS to meet the following component educational quality standards: Postgraduate Interpretation, Evaluation and Presentation of Evidence (2017-1); Crime Scene Investigation (2017-1); Forensic Archaeology (2016-1). For more information on accreditation of these standards please visit the CSoFS website: <https://www.csofs.org/quality-standards/educational-standards/>

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Minor Modifications Schedule

1. July 2025: Annual Changes for the 2025 academic year, including changes to academic regulations
- 2.

Introduction

Forensic Archaeology is the specialist application of archaeological techniques to the search and recovery of evidential material from crime scenes. This often, but not always, involves buried human remains. It is essential that forensic archaeologists can appreciate their role within a wider police investigation and have a detailed understanding of crime scene management procedures.

The taught elements of the programme have a focused structure that covers the key areas within forensic archaeology and is based upon direct case experience by the principal tutor's working with UK police forces. There is a strong emphasis on hands-on experience utilising simulated crime scene scenarios. Students can either choose to undertake a substantial individual research dissertation or students can alternatively take part in a simulated, complex, multi-scene investigation that will test high level skills in co-operative working, scene management and information synthesis plus complete substantial research and writing assignments requiring advanced academic writing skills.

The programme is appropriate for students with either humanities or science-based academic backgrounds and is underpinned by modules on Crime Scene Investigation and Law for Expert Witnesses delivered by West Yorkshire Police and Bradford School of Law.

Archaeology and Forensic Sciences aims to provide excellence in a comprehensive range of archaeological topics, with emphasis on both teaching and research, believing the two activities to be mutually dependent. We are internationally recognised for our work and expertise: The University of Bradford was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize 2021 for its world-leading development of archaeological technology and techniques and its influence on practice, policy and society. We have also attracted over £6M funding for research capabilities, which are available for use during the MSc.

The programme can be used either as vocational training or as a foundation from which to commence further study or research. Entry onto the programme can be direct from Higher Education but is often within serving roles from the Police. Thus, the exit qualification may afford either an entry route into careers within the police and criminal justice system but also provide a route for qualification enhancement or specialisation.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

- A1. Provide graduates in archaeology, anthropology, biosciences and related subjects with advanced practical, analytical and interpretative skills in forensic archaeology.
- A2. Provide a programme of study that reflects areas of staff expertise.
- A3. Provide a supportive, structured learning environment in which students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills.
- A4. Develop high-level subject knowledge and understanding and provide training in discipline skills to enable graduates to pursue careers in Forensic Archaeology and Crime Scene Investigation.
- A5. Provide a means to develop critical and analytical problem-solving skills and personal transferable skills to prepare students for careers in non-cognate fields.

Programme Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of practical, analytical and interpretative approaches in forensic archaeology and the investigation of crime scenes.
- 2. Use a selected range of methods and techniques within the subject area and interpret the generated data within a legal context.
- 3. Possess advanced field/crime scene skills in search and recovery of forensic evidence; demonstrate advanced skills in the survey and documentation of crime scenes.
- 4. Identify individual learning needs and carry out an achievable learning plan to meet them.
- 5. Conduct an excavation of buried remains with appropriate recording to a full professional standard, including spatial and stratigraphic elements.

6. Write expert witness statements, technical reports, briefing documents and forensic strategy documents to a professional standard in the context of the UK legal system.
7. Employ effective decision-making and leadership skills as part of small team.
8. Communicate conclusions in writing and orally to specialist and non-specialist audiences, working effectively in groups.
9. Design and complete a substantial work of independent study (dissertation route). Or, Carry out complex multi scene inquiry, and demonstrate the ability to research and write extended academic papers (non-dissertation route)
10. Manage and appraise their own learning and research.
11. Manage their time effectively when undertaking complex and extended tasks.
12. Confidently use information technology to critically review, synthesise and carry forward professional research or casework in a specialised area.
13. Critically evaluate professional literature in a chosen area and related disciplines.

Curriculum

The Programme is offered full-time (1 year) and part-time (2 or more years). The taught components of the programme emphasise a hands-on approach to field exercises and simulated indoor crime scenes. The programme addresses thematic and theoretical aspects through lectures, workshops, seminars, practicals, experiential learning and tutorials. Skills and knowledge are developed through essays, oral presentations, witness statements, forensic strategy documents, reports, and a dissertation/ extended essays. Passage through the programme is intended to develop critical, research and problem-solving skills.

Modules in Semester 1 (Introduction to Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology, Crime Scene Investigation) are designed to provide the essential framework on which later modules build. Semester 2 provides the compulsory main thematic module (Forensic Archaeology and Crime Scene Investigation) as well as training in expert witness skills (Law for Expert Witnesses and Forensic Archaeology and Crime Scene Investigation).

Please note: The curriculum may change, subject to availability, public health conditions, and the University's programme approval, monitoring and review processes.

Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma

Module Code	Module Title	Type	Credits	Level	Study Period
ARC7038-B	Introduction to Forensic Archaeology and Forensic Anthropology	Core	20	7	Semester 1
ARC7039-B	Crime Scene Investigation	Core	20	7	Semester 1
LAW7028-B	Law for Expert Witnesses	Core	20	7	Academic Year
ARC7041-B	Professional Development	Core	20	7	Academic Year
ARC7012-B	Forensic Archaeology and Crime Scene Investigation	Core	20	7	Semester 2
ARC7017-B	Forensic Taphonomy	Core	20	7	Semester 2

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes LO1-4.

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes LO1-8.

Master of Science – Dissertation route

For those students who choose to complete the programme through the research project (dissertation route), the semester 2 component of Professional Development prepares students for their research project, including planning of research, research design, research ethics, time keeping, and health and safety. The final element of this programme route is a 15,000-word dissertation.

Module Code	Module Title	Type	Credits	Level	Study Period
ARC7034-E	Dissertation	Option	60	7	Semester 3

Master of Science – without dissertation route

For those students who choose to complete the programme through the non-dissertation route, the semester 2 component of Professional Development provides the opportunity to practise independent source-based research on a small, contained topic that is presented as a professional quality briefing document. During semester 3 students on the non-dissertation route will take part in a substantial 3 week-long forensic exercise (Advanced Field Programme for CSI) and write two substantial research papers (Independent Research Papers for CSI).

Module code	Module Title	Type	Credits	Level	Study Period
ARC7014-C	Advanced Fieldwork Programme for CSI	Option	30	7	Semester 3
ARC7040-C	Independent Research Papers for CSI	Option	30	7	Semester 3

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed 180 credits and achieved the learning outcomes LO1-13.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The learning and teaching strategy takes into consideration the learning outcomes, the nature of the subject, and the need for students to take responsibility for their own learning as part of this advanced taught programme.

Due to the specialist nature of the programme all modules are core to the programme, although students can choose between the research dissertation and the non-dissertation route. The teaching strategy makes use of employer engagement by including delivery of elements from police CSIs, and specialists from Forensic Service Providers (Crime Scene Investigation, Forensic Archaeology and CSI) in support of Learning Outcome 1. The thematic modules are delivered in a combination of formal lectures, student-led intensive seminars/tutorials and extensive practical instruction.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to support the learning outcomes of each specific module. It uses a wide range of assessment methods, including coursework (expert witness statements, technical reports, forensic strategy documents, briefing documents, research design, essay), exams, and oral presentations and oral evidence in mock court. Assessment elements are regularly structured in a way that allows candidates to benefit from formative learning towards summative assessment.

Coursework (simulated crime scene and field documentation, witness statements) is geared towards demonstrating relevant knowledge, understanding and professional skills in principal approaches to the recovery, interpretation and reporting of forensic evidence. Communication skills are tested in both written and oral form in several modules.

Assessment, Continuation and Award Regulations

This programme follows the Assessment, Continuation and Award regulations published on the University's website (<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/about/legal-and-governance/governance/regulations/>) for postgraduate courses (Regulation 9)

Admission Requirements

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to thrive at university and beyond. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The Standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

- A first degree in a relevant discipline, normally with a second-class degree or higher, or equivalent is required for UK students.
- Admission will be judged on an individual basis for overseas students, at an equivalent level to UK entry requirements.

- For North American students, normally a GPA of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 is required, or an equivalent. Applicants with a lower second-class degree, or equivalent (e.g., 2.5 GPA in North America), with demonstrable relevant experience will also be considered.
- For students from other countries, find details of equivalent qualifications by visiting the specialist webpages at: www.brad.ac.uk/international/country/
- Applicants whose first language is not English must have IELTS at 6.0, with no subtest score lower than 5.0, or the equivalent overall score in another recognised test.
 - See the Entry Requirements webpage for details of recognised tests: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/>
 - You can improve your English proficiency by taking a pre-sessional English language programme with the University. For more information visit: www.brad.ac.uk/courses/other/pre-sessional-english-language-programme/
- Admissions are made on the basis of demonstrated ability, qualifications, experience, references, and, occasionally, interviews.
- A completed application form, references, official transcripts, or a list of modules and grades/marks stamped by the applicant's undergraduate department or student registry are required of all applicants.

Access and Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or mature students (those over 25 years of age on entry) with significant relevant experience.

The University welcomes applications from all potential students and most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this particular programme. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme. For more details about our Recognition of Prior Learning procedures visit the website: www.brad.ac.uk/teaching-quality/prior-learning/

The University of Bradford has always welcomed applications from disabled students. To discuss adjustments or to find out more about support and access, you may wish to contact the Disability Service before you apply: [Disability Service - University of Bradford](#)

Please note: These entry requirements are correct for the contemporary recruitment cycle when this document was published. The current requirements that apply are published on the course webpage: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/forensic-archaeology-crime-scene-investigation/>