

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA / LL.M Criminal Law and Criminal Justice (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences (home); Birkbeck Law School.
Location of delivery	Central London, online (Flexible Masters)
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September or January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	September start: TMJCMJIP_C on-campus study TMJCMJON_C online study TMJCMJMX_C flexible study January start: TMJCJJP_C on-campus study TMJCJJON_C online study TMJCJMX_C flexible study
HECoS Code	100685 Criminal Law 100483 Criminal Justice
Start date of programme	Prior to 2008
Date of programme approval	Prior to 2008
Date of last programme amendment approval	April 2025
Valid for academic entry year	2025-26
Programme Director	Sappho Xenakis
Date of last revision to document	11/04/2025

Admissions requirements

Generally for entry to our postgraduate programmes, the following is required:

- 2:2 honours degree in the humanities, social sciences or law. Degrees from overseas institutions must be equivalent to a second-class honours degree. Other relevant qualifications and appropriate professional experience and training are welcome.

Course aims

This programme offers a unique opportunity for advanced study of criminal law and criminal justice from an interdisciplinary perspective. Taught by academics in Criminology and Law, and researchers from the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research (ICPR), the programme provides insight into cutting-edge debates in criminal law and criminal justice grounded within legal, criminological, policy, social science and humanities perspectives. Led by Criminology, the programme is part of a proud tradition of critical scholarship in criminology and criminal justice where academics address issues of crime through power and inequality and are led by principles of social and racial justice.

The programme is distinct in that it gives students the opportunity, at the end of their studies, to decide whether they would like to receive an award of LLM or MA in Criminal Law & Criminal Justice. This allows students to choose their award based on their own needs, career paths and areas of specialism. Students on the programme are drawn from a range of backgrounds, including those with preexisting knowledge or experience of criminal law and the criminal justice system, and those with a desire to pursue a specialism in this area. The programme caters to those who would like to advance in their existing career or to carve out a new career path.

Those enrolled on the programme will be introduced to theoretical debates and perspectives that underpin the relationship between criminal law and criminal justice. This is achieved through the completion of three compulsory modules: Criminal Law, Theory and History; Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice; and the Masters Research Project, where students pursue independent research on a subject relevant to the programme. Students are then invited to select three optional modules from Criminology and Law. Students may select one of these optional modules from the wider College, subject to availability. Module options can be tailored towards students' individual research interests.

The programme is designed for students who wish to study in an academic environment and need to balance study with professional and personal commitments. Evening classes take place between 6pm and 9pm, Monday-Friday. The programme is designed so full-time students can arrange their timetable to study two evenings a week. Part-time students can arrange their timetable to study one evening per week. Students learn in a stimulating learning environment, alongside students with diverse backgrounds and professional experiences.

Distinctive features:

- Students can attend specialised research events such as the Criminology Seminar Series. Led by criminology academics, events showcase contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice and feature experts with national and international criminology profiles.
- Students will be taught by active researchers carrying out contemporary criminological research at the Birkbeck Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research (ICPR).
- Students will receive training in a range of specialist subject specific and transferable skills which prepare them for employment or further postgraduate study
- Students will experience, subject to eligibility, different approaches to learning, including on campus, online or flexible modes of delivery.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	LADD059S7	Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice	30	Comp	T1
7	LADD058S7	Criminal Law, Theory and History	30	Comp	T2
7	LACN022S7	Masters Research Project	30	Comp	T3
7	various	Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	various	Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	various	Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	LADD059S7	Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice	30	Comp	T1
7	LADD058S7	Criminal Law, Theory and History	30	Comp	T2
7	various	Option	30	Option	T3
Year 2					
7	LACN022S7	Masters Research Project	30	Comp	T3
7	various	Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	various	Option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3

Core: *Module must be taken and passed by student*

Compulsory: *Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)*

Option: *Student can choose to take this module*

MA / LLM Criminal Law & Criminal Justice			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 1	Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice (L7, 30 credits)	Criminal Law, Theory & History (L7, 30 credits)	Option (L7, 30 credits)
Year 1 (FT) or Year 2 (PT)	Option (L7, 30 credits)	Option (L7, 30 credits)	Masters Research Project (L7, 30 credits)

The range of options available each year will vary but an indicative list includes:

Code	Module	Credits
LADD027S7	Gender, Sexuality and Criminal Justice	30
LACN014S7	Race, Crime and Justice	30
LALA149S7	Global Perspectives on Crime and Crime Control	30
LACN021S7	Contemporary Criminological Theory	30
LACN026S7	Intersectionality and Criminal Justice	30

LACN019S7	Regulating Sex and Sexuality	30
LALA173S7	Research Methods in Criminology	30
LACN025S7	Policing, Race and Justice	30
LALA078S7	Youth Justice	30
LACN013S7	Analysing Public Policy	30
LADD028S7	Issues in International Law and Human Rights	30
LALW102S7	Commercial Law and Market Regulation	30
LALW063S7	Law Of the Digital Economy	30
LALW078S7	Environmental Problems and The Law	30
LALW059S7	Algorithms and the law	30
LADD066S7	Introduction to the History, Theory and Politics of Constitutional Law	30
LADD071S7	Law, Post-Colonialism and Political Economy	30
LADD013S7	Taking a Case to the European Court of Human Rights	30
LALW060S7	Regulating Technology	30
LALW061S7	Labour, Law and Technology	30
LALW043S7	Environmental and Climate Law and Justice	30
LALW081S7	Law, Nature and Planetary Justice	30
LALW087S7	Law, Solidarity and Alternative Economies	30
LALW106S7	Intellectual Property and Global Health	30
LADD005S7	The History and Philosophy of Human Rights	30
LALW109S7	Regulating the Creative Economy	30
LALA087S7	Psychology of Law and Crime	30
LADD029S7	Healthcare and Human Rights	30

Note: Options are expected to be offered as online and in-person from 2025-6 via hyflex classroom technology. The available options may vary each year with the above an indicative list only.

Students are permitted to select 1 x 30 credit option outside of Criminology and School of Law options.

When choosing options, students are encouraged to spread out their modules to achieve a manageable workload. Full-time students are advised to take no more than 60 credits per term. Part-time students are advised to take no more than 45 credits per term.

Schedules will be organised to enable student to choose options that will keep to 2 nights /week for full-time study and 1 night per week for part-time study. However, to access the full range of options, some selections may result in additional nights per week.

How you will learn

Teaching and learning are organised to help students meet the learning outcomes of the MA/LLM Criminal Law and Criminal Justice programme. Students will undertake three compulsory modules. Two of these, Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice and Criminal Law, Theory & History are taught by academics in Criminology and Law respectively. The third compulsory module is the Masters Research Project, where students receive 1-1 supervision by academics in Criminology or Law, or by active researchers in the Insititute for Criminal Justice Policy Research (ICPR).

MA/LLM Criminal Law and Criminal Justice students are active learners who engage fully with the demands and requirements of the programme. Information about the programme and its modules are available on the Birkbeck College virtual learning site. There, students can understand the

requirements of each of their modules, as it relates to academic lecturers, weekly topics and preparatory work and assessment. All modules are taught through a blend of pre-recorded academic lectures, live seminars (in-person and online) and online activities. These provide an overview of a topic and relevant learning materials and resources. Lectures introduce students to a topic and students contribute to seminars through independent preparation, in-class discussion and group-work.

Students are encouraged to attend a range of events and workshops within and beyond criminology. Led by criminology academics, the Criminology Seminar Series showcases contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice and features national and international experts. As members of Criminology and the School of Social Sciences, MA/LLM Criminal Law and Criminal Justice students are invited to attend skill-building workshops organised by faculty Learning and Development tutors, and can access events relating to politics, geography, psychosocial studies and sociology subject areas. Students are also encouraged to attend regular academic events run through the School of Law.

How we will assess you

The MA/LLM Criminal Law and Criminal Justice adopts a variety of assessment methods to advance student learning and enable their progression throughout the programme. Knowledge and skills are developed through written essays and exams, oral presentations, reflective dialogue, the critical analysis of criminology and law scholarship and debates, independent research practice, and IT literacy. Students are supported to complete their assessments through lecturer feedback across 1-1 and in-seminar guidance and formative assessments. Students will receive 1-1 supervisory guidance in the completion of their Masters Research Project.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed. At the end of this programme, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding and critical awareness of topics which are relevant to the study of criminal law and criminal justice.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic dynamics relevant to criminology learning
- Critically appraise a wide range of contemporary, historic and interdisciplinary approaches relevant to the study of criminal law and criminal justice.
- Convey a critical understanding of the intersection between different disciplines, such as law, policy, humanities and the social sciences, in the study of criminal law and criminal justice.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theories and methodologies applicable to undertaking independent research and advanced scholarship in criminal law and criminal justice.
- Express a sophisticated awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of criminology and law.
- Carry out independent study on a topic related to criminal law and criminal justice for the purposes of an extended Masters Research Project, with consideration for ethical implications.
- Carry out advanced and transferable skills such as critical reading, writing, discussion and analysis, and academic practices such as referencing.
- Work both independently and in a group and engage constructively with peers.

Careers and further study

Postgraduate studies in criminal law and criminal justice offer a range of career opportunities, including: pathways to promotion within an existing career, transitions into a new career, or pursuit of a specialist knowledge areas.

You will find criminal law and criminal justice graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- Legal practitioners
- Positions within the third sector including non-government organisations (NGOs) and voluntary organisations
- Positions within criminal justice agencies, such as the police, prisons and youth justice system
- Local government or civil service roles
- Education, research and academia.

Birkbeck's LLM/MA Criminal Law and Criminal Justice graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- The ability to critically evaluate and assess a range of sources.
- The ability to present persuasive arguments.
- Research skills.
- The ability to work as part of a team.
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Students also have access to a range of study skills workshops, online research and writing resources, and one-to-one sessions offered by subject-specific Learning Development Tutors.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

Copyright, Birkbeck, University of London 2022