LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Course Specification

MSc Criminology (CRIMI)

2018-19

www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk
School of Social Sciences

Award and programme title: MSc Criminology

Level of qualification: Level 7

Contained awards available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PGDip</td>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCrt</td>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>7</td>
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Length and status of programme and mode of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Length (years)</th>
<th>Status (FT/PT/SW)</th>
<th>Mode (campus-based / DL or other)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Campus-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Campus-based</td>
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Course Specification

Overview and Aims

The overall philosophy of the MSc Criminology degree is to provide postgraduate students with a critical understanding and appreciation of the key principles of Criminological theory, its research methodologies and primary conceptual debates, within both historical and contemporary contexts. In particular, the MSc embodies a distinctive, cutting-edge degree programme, unashamedly ‘critical’ in its approach to criminology, which promotes themes of justice, race, ethnicity and gender to reflect and advance current thinking and research in the discipline. An overarching theme of this degree is its unapologetic critique of mainstream criminology not only for its ‘male-stream’, masculinist and androcentric focus, but also its failure to address state crime, war and the politics of control. This degree programme elevates and challenges feminist criminology, arguably the most important perspective to emerge within the discipline in the last 40 years. The MSc also extends across thematic spectrums acting as an ‘umbrella’; it critically analyses gender-based violence and victim-hood (for example in Engendering Criminology) whilst also looking at female empowerment and agency (in Understanding the Sex Industry). The degree also critically challenges the historical legacies of racist criminology within both colonial and post-colonial contexts. For example, there is coherence and consistency in curriculum content in modules like Race, Ethnicity and Justice and Rethinking Policing; like natural siblings, both share common themes relating to ‘suspect’ communities, institutional racism, and deaths in custody. These common themes also extend to Understanding the Sex Industry, which analyses hate crimes, vigilantism, trafficking and migration.

Above all, it is clear that each module shares common themes relating to the intersections of age, gender, ethnicity and class. These themes are embedded within the different criminological
interpretations and perspectives surrounding policing, punishment, violence, criminalisation and social exclusion. Above all, students are provided with a critical and rigorous knowledge of these themes, supported by excellent teaching and an advanced critical understanding of research methods.

The module War, Crime and Violence forges a natural bridge-head between all modules; it addresses universal themes of punishment, control, governance and justice, which enables students to navigate the terrain of criminological theory whilst informing other discussions on human rights and migration. Whether the discussion relates to human trafficking, or the Nuremberg trials, it is clear to see how international debates about ‘punishment’ are significant across the degree programme.

Finally, the whole philosophy of the course is underpinned by the advancement of criminological research skills and critical thinking. The 15,000 word dissertation spear-heads these processes when students choose a topic for independent research and scholarship. Students are provided with an opportunity to further develop their written and verbal communication skills, through workshops, data collection and critical use of digital technologies; they are also expected to analyse, reflect on and apply their knowledge to a masterly level through the effective use of digital tools and media. MSc Criminology assists postgraduate students in developing a range of specific and transferable skills, which allow them to be enterprising and successful in the employment they choose.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demonstrate a critical awareness of the contemporary context of criminology; its interdisciplinary nature; alternative theoretical approaches within criminology; contemporary debates about the content and scope of ‘critical’ and ‘mainstream’ criminology.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Synthesise, evaluate and apply theoretical concepts and knowledge from the social sciences and specifically ‘critical’ criminology to challenge practice and societal issues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Critically evaluate current criminological research related to professional practice and societal issues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop an advanced understanding of the relationships between crime, deviance and offending, victimisation, and social divisions such as gender, social class, race and ethnicity based on alternative critical perspectives and methodologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Critically reflect on the development, role, organisation and governance of efforts to reduce and prevent crime and harm; the role of non-governmental agencies; and the effectiveness of such measures and human rights issues in relation to preventive and pre-emptive measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A critical understanding of the construction and influence of representations of crime and victims and of responses to crime and deviance as found in official reports, the mass media, and public opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Structure**

| Level 7 |
The intellectual principles that underpin the Criminology Master’s degree are broadly defined as follows:

- A critical understanding of the major contemporary theories which are deployed throughout the social sciences which allow us to understand the social and personal context of all aspects of crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance

- An advanced understanding of key concepts and contemporary theoretical approaches which have been developed in relation to crime, victimisation and responses to crime and deviance

- An advanced understanding of the dimensions of social divisions and social diversity in contemporary social science and in relation to contemporary criminological topics

- A critical understanding of the local, national, and international contexts of crime, victimisation, and responses to crime and deviance

- Qualities and transferable skills which will enable them to act effectively in a complex and rapidly changing environment. Intellectual and professional independence to prepare them for lifelong learning.

These defining principles are expressed through the more specific learning outcomes of the MSc Criminology degree.

NB - All option modules are indicative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race, Ethnicity and Justice</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Out of Control? Global crime, risk and insecurity</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the Sex Industry</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Engendering Criminology</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rethinking Policing</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>War, Crime and Violence</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semester 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation (Sept starters)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Dissertation (Feb starters)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning and Teaching

Learning and Teaching Approaches

The MSc Criminology degree operates within the context of Leeds Beckett University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-2015, with particular emphasis on putting students at the centre of our activities and providing a flexible and relevant curriculum with excellent teaching and learning. We aim to provide a supportive, inclusive and welcoming environment, and prepare students for employment and lifelong learning. The MSc Criminology team is also dedicated to engaging with and respecting our diverse community of colleagues. The aim is to ensure that teaching is informed by our specialist research and/or expert professional practice with contributions from our Professors, Readers and expert professionals.

Our approach concentrates on:

- Providing students with intellectual and critical challenges and building in opportunities for them to be inspired by engagement with research and researchers.
- Using academic support systems to review individual progress in order to reduce attrition
- Ensuring that our curriculum is relevant to the diverse needs of our students, via regular meetings of the course team.
- Creating a friendly and supportive learning environment, via regular meetings between the students as a group and the Course Leader.
- Reviewing a wide range of feedback and other data to evaluate student satisfaction and guide our actions to promote continuous quality enhancement
- Ensuring that our courses maximise opportunities for students to develop and enhance essential postgraduate skills to enhance their employability and job satisfaction.
- Addressing the diverse academic and professional needs of a wide range of entrants; developing greater flexibility in approaches to learning and promoting skills, including key skills. The assessment arrangements contribute to meeting these aims.

Learning and Teaching Activities

The Criminology team is aware that different teaching and assessment methods suit different students’ learning styles, and the team is committed to a variety of practices – presentations, written assignments, e-portfolios, group work activities - in order to promote active learning and student engagement on the course, and to provide students with a range of means of
demonstrating their achievement of Learning Outcomes. Formal teaching takes place via, lectures, seminars and workshops.

Seminars are a venue in which students are encouraged to debate, question and argue over the chosen topic for discussion in so doing students develop the skills of critical questioning and thinking as well as the confidence to express their informed views. Above all, the MSc Criminology team seeks to provide an inclusive and supportive environment, actively valuing diversity. These aims are reflected in our modules, which share common themes relating to the intersections of age, gender, ethnicity and class as well as international criminological perspectives.

All students on the course are provided with a Course Handbook and a Module Handbook for each module they study. The module handbook will provide students of details relating to:

- Module learning outcomes
- Programme of lectures and seminars
- Recommended reading
- Assessment details and submission dates
- Tutor contact details
- Advice on referencing
- VLE links

**Use of the Virtual Learning Environment**

The University e-learning Strategy is based on the Vision, Values and Strategic Themes set out in the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015. Working within this remit, MSc Criminology is committed to student success, innovation and enterprise, global reach and strong local impact. The Criminology team is committed to the following values:

a. **Inspiring** We share our values and ideas with passion, energy and commitment, supporting all to achieve their potential.

b. **Creative** We stimulate innovation, imagination and discovery, generating challenging and original ideas.

c. **Enterprising** We identify and maximise opportunities using our resources widely and building on our strengths.

d. **Purposeful** We are clear as to our shared plan and are committed to delivering this efficiently and effectively

e. **Respectful** We are inclusive, supportive and ethical in our behaviours and actions, actively valuing diversity.

f. **Professional** We expect and uphold high standards, leading by example with integrity and responsibility

These values underpin three graduate attributes - enterprise, digital literacy, global outlook - that have been defined for Leeds Beckett University graduates. The e-learning strategy implementation will support all three graduate attributes and will make a significant contribution to Digital Literacy.

All staff currently put their module handbooks on My Beckett; the handbook will include details of each lecture / seminar, the recommended reading, assignment details and submission dates, staff contact details and assessment criteria. In addition all staff will put their PowerPoint lecture slides and notes on the My Beckett site.
All My Beckett modules adhere to online submission of assignments via Turnitin. All staff communicate with students via the University’s email system.

Use of Blended-Learning

Not Applicable

Assessment Strategy

The Course’s Assessment strategy is consistent with the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTA) 2011-2015. Practices of learning and teaching are central to what the Criminology degree does. The Course team applies the LTA strategy by focusing on the need to prepare students with the skills and knowledge required to be an effective and successful student of MSc Criminology. A progressive approach is used so that knowledge, skills and critical thinking are developed within and across each module. Students on the course also engage in formative activity as encouraged by the University’s LTA strategy. Some of this takes the form of specific tasks, which are Tutor assessed, but in addition, a great deal of informal feedback is provided because of the teaching approaches used, in particular seminar discussions, one-to-one meetings and email responses to students’ questions. The individual supervisor support provided in the Dissertation includes a very significant element of formative feedback. Assessment has been designed holistically across the curriculum. It fully adheres to and is informed by the course level assessment strategy set out in the University’s Postgraduate Principles (pg12):

https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staff/files/Postgraduate_course_development_principles.pdf

Through our approaches to student support and to learning and teaching we aim to place our students at the heart of everything we do. Students a number of different methods of assessment and we attach considerable importance in providing students with detailed feedback on their assessments that will be helpful for their future learning and practice. These assessments match the learning objectives at a postgraduate level and provide students with the appropriate key skills - including communication, numeracy, problem solving, leadership and employability - to allow them to be enterprising and successful in the careers they choose.

Types of assessment include: research exercises, student presentations, e-portfolios, traditional essays/assignments, research proposals and an Independent Project consisting of a Dissertation and a critical literature review. Formative and summative assessments deadlines are sensibly spaced across the course to avoid a practice known as ‘bunching’ in which three deadlines might occur simultaneously, often on one day. An MSc Criminology Assessment Schedule and Map has been devised by the Course Leader to avoid this practice of bunching. All module leaders on the degree arrange their assessment deadlines via the Course Leader in conjunction with the School Secretary who then schedules this dates over an agreed period of time (usually four weeks). The schedule and map are available in the MSc Criminology Course Document.
There is a great deal of synergy between the assessments on this degree course. This synergy is most apparent in the Dissertation Workshops and Understanding the Sex Industry; both modules utilise research exercises as a form of assessment (within the same semester) and students are able to apply what they have learned across two modules. This deep-learning also allows the students to develop their MSc dissertations to an advanced level.

Each module handbook provides detailed assessment criteria and student contact details; students are encouraged to contact staff to arrange a meeting to discuss any issues a student may have with a particular piece of assessment; extra tutorials are also provided for new assessment methods. For example, additional workshops are provided to support students writing the first chapter of the MSc Dissertation. We also encourage students to attend timetabled classes at Skills for Learning at Leeds Beckett University if they require extra tuition in (for example) referencing, presentations and essay writing.

**Feedback on Assessed Coursework**

Feedback on assignments is important and should serve as a useful learning exercise from which a student can go on and develop their research and learning skills. Feedback is provided chiefly by comments written by the tutor on assessed work; the External Examiner has commended the team on the extent and quality of the written feedback at MSc level. These comments are then discussed with individual students either via email, or in a one-to-one meeting with the Module Leader or Course Leader. Grades and feedback are always posted on My Beckett (via Student ID numbers) in compliance with the University policy of providing feedback within 4 weeks of submission. Prior to assessment, seminars are used to discuss all forms of assessment; extra support is provided for new forms of assessment.

All students are encouraged to consult their module tutor if they are unsure about anything relating to the assessment or the grade they have been awarded; in this way formative feedback can feed into summative assessment. Because of the design of the course and the assessment strategy used, tutors can be confident that the feedback provided for a module can inform student’s work in another module.

In addition, all module handbooks, have a page entitled ‘Feedback’ that explains to students the significance of feedback, what it means and, for advice on how to make the best of the feedback they receive students are directed to the Feedback Pack; [https://my.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/institution/Announcement%20Attachments/Feedback%20Pack.pdf](https://my.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/institution/Announcement%20Attachments/Feedback%20Pack.pdf)
Module Assessment Methods

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<th>Research Project</th>
<th>Research Proposal</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Out of control? Critical perspectives on global crime, risk and insecurity, level 7</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engendering Criminology, level 7</td>
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<td>War, Crime and Violence, level 7</td>
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</table>

NB - All option modules are indicative.

Employability and Professional Context

One of the key external drivers for change has been the increased focus on issues associated with employability. According to the recent Government report, ‘Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy’ (2009) one of the challenges set by the Government that Universities are expected to address is, ‘raising the level of employability of our graduates by ensuring that they have the important generic skills in team-working, reasoning and communicating that are required for many modern careers’ (2009.P.40). In addition, according to the a study commissioned by the British Library and Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) into postgraduate education in 2010, the postgraduate sector has increased by 12% since 2002-03, with the biggest growth area in masters’ degrees by 27%.

The reasons for this growth in postgraduate education, according to Million+ (2010), ‘A Postgraduate Strategy for Britain’ is that a postgraduate education allows individuals to undertake a career change, provides opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge base, update skills and career paths and improve future employment prospects.

The MSc Course team, is keenly aware of the personal motivations and ambitions of each of the students who join the course; staff place a great deal of emphasis on teaching and assessing crucial transferable skills such as problem solving, written communication, self-management, initiative and critical thinking in each module undertaken by a student on the course. Moreover, the criminology team has an extensive range of contacts who work in criminal justice agencies and charitable organisations both locally and nationally (see section 28 to 32 of the CAT). Our past graduates on MSc Criminology have gone on to work in the following occupations/companies/organisations:
Wakefield Youth Offending Team
National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse
The Samaritans
Manchester Youth Offending Team

Our graduates have successfully obtained a range of positions within the criminal justice system including Regional Manager (National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse), Arrest Referral Officer (Wakefield Youth Offending Team), Special Constable (South Yorkshire Police) and Psychology Assistant (Secure Training Centre). Past graduates have also volunteered on the helpline for Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds (SARSL), as Listeners for The Samaritans in Bradford and also as Mentors at Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). Many of our graduates have also volunteered for Youth offending Teams in West Yorkshire and also the North-East.

These links are invaluable for informing the currency of the course; the Criminology team have invited a range of guest speakers and practitioners to contribute to learning and teaching on the degree programme. Recent guest speakers have included Circles of Accountability and Support (CoSA) who delivered a lecture-seminar on preventing sexual reoffending. Practitioners have also joined us from Victim Support, local domestic violence charities and the Howard League for Penal Reform. This rich seam of contacts has ensured that when our MSc Criminology students embark on their 15,000 word dissertations, they feel informed about policy changes, legislation and current practice; they also have first-hand contacts if they wish to complete empirical research, volunteer or pursue a career within criminal justice. Professor Colin Webster, who teaches the module Race, Ethnicity and Justice at MSc Level is consultant to the Youth Justice Board on their risk assessment strategy; consequently our students have direct knowledge of the challenges and innovations within the youth justice policy arena.

MSc Criminology students are signposted to a variety of volunteering opportunities available through the students union and the volunteering and partnerships offices which enable them to gain further work related learning and employability skills. Our students also have access to the careers service and online employability resources (EROL) which help to prepare them for job applications and interviews and critically evaluate their employment prospects and identify potential opportunities. The course team is supported by the Practice Learning and Employability Unit (PLEU) and the careers service to ensure that students are prepared for volunteering and Work-related Learning (WRL) experiences. A dedicated team of PLEU placement officers work with the course team and students to identify potential volunteering opportunities.
The Student Employability and Progression Centre provide a range of resources to support student employability. These can be found principally through:

- The Employability and Progression website which can be accessed via the Student Hub pages on [http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/employability.htm](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/employability.htm) via the A-Z a range of topics are covered such as Career Planning, CVs and Applications, Interviews and Assessment Centres, Graduate Employment and Volunteering Opportunities.
- ERoL (Employability Resources On-Line) in MyBeckett. These complement the above resources and include sections on self-development, job hunting, CVs, Applications, Interviews and Managing Change. Under ‘My Resources’ there is a Knowledge Hub which includes employer video clips, audio podcasts and written tutorial materials on these topics.
- On-line Futures Workbooks. [http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/futures-workbooks.htm](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/futures-workbooks.htm) - they take the students on a career journey from making career choices, researching careers, volunteering, applying for work experience and jobs, psychometric tests, assessment centres and interviews.
- Additionally an overview of jobs overseas, visa requirements and vacancies are provided via Going Global which can be found on the Employability and Progression website under Graduate Employment/International Jobs.
- Learning Objects are available to support academic staff in the delivery of employability.

For staff there is a full range of resources available to support Employability accessed via: [https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staff/employability-resources.htm](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staff/employability-resources.htm)

**Work-Related Activities**

**Placement or Work-Related Activity Level:** Not applicable.

**Placement or Work-Related Activity Length in Weeks:** Not applicable.

**Type of Placement or Work-Related Activity:** Not applicable.

**Reference Points used in course design and delivery**

All our courses leading to Leeds Beckett University awards have been designed and approved in accordance with UK and European quality standards. Our courses utilise the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and relevant subject benchmarks (where these are available) and professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements (for professionally accredited courses).

We review our courses annually and periodically, responding to student feedback and a range of information to enhance our courses. Our University is also subject to external review by the Quality Assurance Agency. Our latest report can be found on the QAA website at [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports)
We appoint External Examiners to verify that our University sets and maintains standards for awards which adhere to relevant national subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ (UK), ensure standards and student achievements are comparable with other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, with which they are familiar, and ensure that assessments measure achievement of course and module learning outcomes and reach the required standard. External Examiners may also provide feedback on areas of good practice or potential enhancement.

**Academic Principles and Regulations**

In July 2012, the MSc Criminology course leader requested a minor modification to the degree programme to ensure that postgraduate students may be conferred a pass, merit or distinction as part of their degree. In the years 2007 to 2011/12, MSc Criminology (CRIMI) students could only obtain a pass award on this degree programme. The criteria for the merit and distinction awards is outlined in regulations C4.5.

Further information about academic regulations can be found at the following link: [http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/academic-regulations/](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/academic-regulations/)

**Student Support Network**

If you have a question or a problem relating to your course, your Course Administrator is there to help you. Course Administrators works closely with academic staff and can make referrals to teaching staff or to specialist professional services as appropriate. They can give you a confirmation of attendance letter, and a transcript. You may also like to contact your Course Rep or the Students’ Union Advice team for additional support with course-related questions.

If you have any questions about life at our University in general, call into or contact the Student Hub on either campus to speak to our Student Experience Team. This team, consisting of recent graduates and permanent staff, are available to support you throughout your time here. They will make sure you have access to and are aware of the support, specialist services, and opportunities our University provides. There is a Student Hub on the ground floor of the Rose Bowl at City Campus and one in Campus Central at Headingley. You can also find the team in the Gateway in the Leslie Silver Building at City Campus. The telephone number is 0113 812 3000, and the e-mail address is StudentHub@leedsbeckett.ac.uk.

Within MyBeckett you will see two tabs (Support and Opportunities) where you can find online information and resources for yourselves. The **Support** tab gives you access to details of services available to give you academic and personal support. These include Library Services, the Students’ Union, Money advice, Disability advice and support, Wellbeing, International Student Services and Accommodation. There is also an A-Z of Support Services, and access to online appointments/registration.

The **Opportunities** tab is the place to explore the options you have for jobs, work placements, volunteering, and a wide range of other opportunities. For example, you can find out here how to get help with your CV, prepare for an interview, get a part-time job or voluntary role, take part in an international project, or join societies closer to home.