

I want to be a.....

Forensic Psychologist

Forensic psychologists are trained to apply psychological theory to aspects of legal processes in the criminal and civil justice field. The main focus of their work is with offenders, victims and professionals within the criminal justice system. Some forensic psychologists work within academia, the NHS or as part of the child protection team with social services. However, the largest single employer of forensic psychologists is the prison and probation service.

Within prisons their work can include analysing offender behaviour and assessing the risk of re-offending. Forensic psychologists are also concerned with piloting and implementing treatment programmes for individuals who have committed an offence. They are also involved in research and development of assessment techniques and undertaking statistical analysis for prisoner profiling and crime analysis. Forensic Psychologists give evidence in court and advise parole boards and mental health tribunals. The role also involves training prison and probation staff.

Qualifications and training

To become a Forensic Psychologist you need the following qualifications:

- A degree (Usually a 2:1 or equivalent) in Psychology from a BPS approved course.
- A Society accredited Masters in Forensic Psychology
- Two years practical experience under the supervision of a chartered forensic psychologist to complete Stage 2 of the Society's Qualification in Forensic Psychology.
- Some universities offer a doctorate programme in Forensic Psychology, which is the equivalent of both an accredited Masters qualification and stage 2 of the Society Qualification. This qualification makes you eligible to become a Chartered Member of the Society.

Please contact the universities directly for more information.

<http://beta.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/accredited-courses>

Work experience

Work experience within a forensic setting and a relevant research dissertation will enhance your chances of getting accepted onto a Masters course. Don't dismiss applying for support level roles initially as more responsible roles are usually advertised internally to staff already working for the organisation before they go externally. Relevant work experience includes:

- A psychology assistant in a prison
- A volunteer on a youth offending panel
- Responsible adult at police interviews
- An official prison visitor
- Working at Victim Support
- Working at bail hostels and refuges, drug or alcohol treatment centres

The University of Manchester Careers Service – Psychology Careers Team (Aug, 2019)

Contact: bmhcareers@manchester.ac.uk

- Interventions Facilitator/activities coordinator in a prison
- Working at secure hospitals and rehabilitation units as support workers or assistant occupational therapists

Forensic Psychology: Useful websites

- **The Division of Forensic Psychology (BPS)**
Division membership includes forensic psychologists working in academic settings, prison services, health, education and social services.
www.bps.org.uk/member-microsites/division-forensic-psychology
- **Victim Support**
An independent charity which helps people cope with the effects of crime. They recruit volunteers for their telephone helpline Local Victim Support branches or as a Witness Service Volunteer. www.victimsupport.org.uk
- **Youth Justice Board**
Youth Offender Panels are a ground-breaking new way of dealing with young people who commit crime. Their website details how to apply to sit on a Youth Offending Panel.
<https://yjresourcehub.uk/volunteering-footer/volunteering-opportunities.html>
For Manchester based volunteering see:
www.manchester.gov.uk/info/100008/work_jobs_training_and_advice/7052/youth_justice_volunteer_opportunities
- **HM Prison and Probation Service**
This is the biggest single employer of psychologists in the country.
<https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/> (scroll down to Forensic Psychologist)
- **Cheshire and Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company**
<http://cgm-probation.org.uk>
- **National Association of Official Prison Visitors**
Prison Visitors are independent volunteers, recruited by establishments on behalf of the Prison Service, who visit prisons and befriend prisoners.
www.naopv.com
- **National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)**
May provide an opportunity for voluntary work with offenders or victims of crime.
www.nacro.org.uk
- **Women's Aid**
Women's Aid is the national charity for women and children working to end domestic abuse. May provide an opportunity for voluntary work with victims of abuse.
www.womensaid.org.uk

- **Circles UK**

Circles work in partnership with Police, Probation, local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and other professionals working in the field of child protection, helping sex offenders rehabilitate into the community. May provide an opportunity for voluntary work with sex offenders.

www.circles-uk.org.uk

- **Change, Grow, Live**

A charity that works with people who wish to change their lives for the better. Voluntary and paid positions in the criminal justice system

www.changegrowlive.org/careers-volunteering

- **Work with Offenders**

Work with offenders is a leading news, information and job site for the offender supervision and offender rehabilitation community

www.workwithoffenders.co.uk/

Find Manchester graduates doing this role

LinkedIn

Use LinkedIn to see and connect with other psychology graduates from UoM who have gone into this and other roles. You can filter for “Psychology” graduates on the second page of the alumni tab, or just search for the job title you are looking for.

www.linkedin.com/school/university-of-manchester/

Join the **Psychology Graduate Network** just for Manchester students & graduates on LinkedIn and view members here too: www.bit.ly/psychologynetwork

NB) You can also use LinkedIn to click through to the organisations where people work in this role, connect with other people who work there and view any job vacancies.

The alumni office run **The Manchester Network** which is a similar platform for all Manchester alumni. You can also use this tool to send alumni any questions about their work. www.network.manchester.ac.uk

More information about the role

Read the Prospects job profile: www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-psychologist