**Forensic Psychology**

Job Summary

As a Forensic Psychologist you would apply psychological theory to the criminal and civil justice field. You would consider psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour and use intervention techniques and programmes for offenders. The intervention programmes can be one-to-one or carried out within a group setting to try to modify their actions and minimise the chances of them re-offending.

Possible treatments often include anger management, cognitive and social skills training and treatment for addiction to drugs. You will be assessing the prisoners and may also provide support and training for other staff in order to reduce workplace stress.

Other aspects of the job include:

* Assessing the risks of re-offending s
* Presenting evidence in court
* Giving expert advice to hospital staff, prison officers, the police, social workers, probation officers, judical and legal systems
* Interventions (helping with offender profiling and crime analysis)
* Overseeing prison/probation staff
* Liaising with other professions
* Research projects into this particular area

The largest single employer of Forensic Psychologists in the UK is the HM Prison Service. However, Forensic Psychologists can work for a wide range of agencies including young offenders units, secure hospitals and rehabilitation units within the NHS, community forensic services, education (researching and lecturing) and the social services.

Qualifications – How do I become a Forensic Psychologist?

1. You will need a 3-year degree in Psychology that meets the standards of accreditation by the British Psychological Society. Qualification with a 2i or more provides eligibility to apply for **GBC** (**G**raduate **B**asis for **C**hartered Membership of BPS).

2) Relevant work experience should be undertaken.

3) You will need to complete a British Psychological Society accredited Masters in Forensic Psychology that shows applied research ability OR Stage 1 of the BPS Qualification in Forensic Psychology.

4) You will need to undertake Stage 2 of the Society’s Qualification in Forensic Psychology (two years supervised practice) which provides eligibility to apply for registration with the **HPC** (**H**ealth **P**rofessions **C**ouncil) and for Chartered Psychologist status.

5) Some Universities offer a Doctorate programme – this can be undertaken in place of the Masters and Stages 1 and 2 of the BPS Qualification in Forensic Psychology and provides a more direct route to apply for status as a Chartered Psychologist. The University of Southampton does not offer a Doctorate programme; please refer to the BPS website: [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk) for details of providers.

What relevant work experience would I need?

Work experience into this particular area is often a necessity when it comes to being selected onto a postgraduate course as it shows a strong work ethic, determination and commitment.

As an undergraduate, it isn’t simple to find work alongside a Qualified Forensic Psychologist. Shadowing a Forensic Psychologist, however, may be easier to find by searching for them in your local area, which the BPS allows you to do: http://www.bps.org.uk/psychology-public/find-psychologist/find-psychologist

The following points include examples of relevant work experience (some including local opportunities):

* The University of Southampton runs a programme for a Voluntary Research Assistant (VRA). This is unpaid and usually runs over the summer or a few hours a week during term time. It is a great opportunity to increase your chances of achieving a place on a postgraduate course. In addition, the researchers could write a letter of reference for you.
* Catch 22 provides voluntary work opportunities with disadvantaged children who are at risk of offending. <http://www.catch-22.org.uk/Jobs>
* Solent Mind Appropriate Adult Scheme – working with vulnerable adults who are arrested by the police. http://www.solentmind.org.uk/appropriate-adult-scheme.aspx
* Working with voluntary organisations to help stop crime. Voluntary work at Wessex Youth Offenders Team <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/wessex-yot/yot-volunteering.htm> – you must be willing to commit on a long-term basis due to training costs.
* http://www.ccjf.org/whatcanido/addresses.html provides a list of contact details for potential voluntary opportunities in the criminal justice system.
* <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/> is a national charity giving help and support to victims of crime via their helpline. This is not available in the Southampton area but there are a variety of others areas listed.
* Voluntary work as an Assistant Youth Support Worker (Woolston). Apply through http://www.susu.org/community-volunteering/opportunities-detail.html?opportunity=Assistant+Youth+Support+Worker+%28Woolston%29
* Community service volunteering - <http://www.csv.org.uk/volunteering>
* Volunteering as an Independent Custody Visitor for the Police Authority (Southampton) http://www.susu.org/community-volunteering/opportunities-detail.html?opportunity=Independent+Custody+Visitor
* The Guardian website displays volunteering opportunities: http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/charities/crime/uk/england/south-east/part-time/volunteering/
* HM Prison Service is the largest single employer of Forensic Psychologists - http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/
* www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjs/getinvolved - Youth justice board volunteering opportunities
* www.nacro.org.uk – Government funded voluntary organisation to prevent crime
* www.sova.org.uk – Supporting offenders, vulnerable youngsters, homeless, etc through volunteer action
* www.victimsupport.org.uk – Volunteer opportunities in witness service or victim support

Jobs are advertised in the [Psychologist Appointments](http://www.psychapp.co.uk/), which is part of [The Psychologist](http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/thepsychologist/the-psychologist_home.cfm) (the BPS monthly magazine), in newspapers (e.g. The Times, The Guardian, The Independent) and in specialist publications from the [Home Office](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/).

**If you are working with children or sensitive information you will need a CRB check.**

To find out more about life as a Forensic Psychologist, take a look at the BPS video: http://www.youtube.com/user/bpsmediacentre#p/u/4/Gq2NyoQeNd4