UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Programme Specification (Postgraduate)

FOR ENTRY YEAR: 2026/27

Date created: n / a **Last amended:** 01/05/26 **Version no.** 2

1. Programme title(s) and code(s)

MSc./PGDip*/PGCert* in Forensic Science and Criminal Justice

Notes

* An award marked with an asterisk is only available as an exit award and is not available for students to register onto.

HECOS Code

HECOS Code	%
100388	75%
100483	25%

2. Awarding body or institution

University of Leicester

3. a) Mode of study

Part-time

b) Type of study

Distance learning

4. Registration periods

The normal period of registration for the MSc is 28 months

The maximum period of registration for the MSc is 48 months

5. Typical entry requirements

Honours degree at 2:1 level or equivalent. In accordance with regulations applicants who do not meet the standard criteria may be considered on the basis of other qualifications and extensive and relevant work experience.

Students whose first language is not English must satisfy the University's English Language requirements, IELTS 6.5 or equivalent.

6. Accreditation of Prior Learning

A maximum of 30 credits obtained from approved optional modules undertaken at the University of Florida will be recognised by the University.

7. Programme aims

The programme aims to

- raise students' knowledge and understanding of the evaluation, interpretation and use of forensic science evidence as a means of solving crime.
- enable students to critically analyse the evidential value of multiple types of forensic science evidence.
- equip students to engage in forensic science research and to conduct independent evaluations of forensic science evidence.

8. Reference points used to inform the programme specification

- QAA Benchmarking Statement
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- University Education Strategy
- University Assessment Strategy [log in required]
- University of Leicester Periodic Developmental Review Report
- External Examiners' reports (annual)
- United Nations Education for Sustainable Development Goals
- Student Destinations Data

9. Programme Outcomes

Unless otherwise stated, programme outcomes apply to all awards specified in 1. Programme title(s).

a) Discipline specific knowledge and competencies

i) Knowledge

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Advanced knowledge of the use of forensic science as a means of solving crime	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	MCQ's, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

ii) Concepts

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Enhanced appreciation of concepts of evidence evaluation and evidential value in the context of forensic science evidence	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	MCQ's, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

iii) Techniques

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to apply an understanding of these concepts	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, MCQ's, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

iv) Critical analysis

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to apply an understanding and critical assessment of the evaluation and evidential value of forensic science evidence to multiple evidence types	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, MCQ's, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

v) Presentation

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to argue the evidential value and interpretation of multiple forensic science evidence types	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

vi) Appraisal of evidence

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to analyze critically and assess the evidential value of multiple forensic science evidence types	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, MCQ's, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

b) Transferable skills

i) Research skills

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to undertake a critical evaluation of new technologies and their relevance to the use of an unseen problem, exemplified via the example of forensic science as a means of solving crime	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

ii) Communication skills

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to produce written material in a competent fashion that demonstrates arguments effectively, clearly and concisely	Directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research	Blackboard discussion groups, assessed written assignments and a dissertation

iii) Data presentation

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to present findings in a logical and concise manner	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities related specifically to research methods	Blackboard discussion groups, MCQ's, assessed written assignments

iv) Working relationships

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to contribute to, and comment on, group discussions	Directed reading (e-library) and activities	Participation in Blackboard discussion groups

v) Managing learning

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to work independently and organise learning	DL materials (voice over presentations, podcasts, video footage) on Blackboard, directed reading (e-library) and activities, dissertation supervision and independent research. Advice on study skills.	Participation in Blackboard discussion groups and regular contact with course administration, module tutors and dissertation supervisor

vi) Career management

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Ability to apply the skills and knowledge learned in a professional context	Communication with colleagues from diverse geographical and professional backgrounds	Participation in Blackboard discussion groups

10. Special features

All modules (both compulsory and optional) relate to the use of forensic science evidence as a means of solving crime and will equip the student to critically assess the evidential value of multiple evidence types and their relevance, in a professional context.

This course is offered in conjunction with the University of Florida. Students registered on this course will be given the opportunity to select up to 30 credits in total of optional modules from those offered by Florida in their second year. Students registered at Florida will be able to study University of Leicester modules as associate students.

10a. Research-inspired Education

Students on this programme will advance through the four quadrants of the University of Leicester Research-inspired Education Framework as follows:

RiE Quadrant	Narrative
	This interdisciplinary programme offers a strong foundation in the core aspects of forensic science. Opening modules on Crime Scene Examination and Trace Evidence Analysis bring students with diverse educational/professional backgrounds to a common point. A subsequent module on Evidential Value and Interpretation develops mathematical skills and critical thinking, assessed by problem solving in quantitative terms. The final compulsory module on Research Methods explicitly addresses diverse issues (see below) associated with research and lays the groundwork for research-inspired content, both in taught optional modules and the dissertation. The central third of the course comprises a collection of optional modules on specialist topics focussed on physical evidence, biological evidence, human remains or management. The taught modules are contextualised through practitioner-oriented material, in some instances taught by practitioners, relevant to the detection, acquisition, analysis, evaluation and utilization of evidence in forensic science and criminal justice.
Research-briefed Bringing staff research content into the curriculum.	Research-briefed – Students are exposed to research concepts in an indirect manner by the appointment of research-active academics and practitioners operating at the cutting-edge. This starts from the first (core) modules taught, proceeds through the technical content of the specialist taught modules and culminates with the dissertations supervised by research active staff.
Research-based Framed enquiry for exploring existing knowledge.	Research-based – The individually assessed assignments are problem-based, requiring students to identify concepts and methodology from the taught material and to extend this by engagement with the published research literature. As in a research environment, rigorous exposition of technical arguments, supported by an appropriate citation strategy, forms part of the assessment. Modules in this quadrant of the framework provide opportunities for students to engage in group discussions and intellectual debates, which are an intrinsic part of research culture.
Research-oriented Students critique published research content and process.	Research-oriented – Students are required to develop the ability to express and critically appraise their ideas through debate (discussion groups) and professionally delivered reports (assignments). They are required to adopt a professional approach to research ethics and integrity, including awareness of AI and its (potential misuse. This reaches its zenith when they are required to write in the style of an extended scientific research paper in the dissertation.
Research-apprenticed Experiencing the research process and methods; building new knowledge.	Research-apprenticed – Module-level activities and assessments develop and test transferable research skills, from data retrieval and evaluation, through reading research articles and their discussion, to presentation skills and report writing. During the dissertation, students engage with a research-active/practitioner at one-to-one level. At the end, the viva requires a presentation and the communication / discussion of their findings to an expert and general examiner “audience”.

As part of studying at a research-intensive university, students on this programme have the following extra or co-curricular opportunities available to them to gain exposure to research culture:

Research-inspired education is fully embedded into the taught modules on the programme. In the dissertation module, students have an option to do a project in the workplace (usually a forensic laboratory or educational research environment) in which interaction with research active colleagues enriches the experience. For a number of students, this has proved to be the springboard to PhD study and/or an academic appointment.

Teaching on this programme will be research-informed (it draws consciously on systematic inquiry into the teaching and learning process itself) in the following way:

The teaching in our School is underpinned by the *Research in Chemical Education (RICE*) group, whose reading and contribution to global pedagogic literature promotes the high quality and highly innovative delivery of our programmes. The School has created an advanced curriculum that expands intellectual horizons, encourages independent but rigorous thought, ensures equal opportunity and widening participation, and promotes high performance; students routinely achieve beyond their expectations. Academic and practitioner colleagues are regularly briefed and frequently exchange ideas and best practice. The School supports all staff involved in teaching to gain an accredited Higher Education teaching qualification, in which they demonstrate their use of teaching theory to support their own practice and reflect on their current teaching and continuing professional development.

11. Indicators of programme quality

This programme represents a new taught postgraduate discipline for the university and comprises module contributions from various pools of expertise across the university. Its multidisciplinary nature makes it appropriate to consider accreditation from the UK Forensic Science Society and the US Academy of Forensic Sciences.Criteria for award and classification

This programme follows the standard scheme of taught postgraduate award and classification set out in Senate Regulations – see the version of *Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study* relevant to year of entry.

The following additional award requirements for this programme have been approved:

- Modules undertaken at the University of Florida will be assessed in accordance with the marking schemes of that university with the marks being converted to a University grade in line with an approved conversion scheme as follows:

Conversion of Grading Systems

Florida Grade	Florida %	Leicester %	Leicester Grade
A+		75	Distinction
A	93	75	Distinction
A–		72	Distinction
B+		68	Merit
B	70	65	Merit
B–		62	Merit
C+		58	Pass

C	47	55	Pass
C–		52	Pass
D+		< 50	Fail
D	60	< 50	Fail
E	Fail	< 50	Fail
F	Fail	< 50	Fail

12. Progression points

As defined in Senate Regulations - refer to the version of *Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study* relevant to year of entry.

The following additional progression requirements for this programme have been approved:

- Students' progress will be reviewed on the completion of the first 60 credits of taught modules and again on completion of 120 credits of taught modules. At this stage progression decisions will be taken in accordance with those specified in the Senate Regulation 6 for taught postgraduate programmes. Boards of Examiners may recommend interim awards as appropriate in accordance with the Senate Regulation 6 for Taught Programmes. https://le.ac.uk/policies/regulations

In cases where a student has failed to meet a requirement to progress he or she will be required to withdraw from the course and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Examiners for an intermediate/exit award where appropriate.

13. Rules relating to re-sits or re-submissions

As defined in Senate Regulations - refer to the version of *Senate Regulation 6 governing taught postgraduate programmes of study* relevant to year of entry.

14. External Examiners reports

The details of the External Examiner(s) for this programme and the most recent External Examiners' reports for this programme can be found at exampapers@Leicester [log-in required]

15. Additional features (e.g. timetable for admissions)

There will be one intake per annum in October.

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Appendix 1: Programme structure (programme regulations)

The University regularly reviews its programmes and modules to ensure that they reflect the current status of the discipline and offer the best learning experience to students. On occasion, it may be necessary to alter particular aspects of a course or module.

Updates to the programme

Academic year affected	Module	Change
2026/27	CH7211 Fingerprint Visualisation (Previously *Latent Fingerprint Analysis*) [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7212 Arson Investigation [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7213 Forensic Engineering [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7232 Introduction to Forensic Archaeology [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7233 Introduction to Forensic Anthropology [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7241 Crime Scene Management [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2026/27	CH7243 Intelligence Gathering and Data Mining of Police Data [Leicester]	Was 10 credits, now 15 credits
2027/28	CH7214 Introduction to Fingerprint Examination and Comparison	New module added

Forensic Science and Criminal Justice MSc

Credit breakdown

Status	Year long	Semester 1	Semester 2	Other delivery period
Core taught	n/a	n/a	n/a	60 credits
Optional	n/a	n/a	n/a	60 credits
Dissertation/project	n/a	n/a	n/a	60 credits

180 credits in total

Level 7/Year 1 2026/27

Core modules

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
October	CH7201	Crime Scene Examination	15 credits
October	CH7202	Trace Evidence Analysis	15 credits
February	CH7203	Evidential Value and Interpretation	15 credits
February	CH7204	Research Methods	15 credits

Notes
n/a

Level 7/Year 2 2027/28

Core modules

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
June	CH7260	Dissertation	60 credits

Notes
n/a

Option modules

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
October	CH7211	Latent Fingerprint Analysis [Leicester]	15 credits
February	CH7212	Arson Investigation [Leicester]	15 credits
February	CH7213	Forensic Engineering [Leicester]	15 credits
February	CH7214	Introduction to Fingerprint Examination and Comparison	15 credits
August	CH7906	Toxicology of Chemical Weapons [Florida]	15 credits

January	CH7900	Blood Distribution and Spatter [Florida]	15 credits
August and January	CH7901	Biological Evidence and Serology [Florida]	15 credits
January	CH7905	Forensic Toxicology I [Florida]	15 credits
August and January	CH7904	Forensic Genetics [Florida]	15 credits
February	CH7232	Introduction to Forensic Archaeology [Leicester]	15 credits
February	CH7233	Introduction to Forensic Anthropology [Leicester]	15 credits
October	CH7241	Crime Scene Management [Leicester]	15 credits
October	CH7243	Intelligence Gathering and Data Mining of Police Data [Leicester]	15 credits

Notes

This is an indicative list of option modules and not definitive of what will be available. Option module choice is also subject to availability, timetabling, student number restrictions and, where appropriate, students having taken appropriate pre-requisite modules.

The delivering institution is indicated in [square brackets]

Appendix 2: Module specifications

See taught postgraduate module specification database [login required] (Note - modules are organized by year of delivery).