



No 1st degree

Minimum 2:2 degree from BPS accredited undergraduate course

- www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses
- www.UCAS.com (to apply for a degree)
- www.prospects.ac.uk/applying-for-university/student-loans-and-finance

While a 2:2 degree is the minimum requirement for Graduate Membership of the British Psychological Society, increasingly many MSc courses require a 2:1 degree for the next stage of training.

1st degree not psychology

BPS accredited conversion course in psychology

- www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses
- www.prospects.ac.uk/case-studies/graddip-psychology-student-ruth-thomas

Different universities have different requirements for entry onto their conversion courses, with some requiring that you have had some university-level education in psychology.

Non-UK 1st degree in psychology

Apply to BPS to scrutinise degree

- www.bps.org.uk/join-us/membership/graduate-membership

The BPS will consider the standard of your degree and where you gained it, whether you studied psychology for at least 50% of the degree, and if you covered the required areas. If you don't meet the criteria, you may be able to apply for 'Special Case' status, involving assessment against a number of different criteria. This includes evidence of postgraduate study in psychology, relevant experience, or authorship of relevant journal papers or book chapters. The strength of your application will be improved by showing evidence of as much coverage as possible.

Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC)

- www.bps.org.uk/join-us/membership/graduate-membership

Following an accredited undergraduate or conversion course, you can apply to the BPS for Graduate Membership. It is becoming increasingly rare to gain entry to the MSc without this. Holders of non-UK degrees will follow the process outlined in the section 'Apply to BPS to scrutinise degree.'

STAGE 1 IN FORENSIC TRAINING

BPS-accredited MSc programme (typically one year full time, though two-year part-time courses are available)

- www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses
- www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-psychologist

Ensure that the MSc is accredited by checking the BPS link above. Only accredited courses allow you to progress to the next stage. You may also be able to complete your MSc as an integrated part of a doctoral programme (see the section 'Doctoral programme at university leading to HCPC registration and BPS chartership.'

Funding: *It is unusual for places to be funded, unless through a current employer. However, you may wish to check your eligibility for a postgraduate loan. You can also see if your chosen university offers any fee discounts or scholarships (but note that the latter are rare and very competitive).*

- www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/funding-postgraduate-study/postgraduate-loans

Volunteer work: *The increasing popularity of forensic psychology means that you may wish to do some relevant volunteer work to build your skills before or during your MSc. The organisations below are good places to start:*

- The Youth Justice Board: yjresourcehub.uk/volunteering.html
- National Association of Official Prison Visitors: www.naopv.com/Interested2.htm
- National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO): www.nacro.org.uk/how-to-help/volunteer-with-us
- Circles UK: www.circles-uk.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-circles-volunteer
- Change Grow Live: www.changegrowlive.org/careers-volunteering/volunteering
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer

Paid work experience: *You may be interested in working as a healthcare assistant in mental health, particularly in a secure unit, or as an assistant clinical psychologist to further your knowledge before your MSc. The NHS is the obvious place to look for such roles but you may also find work in the private sector.*

- www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-assistant
- www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/assistant-clinical-psychologist

STAGE 2 IN FORENSIC TRAINING

BPS Qualification in Forensic Psychology

(typically whilst employed)

- www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/society-qualifications/qualification-forensic-psychology

You can train as a forensic psychologist 'on the job.' You need to be working in an area that will allow you to gain the required competencies, find a registered coordinating supervisor and enrol with the BPS. The qualification requires two years of supervised practice, but realistically, as there are evidence-based requirements to meet, this should be considered a minimum.

Organisations where you might complete the training:

- HM Prison & Probation Service (trainee forensic psychologist): justicejobs.tal.net/vx/candidate/cms/Psychologist%20Recruitment%20-%20The%20Roles
- Scottish Prison Service (forensic psychologist in training): www.sps.gov.uk/Careers/OpportunitiesintheSPS/Psychology-Careers.aspx
- NHS (trainee forensic psychologist): www.jobs.nhs.uk
- Priory Group (trainee forensic psychologist): jobs.priorygroup.com

STAGE 2 IN FORENSIC TRAINING

Graduate programme at university leading to HCPC registration only

- www.ucas.com (course search)

This postgraduate course (see for example the PgD at Cardiff Metropolitan University) lasts a minimum of two years and confers eligibility to register as a forensic psychologist with the HCPC. The course involves a mixture of work placements and classroom training. You will be exposed to a range of different forensic settings (e.g. community, prison, court and high security) and different client groups (e.g. individuals with mental health issues, individuals with personality difficulties, adolescent offenders and female offenders).

The main difference between this course and one which offers both HCPC registration and BPS chartership (a doctoral programme) is that the doctoral programme places a greater emphasis on research. Note also that while only HCPC registration is required to work as a forensic psychologist in the UK, some employers may request BPS chartership too.

Funding: *It is unusual for places to be funded, unless through a current employer.*

STAGE 2 IN FORENSIC TRAINING

Doctoral programme at university leading to HCPC registration and BPS chartership

- www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accruited-courses

Universities have different entry criteria for doctoral training. Some offer the doctorate as an extension to an MSc programme or as a top-up for individuals who already possess an MSc. The doctorate involves a mixture of classroom training and work placements. You will be exposed to a range of different forensic settings (e.g. community, prison, court and high security) and different client groups (e.g. individuals with mental health issues, individuals with personality difficulties, adolescent offenders and female offenders).

Doctoral programmes place a greater emphasis on research than courses which lead to HCPC-only registration. While BPS chartership is not required to work as a forensic psychologist in the UK, some employers do currently request it.

Funding: *It is unusual for places to be funded, unless through a current employer. However, you may wish to look into a doctoral loan:*

- www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan
- www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/postgraduate-students/postgraduate-doctoral-loan.aspx

Application to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for registration as a Forensic Psychologist

- www.hpc-uk.org/apply
- www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards
- www.bps.org.uk/psychologists/professional-development/find-cpd

The role of the HCPC is to monitor and maintain an individual's fitness to practise, based on a set of standards. You will need to apply for HCPC registration before you can practise as a forensic psychologist in the UK. To maintain your registration, you will need to undertake continuing professional development (CPD).