

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MSc Criminology <i>Pathway exit awards</i> - MSc Criminology (Criminal Justice) - MSc Criminology (Gender and Sexuality) - MSc Criminology (Racial Justice) - MSc Criminology (Global Perspectives) - MSc Criminology (Public Policy) (Level 7)
Name and title of interim exit qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma Criminology Postgraduate Certificate Criminology
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences (home); Law School
Location of delivery	Central London, online. flexible
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 year) October or January
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
<u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u> <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for England</u>	Criminology
Birkbeck Course Code	TMSCRIIP_C on campus study TMSCRION_C online study TMSCRIMX_C flexible study January start: TMSCRJIP_C - on-campus study TMSCRJON_C - online study TMSCRJMX_C - flexible study
HECoS Code	100483 100484
Start date of programme	October 2012
Date of programme approval	January 2012
Date of last programme amendment approval	February 2026
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Programme Director	Sappho Xenakis
Date of last revision to document	23/02/26

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.

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

This programme offers a unique opportunity for advanced study of criminology. 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. Taught by academics in Criminology and researchers from the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research (ICPR), the programme provides a multidisciplinary platform for students to engage with contemporary criminology.

The programme will appeal to those with a keen interest in crime, as well as those seeking to develop a deeper appreciation and critical understanding of the key issues that currently play a major role in shaping criminal justice policy and practice. It will also appeal to those who are seeking advanced knowledge and understanding of contemporary criminological theory and research methods, as well as those who wish to pursue a specialist subject area. Students tailor their learning and choose their programme award along a 'pathway': Criminal Justice, Gender & Sexuality, Racial Justice, Global Perspectives, or Public Policy. Pathways allow students to choose their award based on their own needs, career paths and areas of specialism.

Across all pathways, students take three compulsory modules: Contemporary Criminological Theory; Research Methods in Criminology; and an extended independent Masters Research Project. Students then select two optional modules from their chosen pathway, plus one option across the School of Social Sciences, School of Law and wider College (subject to availability).

Students on the MSc Criminology 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. It caters to those who would like to advance in their existing career or to carve out a new career path.

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. 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 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 and online modes of delivery

Course structure

The MSc Criminology is for students who wish to pursue advanced criminological study. The programme provides an interdisciplinary platform from which students will engage with the complexity of contemporary criminology.

The pathway structure enables students to specialise in:

1. Criminal Justice
2. Gender and Sexuality
3. Race and Criminal Justice
4. Global Perspectives
5. Public Policy

All students are required to take the following compulsory modules:

- Contemporary Criminological Theory (30 credits)
- Research Methods in Criminology (30 credits)
- Masters Research Project (Criminology) (30 credits). Students are required to choose a topic for the research project that reflects their chosen pathway.

All students are also required to take:

- Two pathway-specific module options from a designated list (2 x 30 credits)
- One optional modules from Criminology, the School of Social Sciences, the School of Law, or the wider College (subject to availability) (30 credits)

Module options for all students undertaking the MSc Criminology are made up of all pathway specific compulsory and optional modules, and selected modules from the School of Law and School of Social Sciences.

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. Student timetables 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.

Pathway Details:

Students apply to the MSc Criminology and are invited to select a subject pathway following enrolment. Depending on a student's choice of options, as outlined on the pathways below, they will be awarded one of five exit awards on successful completion of their programme:

1. MSc Criminology (Criminal Justice)
2. MSc Criminology (Gender and Sexuality)
3. MSc Criminology (Racial Justice)
4. MSc Criminology (Global Perspectives)
5. MSc Criminology (Public Policy)

Details of the pathway specific options for each pathway are as follows:

Pathway 1: Criminal Justice

Students select two pathway specific option modules from the following list (subject to availability):

- Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice
- Global Perspectives on Crime & Crime Control
- Intersectionality and Criminal Justice
- Youth Justice
- Policing, Race and Justice
- Investigating the Social World
- Sociology for New Worlds

Pathway 2: Gender and Sexuality

Students select two pathway specific option modules from the following list (subject to availability):

- Gender, Sexuality & Criminal Justice
- Regulating Sex and Sexuality
- Intersectionality & Criminal Justice
- Analysing Public Policy
- Theorising Gender & Sexuality
- Gender and Development
- Global Histories of Feminism
- Sex, Work and the Law: Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in Modern History
- Gender, Modernity and the City
- Philosophy and Gender
- Disciplining Sex: Sexuality, Society and Modern Literary Culture
- Gender and Everyday Life in 20th Century China
- Cultures of Hate and Oppression. Connecting the Conversations about Antisemitism, Holocaust, Gender, Colonialism

Pathway 3: Racial Justice

Students select two pathway specific option modules from the following list (subject to availability):

- Race, Crime and Justice
- Policing, Race and Justice
- Intersectionality and Criminal Justice
- Race, Environment and International Development
- Cultures of Hate and Oppression. Connecting the Conversations about Antisemitism, Holocaust, Gender, Colonialism
- Black Space Matters (New, TBC)

Pathway 4: Global Perspectives

Students select two pathway specific option modules from the following list (subject to availability):

- Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice
- Global Perspectives on Crime & Crime Control
- Global Politics, Governance and Security
- International Development and Social Justice

- Issues in International Law and Human Rights
- Global Political Economy: Structures & Policies
- War, Politics and Society
- Nationalism, Religion, and Conflict
- The Politics of Race and Diaspora
- Rebels, Riots and Revolutions in International Development
- Cities in the Global South
- Emerging Powers in World Politics
- Sociology for New Worlds

Pathway 5: Public Policy

Students select two pathway specific option modules from the following list (subject to availability):

- Analysing Public Policy
- Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions
- Global Politics, Governance and Security
- Environment and Policy
- Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, Citizens
- Perspectives on public Service
- Power and Politics in the UK
- Political Theory and Contemporary Politics
- Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice
- Youth Justice

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	LACN021S7	Contemporary Criminological Theory	30	Comp	T1
7	LALA173S7	Research Methods in Criminology	30	Comp	T2
7	LACN022S7	Masters Research Project	30	Comp	T3
7		Option 1: Pathway specific option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2: Pathway specific option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 3: Any option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Part-time- 2 years					
Year 1					
7	LACN021S7	Contemporary Criminological Theory	30	Comp	T1
7	LALA173S7	Research Methods in Criminology	30	Comp	T2
		Option 1: Pathway specific option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 2					
7	LACN022S7	Masters Research Project	30	Comp	T3
7		Option 2: Pathway specific option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 3: Any option	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3

Note: Students who complete sufficient compulsory modules and options but have not completed the specific pathway requirements may be eligible to graduate with a general MSc Criminology.

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

Timetable by Term: MSc Criminology			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 1	Contemporary Criminological Theory (L7, 30 credits)	Research Methods in Criminology (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)
At least two of the options must be pathway specific. See list of pathway options above.			

Options for all students undertaking the MSc Criminology are made of all pathway specific optional modules, and selected modules from the School of Law and School of Social Sciences. Indicative lists of general options are below (for the pathway specific lists see above)

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
LACN021S7	Issues in International Law & Human Rights*	30
LADD013S7	Taking a Case to the European Court of Human Rights*	30
LADD005S7	The History and Philosophy of Human Rights*	30
LADD029S7	Healthcare and Human Rights*	30
POSO025S7	Public Policy: Interests, Ideas, Institutions*	30
POSO023S7	The political sociology of the modern state	30
POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security *	30
SSGE011S7	Environment and Policy	30
SSPO267S7	Political Communications: Media, Campaigns, Citizens*	30
POSO020S7	Power and Politics in the UK	30
POSO082S7	Global Politics, Governance and Security	30
SSGE125S7	International Development and Social Justice	30
LADD028S7	Issues in International Law and Human Rights*	30
SSPA152S7	Sociology for New Worlds*	30
SC05001S7	Global Political Economy: Structures & Policies	30
POSO035S7	War, Politics and Society	30
POSO044S7	Nationalism, Religion, and Conflict	30

SSGE070S6	The Politics of Race and Diaspora	30
SSGE128S7	Rebels, Riots and Revolutions in International Development	30
SSPO120S7	Emerging Powers in World Politics	30
SSGE070S6	The Politics of Race and Diaspora	30
FDDV016S7	Race, Environment and International Development	30
New (TBC)	Black Space Matters	30
SSPO263S7	Investigating the Social World*	30

**Options marked with a star are expected to be offered as online and in-person via hyflex.*

How you will learn

Teaching and learning are organised to help students meet the learning outcomes of the MSc Criminology programme. Students will undertake three compulsory modules. This includes Contemporary Criminological Theory; Research Methods in Criminology and a Masters Research Project, where students receive 1-1 supervision from academics in Criminology or by active researchers in the Institute for Criminal Justice Policy Research (ICPR).

Students then choose two pathway-specific optional modules from a designated pathway list, plus one other option from across Criminology, the School of Social Sciences, the Law School, or the wider College (subject to availability).

MSc Criminology 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, in-person seminars 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, MSc Criminology 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.

How we will assess you

The MSc Criminology 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 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 criminology.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic dynamics relevant to the critical study of criminology
- Critically appraise a wide range of contemporary, historic and interdisciplinary approaches relevant to the study of criminology.
- Convey a critical understanding of the intersection between different disciplines, such as law, policy, humanities and the social sciences, in the study of criminology.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of theories and methodologies applicable to undertaking independent research and advanced scholarship in criminology
- Express a sophisticated awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of criminology and related disciplines.
- 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 criminology offer a range of career opportunities, including: a pathway to promotion within an existing career, a transition into a new career, or pursuit of a specialist knowledge areas.

You will find MSc Criminology graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- Policy Development & Research
- Public Administration
- Police, Probation and Security Services
- Criminal Case Review Management
- Legal Services
- Victim Support Services
- Welfare, Counselling and Well-Being Services
- Social Work, Youth Work and Community Support
- Public / Local Government Administration
- Charity /Voluntary Sector Work
- Community Campaigner or Advocate
- Community Educator
- Journalism

Birkbeck's MSc Criminology students will graduate with a range of transferrable skills, such as:

- Independent research and evaluation
- Policy analysis
- Organising and planning
- Team work and leadership
- High-level oral and written communication skills
- Critical problem solving and critical thinking
- Working to deadlines
- Advanced oral presentation skills
- Critical argumentation skills

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 programme 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.

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.

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