

Programme Specification:

MSc Forensic Science

[Forensic Science MSc - University of Bradford](#)

PROGRAMME DETAILS	
Academic Year	2025/26
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	Master of Science [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level 7]
FHEQ Level 7	MSc
Variants	1 year full-time
Degree Awarding Body	University of Bradford
Faculty	Life Sciences
Partner, Delivery Organisation and/or Support Provider(s) <i>(if applicable)</i>	Not applicable
Accrediting Body <i>(if applicable)</i>	
External Frameworks/ Reference Points <i>(if applicable)</i>	This programme has been designed to meet: The Subject Benchmark Statement for Forensic Science of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2022. The Interpretation, Evaluation, and Presentation of Evidence (IEPE) and Laboratory Analysis (LA) component standards of The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences, 2022 v2.
Date of Original Approval	June 25
Date of Publication <i>(see Review/Modification Schedule for any version updates)</i>	September 25

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.

PROGRAMME AIMS

Forensic Science is the specialist application of science to criminal and civil law. This Master's programme provides hands-on practical, analytical instrumental and interpretative skills in forensic chemistry, forensic genetics and forensic biology. This will enable you to: develop a critical understanding of crime scene management information synthesis, including the role of investigative versus evidential potential, and develop enhanced skills in presumptive testing and confirmative testing, enhancement, development and interpretation of trace evidence via relevant instrumental methodologies. You will combine these skills to understand the role a forensic scientist plays within the crime scene to court process and gain experience as an expert witness in mock investigation and/or mock court settings. Using both oral and written records you will communicate effectively with both non-specialist and specialist audiences, including completion of substantial research and written assignments requiring advanced academic and persuasive writing skills.

Throughout, this programme will consider quality management systems in laboratory forensic sciences, including method validation and approval, avoidance of contamination and the effect of cognitive bias in the interpretation of results.

The programme team provide excellence in a comprehensive range of subject areas, with emphasis on both teaching and research, believing the two activities to be mutually dependent. We are internationally recognised for our work and expertise. We were the first UK university to offer the study of Forensics at degree level. We have attracted over £6M funding for specialised research capabilities, including dedicated scene of crime rooms, laboratories and instrumentation, with these and further facilities available for use during the course of MSc studies and dissertation research.

Graduates will master of a range of specialist forensic science laboratory techniques, be confident in their own scientific skills, comfortable with the preparation and delivery of presentations, and competent in forensic evaluation and writing and presenting evidential statements. This master's programme can be used either as vocational training or as a foundation from which to commence further study or research. The exit qualification will afford an entry route into careers within the police, criminal justice system and private sector commercial forensic analytical companies. Other related career areas include: Chemical and Clinical analysis e.g. food, chemical and pharmaceutical industries and hospital laboratories.

The core aims of the programme are:

- A1. To provide graduates from relevant science disciplines with systematic training in the application of modern scientific methods to forensic sciences.
- A2. To encourage development of independent learning skills, by providing a supportive, structured environment.
- A3. To develop high-level subject knowledge and understanding and provide training in discipline skills to enable graduates to pursue further research or a career in the forensic sciences.
- A4. To develop critical and analytical problem-solving skills and personal transferable skills to prepare students for careers in both cognate and non-cognate fields.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this programme, students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following learning outcomes:

To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of practical, analytical and interpretative approaches in forensic science.
2. Use a range of methods and techniques within forensic science and interpret the generated data within a legal context.
3. Apply critical understanding to the wider context of the discipline.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

4. Develop and apply advanced laboratory skills in the study and application of: separation science and mass spectrometry, forensic genetics and forensic biology to the analysis of forensic materials.
5. Confidently use information technology to critically review, synthesise and carry forward professional research in a specialised area. Including statistical approaches to interpret forensic data.
6. To work effectively in groups, manage and appraise their own learning and research by identifying individual learning needs, carry out an achievable learning plan to meet them and to apply ongoing reflection.
7. Communicate to a professional standard in the context of the UK legal system conclusions in writing and orally to specialist and non-specialist audiences, including expert witness statements, technical reports and other documents.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Degree of Master at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

8. Design and complete a substantial work of independent, original, laboratory or field based research project which draws upon a comprehensive and critical review of relevant literature.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

This programme will appeal to students wishing to develop their scientific background into the areas of analytical chemistry, forensic biology and forensic genetics as applied to Forensic Science, and to those who are wishing to enter into, or to enhance, a career in the Forensic Sciences.

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

An honours degree at 2:2 classification or higher in a relevant science discipline (including; chemistry, biology, archaeological sciences, forensic anthropology, forensic sciences)*.

* not criminology or psychology as these areas lack the required scientific and laboratory based background. However, consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The University welcomes applications from all prospective 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 programme.

For students who require evidence of English language ability, IELTS: 6.0 overall, with no sub-test less than 5.5 will be required on entry to the programme.

The current tariff and accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme, is published at [Forensic Science MSc - University of Bradford](#).

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Module	Code	Credit	Semester	Study Period
Law for Expert Witnesses	LAW7028-B	20	ACYR	1+2
Advanced Methods in Laboratory Forensics	ARC7060-B	20	SEM1	1
Advanced Forensic Biology	ARC7061-B	20	SEM1	1
Advanced Forensic Genetics	ARC7062-B	20	SEM2	2
Separation Science and Mass Spectrometry	ARC7059-B	20	SEM2	2
Professional Development	ARC7041-B	20	ACYR	1+2
Dissertation	ARC7034-E	60	SEM 3	3 (Summer)

The Programme is offered as full-time 1 year. There are no optional modules for this specialised Master's programme. Student choice is embedded in the module Professional Development with student-specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and choice/design of the Master's dissertation research project.

This cohesive learning journey will build identity and belonging, challenges the passive consumption of learning, enthuses students for the subject discipline and prepares you for future success. This programme will develop critical, research and problem-solving skills, culminating in the dissertation which is a substantially hands-on, laboratory/field-based piece of research (60 credits, 1/3 of the Master's programme).

Students will take the modules Law for Expert Witness, Professional Development, Advanced Methods in Laboratory Forensics, and Advanced Forensic Biology which will provide and enhance the background skills for non-subject specialists (including Interpretation, Evaluation and Presentation of Evidence).

These modules run concurrently with, and are followed by, more specialised modules in Forensic Biology, Generics and Separation Science and Mass Spectrometry – all key methodologies for a forensic analyst with hands-on delivery of teaching. The modules Law for Expert Witness and Forensic Biology provide understanding of the wider role a forensic scientist plays within the crime scene to court process. The Professional Development module includes preparation for the dissertation. The dissertation is an opportunity to design and undertake original laboratory or field based research, working directly with research active staff.

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

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

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed 180 credits and achieved the relevant award learning outcomes.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

This Master's programme will develop students' abilities to think creatively about complex crime scene management, practical, instrumental, forensic -chemistry, -genetics, -biology and expert witness subject areas whilst encouraging students to become independent critical thinkers, with a range of practical skills and responsibility for their own learning.

Teaching will adopt research informed approaches, with students guided to critically appreciate how knowledge is produced, presented, and used to inform forensic decision-making processes. Our varied and collaborative approach to teaching involves a number of delivery types including: lectures, problem solving based workshop sessions, role play/simulation (mock court), revision/summarising sessions and extensive practical instruction.

The Bradford curriculum is incorporated into this approach, ensuring students have a clear, stimulating, empowering, inspirational learning and employment journey:

Programme centric learning

The programme has been designed for preparing students for the world of work in the forensic sciences and aligned sectors. Students will be equipped with essential knowledge of theory and practice while also developing their understanding and competences around analytical, research and professional skills.

Modules focus on essential knowledge and skills, including a 'Zero to Hero' approach with modules tailored for those seeking to act as expert witnesses who have little or no prior legal knowledge (module: Law for Expert Witnesses), or for those who have scientific skills from other areas, but need to apply these to forensic sciences (module: Advanced Methods in Laboratory Forensics).

The module Professional Development requires students to develop their subject area interest and research knowledge, skills and methodological approaches to produce a

dissertation proposal that is laboratory based and connects with their own research interests. The professional development module also offers students opportunities to develop their employability by introducing them to key themes and concepts relating to graduate expectations, professionalism and undertaking preparation for graduate employment.

The Dissertation which encompasses a substantial piece of original, practical-based research is ultimately assessed for its publishable merit. Each student works with a dissertation supervisor(s) but has a significant degree of control in relation to how the subject being investigated is explored, within the parameters of the discipline.

Liberated learning

The teaching and learning strategy of this programme has been designed to support the diverse needs and abilities of all students. Learning Support Profiles are used to document a student's individual needs and to guide the provision of reasonable adjustments. Managing Risks for Impaired Laboratory Users (MaRILU) assessments are also used to enable staff and students to identify Health and Safety issues when working in a laboratory environment. These profiles ensure students receive appropriate interventions and resources and will ensure that there are no barriers to learning and that all students feel able to access and contribute to the programme and its contents. The programme is taught through a lens that is decolonial and intersectional, with module content exploring how topics related to forensic science, such as the investigative process and the criminal justice system, may contribute to prejudice, marginalisation and discrimination visible in contemporary societies.

Case studies will highlight acknowledgement of difference, understanding bias and encourage students to think about ways in which inequality can be challenged in a sustainable way. Students will be taught international perspectives on forensic science throughout the programme as they are introduced to areas of best practice and the promotion of academic free speech and debate.

The Professional Development and Dissertation modules includes opportunities for students to choose subject areas relevant to them and for them to have the flexibility to align choices to potential employment aspirations.

Research engaged learning

The importance of identifying, interpreting, and evidencing reliable research is embedded in the programme, with the Professional Development module providing opportunities for students to develop their awareness of research processes and to apply these skills in the dissertation.

Across all modules, the role of research in influencing an evidenced informed approach to forensic science is introduced and developed, with case studies and external speakers who are practicing experts in the field.

Future focused learning

Throughout the programme, students will be supported to think about their futures, with the content of modules providing skills and knowledge that can be transferred into a

workplace, particularly those with links to forensic science, or lay the foundations for post-graduate research.

In addition to support by Personal Academic Tutors and the Programme Leader, the Professional Development module emphasises employment aspiration with careers and entrepreneurial support. By combining a real-world approach to the programme design, alongside external speakers, students will be aware of opportunities and challenges within forensic science and how their interests, skills and abilities could be transferred to addressing such issues once they have graduated.

Modules contain teaching material and assessments that are designed to help students understand real world challenges and how they are tackled within forensic science and the criminal justice system.

The whole programme is designed to develop students that are empowered, confident, authoritative and analytically rooted problem solvers in the area of forensic science.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to support the learning outcomes of each module via authentic, real-world, assessments. The programme uses a wide range of assessment methods, including coursework (problem solving, expert witness statements, technical reports, forensic strategy documents, research design, essay, continued professional development), open book exam, oral presentations and oral evidence to mock court (for more detail, see the module descriptors). Elements of group work are part of sessions within modules. Assessment elements are structured in a way that allows students to benefit from formative learning and feedback prior to summative assessment.

Student support is embedded within the programme such as Personal Academic Tutorials, discussions with experts in their subject areas, drop-in sessions and University-wide support in academic skills and careers. The University has established Learning Support Profiles, Managing Risk for Impaired Laboratory Users and alternative assessments are provided when appropriate.

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 taught courses (Regulation 9)

EXTERNAL FRAMEWORKS

We are seeking Educational Accreditation once a full cohort has graduated via The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences, with the following Component Standards: Interpretation, Evaluation, and Presentation of Evidence (IEPE) and Laboratory Analysis (LA).

REVIEW/MODIFICATION SCHEDULE

Date	Review/Modification Activity Since Last Publication
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July 25	Annual Changes for the 2025 academic year, including changes to the academic regulations.
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