Postgraduate Programme Specification

Session	2025/26	Last Modified	April 2025
Named Award Title	MSc Forensic Mental Health		
Award Title for Each Award	PgC Forensic Mental Health PgD Forensic Mental Health MSc Forensic Mental Health		
Date of Approval	November 2021		
Details of Cohort Applies to	All new and existing cohorts		
Awarding Institution	University of the West of Scotland	Teaching Institution(s)	University of the West of Scotland
Language of Instruction & Examination	English		
Award Accredited by			
Maximum Period of Registration			
Duration of Study			
Full-time		Part-time	3 Years
Placement (compulsory)	No		
Mode of Study	☐ Full-time ☒ Part-time		
Campus	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☐ Paisley	☒ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)
School	**Health and Life Sciences**		
Divisional Programme Board	**Mental Health Nursing Midwifery Health**		
Programme Leader	Yvonne Murray		

Admissions Criteria
Candidates must be able to satisfy the general admission requirements of the University of the West of Scotland as specified in Chapter 2 of the University Regulatory Framework together with the following programme requirements:

Appropriate Undergraduate Qualifications:
Applicants will typically possess a degree or equivalent. In the absence of a degree, where entry requirements do not conform to the general entry requirements, other evidence can be considered on an individual basis in line with Regulations 2.13 – 2.36 (Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL / Recognition of Credit).

Other Required Qualifications/Experience
Non-standard entry: Applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficient professional or practice based experience to undertake the programme, for example, two years experience working in a mental health or forensic mental health context where they are required to provide written reports.
A potential progression route exists from the Short Forensic Module at New College Lanarkshire, Motherwell Campus and from the Graduate Certificate in Personality Disorder programme at UWS. The one condition of students being accepted via these routes is a pass rate of 60% or above.

Further desirable skills pre-application
In the case of a candidate whose native language is other than English, a Qualification Minimum Requirement applies. Details are available on UWS web site: www.uws.ac.uk. Information on other English language test scores is available from Admissions

General Overview
The MSc Forensic Mental Health programme is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and critical thinking of practitioners working across forensic mental health and criminal justice services. This includes nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, social workers, police officers, and prison officers. The programme enables students to develop a deep understanding of the complex systems and inter-agency processes that forensic service users move through, and how these systems interlink to influence care, treatment, and rehabilitation. At the intersection of mental health care, law and criminal justice, forensic mental health is a distinctive subject area in academic programmes which necessitates a strong multidisciplinary focus and emphasis on how forensic services connect and collaborate across sectors. Students examine the systems, processes and pathways that forensic patients move through, building capacity to contribute to improved service delivery, policy development and outcomes.

Delivered part-time via distance learning, the programme offers flexible, independent study that enables students to learn at their own pace and at times that suit their professional commitments. Each module is supported by complementary live online sessions delivered via MS Teams. These sessions offer real-time engagement with multidisciplinary academic and clinical experts, enabling students to explore the material in depth and share practice insights with peers from diverse professional backgrounds.

The programme is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities), reflecting its commitment to promoting equitable and effective mental health care. Covering areas such as mental disorder and the law, forensic risk assessment, complex behaviours, and interventions, the programme prepares graduates for advanced roles in clinical practice, leadership, and research, with awards available at Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, and MSc levels.

For the award of MSc Forensic Mental Health, students must have successfully completed the core modules for each year:
• Year 1: Mental Disorder and the Law (20 Credits), Forensic Risk Assessment and Risk Management (20 credits), and Managing Mental Health through the Criminal Justice System (20 credits)
  Year 1 total: 60 credits

• Year 2: Problem Behaviours (30 credits), Forensic Treatments and Interventions (10 credits), Research for Health and Social Care (20 credits)
  Year 2 total: 60 credits

• Year 3: M.Sc. Dissertation (HLS) (60 credits)
  Year 3 total: 60 credits

Exit points:
- M.Sc. Forensic Mental Health (All year 1, 2 and 3 modules - total 180 credits),
- Post graduate Diploma in Forensic Mental Health (All year 1 and 2 modules - total 120 credits),
- Post Graduate Certificate in Forensic Mental Health (60 credits from year 1 and/or year 2)

Typical Delivery Method
The programme is delivered through distance learning, with module materials available via an online learning platform, supplemented by optional 1–2 hour live sessions for each module, hosted on MS Teams.

Any additional costs
None

Graduate Attributes, Employability & Personal Development Planning
The MSc Forensic Mental Health programme at UWS supports the development of key UWS Graduate Attributes, preparing students to be Universal, Work Ready and Successful. Across the academic, personal, and professional dimensions of learning, students develop the confidence, flexibility, and insight needed to thrive in complex, interdisciplinary environments.

Throughout the programme, students build attributes such as critical thinking, ethical awareness, leadership, and reflective practice—skills that are essential for professional growth and effective service delivery in forensic mental health settings. The programme also fosters analytical ability, evidence-based decision-making, and the capacity to innovate in response to the evolving needs of individuals and services.

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is embedded throughout, supporting students to reflect on their learning, and to consider routes for progression. Modules are designed to develop transferable skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and digital literacy—key assets in multidisciplinary and multi-agency contexts.

Graduates are well-placed for advancement in forensic mental health services, social care, criminal justice, policy development, and research roles. The programme also provides a strong foundation for further academic study, including PhD-level research. Ultimately,

students will emerge as motivated, socially responsible professionals equipped to lead change and contribute meaningfully to their field.

Work Based Learning/Placement Details
No work based learning or placements in this programme, however, it is anticipated that the assessment strategy will allow students to contextualise learning to current and/or future professional employment within the field of forensic mental health.

Attendance and Engagement
In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this programme, academic engagement equates to the following:

Students are considered academically engaged when they consistently participate in timetabled online sessions and discussions, actively engage with course-related learning resources such as those available through the Library and the Virtual Learning Environment, and complete and submit assessments within the required deadlines.

Equality and Diversity
The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

In line with current legislation (Equality Act, 2010) and the UWS Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights Code, the modules within this programme are accessible and inclusive, with reasonable adjustment for different needs where appropriate. Module materials comply with University guidance on inclusive learning and teaching, and specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations.

Programme structures and requirements, SCQF level, term, module name and code, credits and awards (Chapter 1, Regulatory Framework)

Learning Outcomes

	SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Learning Outcomes
**Knowledge and Understanding**
A1	Critically understand the concepts and principles of mental disorder and the relationship to offending.
A2	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the theory and practice of risk assessment and risk management of forensic patients.
A3	Demonstrate critical knowledge and understanding of criminal justice systems engagement with people with mental health problems.
A4	
A5	
	Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding
B1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of homicide inquiries.
B2	Apply critical knowledge of violence risk assessment, sexual violence, domestic violence and stalking risk assessments.
B3	Examine the knowledge and skills required by a range of professionals in the review of patient care.
B4	Draw conclusions from comparisons of national and international criminal justice services.
B5	
	Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills
C1	Using a range of advanced skills including academic writing and referencing skills, analysis and interpretation of complex information and the use of appropriate ICT skills to aid dissemination of information.
C2	Demonstrate knowledge of effective communication skills required for the subject area, including effective use ICT and numeric skills to present and disseminate information.
C3	
C4	
C5	
	Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation
D1	Apply critical knowledge of civil and criminal legislation and processes.
D2	Demonstrate critical awareness of ethical issues linked to mental health legislation.
D3	Apply critical knowledge of current literature and practice within one's own domain of work to make informed judgements of best practice.
D4	
D5	

	Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others
E1	Apply a critical understanding of the roles and contributions of a range of professionals in risk assessment and risk management initiatives.
E2	Demonstrate considerable, autonomy and initiative in all professional activities.
E3	Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively with, and take responsibility, for one and others work.
E4	Demonstrate leadership in transformational activity.
E5	

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Footnotes
11	NURS11139	Mental Disorder and the Law	20	☒	☐	☐	
11	NURS11136	Forensic Risk Assessment and Risk Management	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	NURS11163	Managing Mental Health through CJS	20	☐	☐	☒	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Footnotes
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 11- Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) **Criteria for Award** *Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations*

On successful completion of the three programme core modules (60 credits SCQF Level 11) students may exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate Forensic Mental Health.

SCQF LEVEL 11 - Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)
Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of contemporary theory, principles and concepts in relation to research design and methods.
A2	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the theories and principles of personality disorder, sexual and violent behaviours in forensic mental health services.
A3	Extensive and critical knowledge of some specialized areas of treatment for forensic patients.
A4	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the theories and principles of treatments and interventions within forensic mental health settings.
A5	

Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding

B1	Relate key components of research design and methods principles to one's own domain of work.
B2	Apply critical knowledge to clinical situations, for example at multi-disciplinary team reviews.
B3	Demonstrate an understanding of the main research paradigms and evaluate their appropriate use and limitations.
B4	Plan and execute the analysis and presentation of the findings of a case study.
B5	Use of a range of skills and techniques as appropriate to the discipline.

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

C1	Make effective use of information retrieval systems and use information technology applications.
C2	Evaluate a range of appropriate methods and tools to facilitate appropriate quantitative or qualitative data collection and analysis.
C3	Demonstrate skills of critical thinking and writing.
C4	
C5	

Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation

D1	Develop creative and original responses to presenting problems and issues in relation to ethical principles and research governance.
D2	Critically reflect upon and appraise complex situations to make informed judgements that underpin the effective design of research projects to enhance organisational decisions.
D3	Critically analyse the links between diagnoses and treatment and management approaches.
D4	Utilise a wide range of software to support and enhance a robust study for example I.T. facilities, library, databases and Moodie to locate, retrieve, evaluate and incorporate evidence into practice.
D5	Critically evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data.

Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

E1	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in academic activities.
E2	Demonstrate leadership in relation to generating a vision for research in the work setting.
E3	Work in ways that are reflective, critical and analytical to facilitate and enhance research and effective clinical developments, taking responsibility for own work.
E4	Deal with complex ethical issues related to research in primary care settings.
E5	

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Footnotes
11	NURS11140	Problem Behaviours	30	☒	☐	☐	
11	MIDW11003	Research for Health & Social Care	20	☐	☒	☐	
11	NURS11137	Forensic Treatments and Interventions	10	☐	☐	☒	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Core Modules

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Footnotes
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	

Footnotes for Option Modules

Level 11- Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) **Criteria for Award** *Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations*

Students who successfully complete 120 credits including all programme core modules as detailed at PG Certificate and PG Diploma level may be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma Forensic Mental Health.

SCQF LEVEL 11 – Masters
SCQF LEVEL 11 – Masters
Learning Outcomes (Maximum of 5 per heading**)**
Knowledge and Understanding

A1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of contemporary theory, principles and concepts in relation to systematic review of the literature and/or research design.
A2	
A3	
A4	
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Relate key components of research design and methods principles to one's own domain of work.
B2	Demonstrate creativity in the application of theoretical concepts to enhance an evidence-base for work or practice within the primary care contexts.
B3	
B4	
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Select and apply appropriate methods and tools to facilitate appropriate quantitative or qualitative data collection and analysis.
C2	Design the presentation of information for dissemination across appropriate levels and areas of the professional audience and organisational contexts.
C3	Synthesise work into a well-designed dissertation document.
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Critically reflect upon and appraise complex situations to make informed judgements that underpin the effective design of research projects to enhance organisational decisions.
D2	Demonstrate creativity in the application of theoretical concepts to enhance an evidence-base for work or practice within the health and social care contexts.
D3	
D4	
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Demonstrate leadership in relation to generating a vision for research in the work setting, engagement of self and others in contributing to research, and the promotion of professional excellence and effectiveness in the primary care context.
E2	Work in ways that are reflective, critical and analytical to facilitate and enhance research and effective clinical developments.
E3	
E4	

E5	

Masters Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	**2**	**3**	
11	NURS11010	MSc Dissertation (HLS)	60	☒	☒	☒	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Masters Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	**2**	**3**	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
				☐	☐	☐	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 11- Masters **Criteria for Award** ***Please refer to UWS Regulatory Framework for related regulations***
Students who successfully complete 180 credits SCQF Level 11 including all core modules as detailed in this programme specification are eligible for the award of MSc Forensic Mental Health.

Regulations of Assessment

Candidates will be bound by the general assessment regulations of the University as specified in the University Regulatory Framework.

An overview of the assessment details is provided in the Student Handbook and the assessment criteria for each module is provided in the module descriptor which forms part of the module pack issued to students. For further details on assessment please refer to Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

To qualify for an award of the University, students must complete all the programme requirements and must meet the credit minima detailed in Chapter 1 of the Regulatory Framework.

Combined Studies

There may be instances where a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the award criteria for the named award and for other more generic named awards existing within the School.

Provided that they have met the credit requirements in line with the SCQF credit minima (please see Regulation 1.21), they will be eligible for a Combined Studies award (please see Regulation 1.61).

For students studying at Level 11, they will normally be eligible for an exit award of PgCert / PgDip / Masters in Combined Studies.

Version no: 1

Change/Version Control

What	When	Who