

Course Information Document: Undergraduate

For Academic Year 2025/26

1. Course Summary

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| Names of programme and award title(s) | BSc (Hons) Forensic Biology BSc (Hons) Forensic Biology with International Year (see Annex for details) BSc (Hons) Forensic Biology with Work Placement Year (see Annex for details) |
| Award type | Single Honours |
| Mode of study | Full-time |
| Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award | Level 6 |
| Normal length of the programme | 3 years; 4 years with either the International Year or Placement Year between years 2 and 3 |
| Maximum period of registration | The normal length as specified above plus 3 years |
| Location of study | Keele Campus |
| Accreditation (if applicable) | Accreditation will be sought from the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences and the Royal Society of Biology upon completion of a full degree cycle. See also the section on accreditation. |
| Regulator | Office for Students (OfS) |
| Tuition Fees | <p>UK students:</p> <p>Fee for 2025/26 is £9,535*</p> <p>International students:</p> <p>Fee for 2025/26 is £17,700**</p> <p>The fee for the international year abroad is calculated at 15% of the standard year fee</p> <p>The fee for the work placement year is calculated at 20% of the standard year fee</p> |

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* These fees are regulated by Government. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study in response to changes in government policy and/or changes to the law. If permitted by such change in policy or law, we may increase your fees by an inflationary amount or such other measure as required by government policy or the law. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

** These fees are for new students. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further

2. What is a Single Honours programme?

The Single Honours programme described in this document allows you to focus more or less exclusively on this subject. In keeping with Keele's commitment to breadth in the curriculum, the programme also gives you the opportunity to take some modules in other disciplines and in modern foreign languages as part of a 360-credit Honours degree. Thus it enables you to gain, and be able to demonstrate, a distinctive range of graduate attributes.

3. Overview of the Programme

Forensic Biology is at the interface of forensic and biological sciences, drawing skills, concepts and ideas from both subjects to provide graduates with broad experience of both disciplines. In the first and second year, the core fundamentals of the subject, including forensic identification, investigation and analysis, forensic biology, anatomy, physiology and genetics are put into practice through regular practical sessions and activities. This is enhanced by knowledge of forensic chemistry, toxicology and analytical science, anthropology and taphonomy, and crime scene investigation. Optional modules will enable you to tailor your experience to your interests and future career needs and deepen your understanding of key topics such as genetics, wildlife crime and a broader range of evidence types and investigative skills. The course emphasizes professional practice enabling you to understand the diverse roles in which forensic biology knowledge is applied such as crime scene investigator or expert witness in the court. This includes certifications in expert witness training. You will undertake a range of practical work in our state-of-the-art laboratories and teaching facilities, linking your understanding of key theories and ideas to the practical skills in gathering, processing and evaluating evidence. Key to this will be the use of analytical instruments commonly used in research, simulated indoor crime scenes in a range of authentic settings, outdoor search and recovery scenes including vehicle investigations, and obtaining a practical endorsement in bioscience laboratory skills. Forensic science and biology skills development and graduate attributes are embedded throughout the course, which include a wide range of transferrable skills and research skills via the independent research project that all students undertake in the final year of the programme.

Your final year is highlighted by a yearlong Forensic Biology research project in which you will plan and carrying out a year-long original research project in your area of interest, which will advance knowledge and tackle a new question or problem of interest in the subject area. This will allow you to focus and fully immerse yourself in the subject, develop your skills of scientific inquiry and communication and explore the world of research.

4. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are informed by the QAA Benchmark Statement for Forensic Science, the requirements of the [Chartered Society of Forensic Science](#) and the [Royal Society of Biology](#) for accreditation and to embed Keele [curriculum expectations and graduate attributes](#), which are under the following generic categories:

Academic Knowledge and expertise

- engender and develop an enthusiasm for forensic biology and provide an intellectually stimulating and beneficial learning experience
- enable development of a deep academic **subject knowledge** and experience of **interdisciplinary experience** and techniques relevant to forensic biology
- foster **critical thinking**, awareness of and engagement with current forensic science and biology methods and techniques, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline

Professional skills

- develop practical, analytical, **problem-solving** and **numeracy and data literacy** skills, exploring new approaches to solving problems, within forensic science and biology, to Degree level
- develop **digital readiness**, literate, written and oral reporting skills to a level appropriate to the professional forensic biologist and the ability to convey scientific outcomes to non-scientists
- engender a sound understanding of continuity of evidence and how the forensic crime scene, the laboratory and the court contribute to the forensic and legal process
- **research skills** of devising, planning, executing and reporting on an original investigation or research project within the discipline, both as an individual and as part of a team
- **reflective practice** and **career management**

Personal effectiveness

- develop **leadership**, **communication** and **time management** skills, **collaborate** as part of a team,
- become **adaptable**, **resilient**, **self-aware** and **empathetic** of others

Social and ethical responsibility

- recognise and respect **equality, diversity and inclusion**, acting **ethically** with **integrity and respect**
- developing **sustainability** knowledge and skills and aware of **global issues** and challenges.

5. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the principles of biology, physiology, anatomy, forensic biology, analytical science, forensic chemistry, anthropology and taphonomy, crime scene investigation.
- selected topics in biology, forensic biology and forensic anthropology and possess competence in applying these principles to appropriate areas of the discipline.
- a wide range of instrumental and other techniques relevant to forensic science and use them competently to analyse a range of relevant materials and with regard to quality assurance issues
- problem-solving within forensic science and biology by drawing on their scientific understanding and knowledge, and experience of experimental techniques
- an awareness of and engagement with current methods and techniques within forensic science and biology, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline
- the place of forensic science within the legal framework and the role of the expert witness in court
- the research literature across forensic biology, use it to advance their understanding and apply it in practice
- the legal and ethical issues which constrain the practice of the professional forensic scientist

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- execute practical work and critically analyse the results from experiments or investigations and draw valid conclusions.
- interpret and evaluate the significance of the results of a forensic investigation in the context of the circumstances of the crime, using appropriate statistical tools
- prepare a written statement of expert testimony and defend it under cross-examination in a court setting
- research, devise, plan, execute and report on an original investigation or research project within the discipline, both as an individual and as part of a team
- work safely in the laboratory and manage risk assessments and other practices in a competent fashion.
- select and utilise appropriate software, databases and other digital resources for the analysis and interpretation of instrumental and other laboratory data

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- solve familiar, unfamiliar and complex problems with self-direction and originality, by clearly formulating the problem, identifying the key issues and generating different approaches to its solution
- analyse, synthesise and summarise data and information critically and appreciate its limitations
- assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and strategies
- make critical judgements by acquiring a range of evidence and information then formulating and testing hypotheses
- present complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner, both orally, in writing and by other means and to interact and communicate effectively within a wide range of professional environments, including to non-scientific audiences
- work both independently and as part of a team, to plan, organise and perform work efficiently and conscientiously in a timely way, and meet appropriate deadlines
- take responsibility for their own learning and develop a habit of critical reflection upon that learning
- utilise a wide range of ICT skills, including the use of databases, software packages and modern methods of communication
- work within an ethical framework and according to ethical, honest and acceptable practices
- develop confidence in their own understanding and skills as well as a self-critical attitude to their own work and achievements

- develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study, work and work-life balance
- identify and work towards targets for ongoing professional development

Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical responsibility**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

6. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

- Lectures, including those from guest speakers from the profession
- Digital material, including short videos and recorded lectures
- Tutorials
- Practical laboratory classes
- Practical simulated crime scene examination (indoor and outdoor)
- Problem-based learning (PBL) classes
- Oral presentations
- Poster presentations
- Presentation and cross-examination in a mock court setting or online
- Mini-projects
- Group/ teamwork Independent project work
- Literature research tasks
- Expert witness statement preparation
- Case studies
- Workshops
- Directed reading Independent study
- Use of e-learning/the Keele Learning Environment (KLE) (Blackboard) and MS Teams

The lectures (in-person and digital asynchronous) describe, explain and map out the academic content of modules as well as engendering and developing an enthusiasm for biology and forensic sciences. Through examples and case studies discussed in the lectures, students develop critical skills in reviewing ideas, principles and applications. Informal tutorials provide occasional small group support to material discussed in lectures and problem classes have a dual role, firstly in enabling students to apply theoretical ideas to new problems and secondly, to allow the tutor to provide formative feedback on the students' learning during these activities.

Forensic biology is a laboratory-based discipline and practical work is closely tied to the lectures, thus enabling students to gain competence and confidence in the investigation and analysis of forensic evidence, using laboratory instrumentation as well as developing a critical awareness of the range of techniques available, their capabilities and limitations. Students working in the laboratory quickly gain an understanding of health and safety issues, manage risk assessments, maintaining accurate and informative laboratory notes and working with others in a safe and productive fashion. In a similar way, through small-group, tutor-guided exercises and team-led investigations in indoor and outdoor simulated crime scenes, students apply the principles and procedures of crime scene investigation to novel incidents, develop practical skills and learn how to implement a forensic strategy and ensure a rigorous chain of custody.

In working with laboratory data, students develop skills and confidence in data analysis, the use of software tools and databases and in communicating the outcomes of such work in the form of reports, oral presentations and as conference posters. They will also develop skills in working within small groups of various sizes in laboratory mini-projects, team work and fieldwork exercises.

In preparing expert witness statements and through the presentation and cross-examination within the mock court, students develop understanding of the place of the forensic and investigative sciences within the legal framework, the role of the expert witness in court and some of the legal and ethical issues which constrain the practice of the professional forensic scientist.

By engaging in literature research tasks and through directed reading, students will advance their own understanding of the discipline, develop critical abilities, appreciate the limitations of information and assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and strategies. Through working on all assignments, students will develop organisational skills, efficient working practices and the ability to meet appropriate deadlines.

Through project work, students will research, devise, plan, execute and report on an original investigation within the discipline either as an individual or as part of a team. They will work safely in the laboratory and engage in ethical, honest and acceptable practices throughout. At level 6 the forensic biology research project focuses on developing these skills within the context of the research aims.

Throughout the programme students will undertake independent study that will require them to develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study, work and work-life balance. They will need to work towards identified targets for their own academic development, take responsibility for their own learning and thereby develop confidence in their own understanding and acquire a self-critical attitude to their own work and achievements. Consequently each student will develop practices which will enable them to engage with ongoing professional development throughout their careers.

All staff use the Keele Learning Environment and/or MS Teams to post learning resources for the modules on which they teach; these include lecture notes, recorded lectures and screencasts, module and laboratory handbooks, problem sheets, past exam papers, web- links to external resources, assignment briefs, assignment feedback and in some cases quizzes. Staff also use the KLE for electronic submission of work, marking and feedback and MS Teams to hold online tutorials, lectures and problem classes.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Academic Mentors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways.

7. Teaching Staff

Teaching on the Forensic Biology programme is split between staff in Life Sciences and staff in Forensic Science.

in Life Sciences, you will meet a diverse range of staff, all are active in research or scholarship. For information on the research interests and qualifications of staff from the School of Life Sciences, please see the school web page at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/lifesci/people/>

The Forensic Science academic staff have expertise and interests across the full spectrum of forensic science or related disciplines. All staff are active in research or scholarship and details can be found on the school web page at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/scps/forensicscience/ourpeople/>

There are a number of additional guest lecturers from the profession who contribute either a single or a short series of lectures, workshops or practical classes across the programme in topics such as crime scene examination and forensic toxicology. A strength of the programme lies in our specialist forensic science practitioners who bring their wealth of real-world experience and case work to the teaching of Forensic Science.

Many current teaching staff hold or are working towards an accredited Higher Education Teaching qualification and many are Fellows (FHEA) or Senior Fellows (SFHEA) of the Higher Education Academy, the professional body for teachers in Higher Education. Our staff regularly make scholarly contributions to national education conferences, journals and books, as well as attract funding for teaching innovation projects, on topics spanning authentic assessment, embedding technology in teaching, team-based and active learning, gamification and induction to HE, among others. Several of the teaching staff have established a national reputation for excellence in teaching and learning and have been recognised for their innovation in teaching through national teaching awards, for example:

- RSC Team Prize for Excellence in Higher Education
- AdvanceHE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

8. What is the structure of the Programme?

The academic year runs from September to June and is divided into two semesters. The number of weeks of teaching will vary from programme to programme, but you can generally expect to attend scheduled teaching sessions between the end of September and mid-December, and from mid-January to the end of April. Our degree courses are organised into modules. Each module is usually a self-contained unit of study and each is usually assessed separately with the award of credits on the basis of 1 credit = 10 hours of student effort. An outline of the structure of the programme is provided in the tables below.

There are two types of module delivered as part of your programme. They are:

- Compulsory modules - a module that you are required to study on this course;
- Optional modules - these allow you some limited choice of what to study from a list of modules.

Global Challenge Pathways

This programme includes the option for you to take a Global Challenge Pathway. These modules offer you an exciting opportunity to work with students and staff from different disciplines to explore topical global issues such as power and conflict, health inequalities, climate change, generative AI, social justice, global citizenship, and enterprise from different perspectives.

Global Challenge Pathways can be taken as one 15-credit module at Levels 5 and 6. For more information about our Global Challenge Pathways please visit:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/globalchallengepathways/>

Modern Languages or Certificate in TESOL

Alternatively, you could choose to study modules with the University Language Centre. The Language Centre offers three pathways; The Language Specialist, The Language Taster, and The Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL). Language Centre modules are available separately for students at Level 4. At Levels 5 and 6 they are included within the Global Challenge Pathways.

If you choose the Language Specialist pathway, you will automatically be enrolled on a Semester 2 Modern Language module as a continuation of your language of choice as a faculty funded 'additional' module. Undertaking a Modern Languages module in Semester 2 is compulsory if you wish to continue to the Language Specialist Global Challenge Pathway the following academic year.

For more information about Language Centre option modules available to you please visit the following webpages.

For new (Level 4) students please visit: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/languagecentre/>

For current (Level 5 and Level 6) students please visit: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/global-challenge-pathways/>

For further information on the content of modules currently offered, please visit:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/recordsandexams/modulecatalogue/>

A summary of the credit requirements per year is as follows.

| Year | Compulsory | Optional | |
|---------|------------|----------|-----|
| | | Min | Max |
| Level 4 | 120 | 0 | 0 |
| Level 5 | 90 | 30 | 30 |
| Level 6 | 90 | 30 | 30 |

Module Lists

Level 4

| Compulsory modules | Module Code | Credits | Period |
|---|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Forensic Chemistry: Molecules under Investigation | FSC-10013 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Forensic Investigation: From Documents to DNA | FSC-10019 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Human Physiology and Anatomy | LSC-10101 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Practical and Academic Skills in Bioscience | LSC-10103 | 0 | Semester 1-2 |
| Cells, Genetics and Evolution | LSC-10107 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |

Level 4 Module Rules

LSC-10103: Practical and Academic Skills in Bioscience is a compulsory zero-credit module. All laboratory work across this level of study will be coordinated through this module and assessed within other credit-bearing modules across the year, where appropriate. This module will also develop wider academic skills and includes additional academic support and development material to enhance your overall student experience and develop key employability skills. The module will be passed via attendance to a minimum threshold of taught laboratory sessions and successful completion of a competency skills audit.

Level 5

| Compulsory modules | Module Code | Credits | Period |
|--|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Forensic Genetics: DNA and Crime | FSC-20035 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Applications of Molecular Biology | LSC-20131 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Forensic Anthropology: Decomposition and Skeletal Analysis | FSC-20033 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Drugs of Abuse | FSC-20009 | 15 | Semester 2 |
| Crime Scenes: Blood, Marks and Prints | FSC-20031 | 15 | Semester 2 |

| Optional modules | Module Code | Credits | Period |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Counterfeits, Fakes and Forgeries | FSC-20011 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Human Genetics | LSC-20050 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Flexible Work Placement (Level 5) | NAT-20011 | 15 | Semester 1-2 |
| Nutrition and Health | LSC-20123 | 15 | Semester 2 |
| Molecular Ecology and Plant Genetics | LSC-20125 | 15 | Semester 2 |

Level 5 Module Rules

Please note: You cannot take both Flexible Work Placement (Level 5) and Flexible Work Placement (Level 6)

Level 6

| Compulsory modules | Module Code | Credits | Period |
|---|-------------|---------|--------------|
| Topics in Forensic Biology | FSC-30061 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Forensic Biology Research Project | FSC-30047 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Crime Scene to Court | FSC-30049 | 30 | Semester 1-2 |
| Forensic Toxicology: Ingestion to Detection | FSC-30039 | 15 | Semester 2 |

| Optional modules | Module Code | Credits | Period |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| Marks and Traces Examination | FSC-30053 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Conservation Biology | LSC-30043 | 15 | Semester 1 |
| Flexible Work Placement (Level 6) | NAT-30008 | 15 | Semester 1-2 |
| Professional Experience in Education | NAT-30012 | 15 | Semester 1-2 |
| Environmental and Wildlife Forensics | FSC-30029 | 15 | Semester 2 |
| Animal Welfare | LSC-30072 | 15 | Semester 2 |

Level 6 Module Rules

Please note: You cannot take both Flexible Work Placement (Level 5) and Flexible Work Placement (Level 6). You also cannot take both Flexible Work Placement (Level 6) and Professional Experience in Education.

9. Final and intermediate awards

Credits required for each level of academic award are as follows:

| | | |
|--|-------------|---|
| Honours Degree | | You will require at least 120 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 |
| BSc (Hons) Forensic Biology | 360 credits | You must accumulate at least 270 credits in your main subject (out of 360 credits overall), with at least 90 credits in each of the three years of study, to graduate with a named single honours degree in this subject. |
| Diploma in Higher Education | 240 credits | You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher and at least 120 credits at level 5 or higher |
| Certificate in Higher Education | 120 credits | You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher |

International Year option: in addition to the above students must pass a module covering the international year in order to graduate with a named degree including the 'international year' wording. Students who do not complete, or fail the international year, will be transferred to the three-year version of the programme.

Work Placement Year option: in addition to the above students must pass a non-credit bearing module covering the work placement year in order to graduate with a named degree including the 'with Work Placement Year' wording. Students who do not complete, or fail the work placement year, will be transferred to the three-year version of the programme.

10. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of

knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- **Class tests** assess the understanding of concepts and the application of theories to solve familiar and unfamiliar problems. They also allow students to experience time-constrained assessment as well as acting to provide feedback on their progress
- **End of module examinations, open book assessments and case work portfolios** test the ability of the student to describe, explain, and critically discuss the principles of biology and forensic science, and to demonstrate competence in applying these principles to applications and to solve problems from appropriate areas of the disciplines
- **Problems sheets and data analysis exercises** assess the student's skills in solving numerical and other problems by drawing on their scientific understanding and knowledge, and experience of experimental techniques
- **Group/Team Scenarios** - students work in teams or groups to investigate scenarios and case studies, simulating the role of teamwork in the real world work of Forensic Biology analysts.

Throughout the extensive laboratory and other practical work in this programme, many types of assessment are utilised to achieve the learning outcomes.

- **Laboratory portfolios** are used to communicate the results of work accurately and reliably and to encourage good working practice, including managing risk assessments and following safe working practices. Together with laboratory proformas, they allow students to demonstrate their skills in the critical analysis and interpretation of data, test the uncertainty in knowledge and show the ability to draw valid conclusions from their work
- **Laboratory reports** communicate the execution of practical work, the ability to describe the results of work accurately and reliably, with structured and coherent arguments and to enable students to evaluate the outcomes of data analysis in a critical fashion
- **Court expert witness statements** enable students to prepare a written statement of expert testimony and to understand the place of forensic science within the legal framework and the role of the expert witness in court. These reports test the student's ability to interpret and evaluate the significance of the results of a forensic investigation in the context of the circumstances of the crime, using appropriate statistical tools
- **Oral presentations, digital presentations and poster presentations** demonstrate the ability of the student to present complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner, to interact and communicate effectively to a wide range of professional environments, including to both scientific and non-scientific audiences
- **Crime scene investigation and strategic forensic reports** enable students to apply the principles and procedures for crime scene investigation to a scenario, to critically review data and outcomes in light of the chain of custody for evidence and the appropriate forensic strategy, to make critical judgments and to present in a clear and concise manner
- **Essays** and the production of **technical leaflets** enable students to analyse, synthesise and summarise data and information critically, to appreciate its limitations, to assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and strategies and to present, in writing, complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner
- **Dissertation and research paper / literature / critical reviews** enable the student to demonstrate their effective engagement with the research literature across forensic biology and use it to advance their understanding. In this way, the assessment may test their awareness of, and engagement with, current methods and techniques, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline. The assessment enables the student to present complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner in writing, and to communicate effectively to a wide range of scientific and professional environments
- **Project plans, project presentations and examinations** test the student's skills in working both independently and as part of a team, in planning, organising and carrying out practical and other work efficiently, including making appropriate ethical assessments, and meeting appropriate deadlines
- **Project reports** demonstrate how the student has taken responsibility for their own learning, has critically assessed a wide range of techniques and methodologies relevant to the forensic and analytical sciences and used them competently to analyse relevant materials and has selected and utilised appropriate software, databases and other digital resources for the analysis and interpretation of laboratory data. The report also tests the student's achievement in presenting complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner in writing and communicating effectively to a scientific audience
- **Presentation and cross-examination** assessments test the student's ability to interpret and evaluate the significance of the results of a forensic investigation in the context of the circumstances of the crime, to demonstrate their understanding of the place of forensic science within the legal framework and the role of the expert witness in court and test their ability to defend a written witness statement under cross-examination in a court setting

Through working on a diverse range of assessments, linked to a curriculum that is in its latter stages closely

based around the professional forensic science context, the student will demonstrate confidence in their own understanding and skills as well as a self-critical attitude to their own work and achievements, an adaptable and flexible approach to study, work and work-life balance and the ability to identify and work towards targets for ongoing professional development.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

Although there are some explicit formal exercises providing formative assessment throughout the programme, the majority of formative assessment and feedback is generated informally through a variety of tutor-led activities. For example:

- Tutor-led comments on the work in the laboratory notebook or on calculations encountered in data analysis during laboratory classes
- Tutor feedback and advice on calculations undertaken during problems classes
- Tutor-led discussions on project plans, literature reviews and project results during viva interviews
- Written formative feedback on non-summative laboratory work
- Written formative feedback provided from the tutor reading a draft of a major piece of work such as the dissertation or a project report

11. Contact Time and Expected Workload

This contact time measure is intended to provide you with an indication of the type of activity you are likely to undertake during this programme. The data is compiled based on module choices and learning patterns of students on similar programmes in previous years. Every effort is made to ensure this data is a realistic representation of what you are likely to experience, but changes to programmes, teaching methods and assessment methods mean this data is representative and not specific.

Undergraduate courses at Keele contain an element of module choice; therefore, individual students will experience a different mix of contact time and assessment types dependent upon their own individual choice of modules. The figures below are an example of activities that a student may expect on your chosen course by year stage of study. Contact time includes scheduled activities such as: lecture, seminar, tutorial, project supervision, demonstration, practical classes and labs, supervised time in labs/workshop, fieldwork and external visits. The figures are based on 1,200 hours of student effort each year for full-time students.

Activity

| | Scheduled learning and teaching activities | Guided independent Study | Placements |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Year 1 (Level 4) | 40.5% | 59.5% | 0% |
| Year 2 (Level 5) | 31.8% | 68.2% | 0% |
| Year 3 (Level 6) | 31.7% | 68.3% | 0% |

12. Accreditation

Accreditation for this programme will be sought from the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences and the Royal Society of Biology upon completion of a full degree cycle. This is a requirement of the Societies.

13. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

14. Other Learning Opportunities

Study Abroad (International Year)

A summary of the International Year, which is a potential option for students after completion of year 2 (Level 5), is provided in the Annex for the International Year.

Natural Sciences Placement Year

Students have the opportunity to apply directly for the 4-year 'with Work Placement Year' degree programme or to transfer onto the 4-year degree programme at the end of Year-1 and in Year-2 at the end of Semester 1. Students who are initially registered for the 4-year degree programme may transfer onto the 3-year degree programme at any point in time, prior to undertaking their year-long placement.

To undertake the Faculty of Natural Sciences Placement Year, it is normally required that students must have achieved an average of 50% across all modules in Semester 1 at Level 5. Places on the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year are then conditional on achieving an average mark of 50% across all Level 5 modules.

Students with up to 15 credits of re-assessment who meet the 50% requirement may progress to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year. Where no Semester 1 marks have been awarded performance in 1st year marks and ongoing 2nd year assessments are taken into account.

Alternatively, students may be accepted with lower grades on the discretion of the School/Faculty following an interview with the School Placements and Projects Manager, and Schools' Academic Placement Link

International students who require a Tier 4 visa must check with the Immigration Compliance Team prior to commencing any form of placement.

A summary of the Work Placement Year, which is a potential option for students after completion of year 2 (Level 5), is provided in the Annex for the Work Placement Year.

15. Additional Costs

| Activity | Estimated Cost |
|--|----------------|
| Equipment - All PPE equipment (laboratory coats and glasses) are provided by the School at no cost to the student. Students will be required to have two laboratory notebooks, these are provided at no cost to the student in the induction session and can be used for multiple modules/years. Replacement items are available from the School Stores, the 2024/25 price for these are listed below: Laboratory Book - £1.50 Laboratory Glasses - £3.50 Laboratory Coat - £13 Students will be required to supply appropriate writing equipment but this would be a minimal (<£10) cost. All core textbooks are available in the main University Library. To increase the availability of these resources, eBooks are also purchased alongside the printed text where available; these can be accessed through the University Library Catalogue. Additional costs may be incurred if the student wishes to purchase any book for themselves. | £10 |
| Total estimated additional costs | £10 |

These costs have been forecast by the University as accurately as possible but may be subject to change as a result of factors outside of our control (for example, increase in costs for external services). Forecast costs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain representative. Where additional costs are in direct control of the University we will ensure increases do not exceed 5%.

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

16. Annex - International Year

Forensic Biology with International Year

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|------------------------------|
| International Year Programme |
|------------------------------|

Students registered for this Single Honours programme may either be admitted for or apply to transfer during their period of study at Level 5 to the International Year option. Students accepted onto this option will have an extra year of study (the International Year) at an international partner institution after they have completed Year 2 (Level 5) at Keele.

Students who successfully complete both the second year (Level 5) and the International Year will be permitted to progress to Level 6. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in respect of the International Year will normally revert to the standard programme and progress to Level 6 on that basis. The failure will be recorded on the student's final transcript.

Study at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 will be as per the main body of this document. The additional detail contained in this annex will pertain solely to students registered for the International Year option.

International Year Programme Aims

In addition to the programme aims specified in the main body of this document, the international year programme of study aims to provide students with:

1. Personal development as a student and a researcher with an appreciation of the international dimension of their subject
2. Experience of a different culture, academically, professionally and socially

Entry Requirements for the International Year

Students may apply to the 4-year programme during Level 5. Admission to the International Year is subject to successful application, interview and references from appropriate staff.

The criteria to be applied are:

- Academic Performance (an average of 55% across all modules in Semester 1 at Level 5 is normally required. Places on the International Year are then conditional on achieving an average mark of 55% across all Level 5 modules. Students with up to 15 credits of re-assessment who meet the 55% requirement may progress to the International Year. Where no Semester 1 marks have been awarded performance in 1st year marks and ongoing 2nd year assessments are taken into account)
- General Aptitude (to be demonstrated by application for study abroad, interview during the 2nd semester of year 2 (Level 5), and by recommendation of the student's Academic Mentor, 1st and 2nd year tutors and programme director)

Students may not register for both an International Year and a Placement Year.

Student Support

Students will be supported whilst on the International Year via the following methods:

- Phone or Skype conversations with Study Abroad tutor, in line with recommended Academic Mentoring meeting points.
- Support from the University's Global Education Team

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes specified in the main text of the Programme Specification, students who complete a Keele undergraduate programme with International Year will be able to:

1. Describe, discuss and reflect upon the cultural and international differences and similarities of different learning environments
2. Discuss the benefits and challenges of global citizenship and internationalisation
3. Explain how their perspective on their academic discipline has been influenced by locating it within an international setting.
4. Reflect upon the international nature of crime and describe and discuss differences between investigative approaches taken in different countries.
5. Evaluate the merits and limitations of the different approaches taken to investigating crime in different countries.
6. Apply their experiences abroad to the specific graduate attributes associated with their Forensic Science degree.

These learning outcomes will all be assessed by the submission of a satisfactory individual learning agreement, the successful completion of assessments at the partner institution and the submission of the reflective portfolio element of the international year module.

Regulations

Students registered for the International Year are subject to the programme-specific regulations (if any) and the University regulations. In addition, during the International Year, the following regulations will apply:

Students undertaking the International Year must complete 120 credits, which must comprise *at least* 40% in the student's discipline area.

This may impact on your choice of modules to study, for example you will have to choose certain modules to ensure you have the discipline specific credits required.

Students are barred from studying any module with significant overlap to the Level 6 modules they will study on their return. Significant overlap with Level 5 modules previously studied should also be avoided.

Additional costs for the International Year

Tuition fees for students on the International Year will be charged at 15% of the annual tuition fees for that year of study, as set out in Section 1. The International Year can be included in your Student Finance allocation, to find out more about your personal eligibility see: www.gov.uk

Students will have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their destination university, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the destination they are studying at additional costs may include visas, study permits, residence permits, and compulsory health checks. Students should expect the total costs of studying abroad be greater than if they study in the UK, information is made available from the Global Education Team throughout the process, as costs will vary depending on destination.

Students who meet external eligibility criteria may be eligible for grants as part of this programme. Students studying outside of this programme may be eligible income dependent bursaries at Keele.

Students travel on a comprehensive Keele University insurance plan, for which there are currently no additional charges. Some Governments and/or universities require additional compulsory health coverage plans; costs for this will be advised during the application process.

17. Annex - Work Placement Year

Forensic Biology with Work Placement Year

Work Placement Year summary

Students registered for this programme may either be admitted for or apply to transfer during their studies to the 'with Work Placement Year' option (NB: for Combined Honours students the rules relating to the work placement year in the subject where the placement is organised are to be followed). Students accepted onto this programme will have an extra year of study (the Work Placement Year) with a relevant placement provider after they have completed Year 2 (Level 5) at Keele.

Students who successfully complete both the second year (Level 5) and the Work Placement Year will be permitted to progress to Level 6. Students who fail to satisfactorily complete the Work Placement Year will normally revert to the 3-year programme and progress to Level 6 on that basis. The failure will be recorded on the student's final transcript.

Study at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 will be as per the main body of this document. The additional detail contained in this annex will pertain solely to students registered for the Work Placement Year option.

We recommend where possible students undertake a placement of between 9 - 12 months on a full-time basis to maximize academic and personal growth. However, the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year mandates a minimum of 24 weeks in duration, ideally on a full-time basis, but no less than 21 hours per week. This enables those undertaking an unpaid placement to work on a part-time basis alongside their placement.

*Students who require a visa to study in the UK may be able to add in a work placement depending upon the programme and may have to undertake a placement of a longer duration to meet UKVI regulations.

The ability to add a work placement is dependent upon the UK Immigration rules at the time of the request. It may be that for some programmes students will not have the option to request a placement period to be added to their programme before they arrive in the UK and would need to apply for a new visa. There is no guarantee that a placement will be provided and that students who have a visa are subject to a number of restrictions on the type of work, including placements they can undertake.

Work Placement Year Programme Aims

In addition to the programme aims specified in the main body of this document, the Work Placement Year aims to provide students with:

1. the opportunity to carry out a year long work placement in the broad field of forensic science between Years 2 and 3 (Levels 5 and 6) of their degree programme. The module will be underpinned by reflective assessment, employer and tutor evaluation, and support from academic tutors

Entry Requirements for the Work Placement Year

Admission to the Work Placement Year is subject to successful application, interview and references from appropriate staff. Students have the opportunity to apply directly for the 4-year 'with work placement year' degree programme, or to transfer onto the 4-year programme at the end of Year-1 and in Year-2 at the end of Semester 1. Students who are initially registered for the 4-year degree programme may transfer onto the 3-year degree programme at any point in time, prior to undertaking the year-long work placement. Students who fail to pass the work placement year, and those who fail to meet the minimum requirements of the work placement year module, (* or equivalent, work placement), will be automatically transferred onto the 3-year degree programme.

* We recommend where possible students undertake a placement of between 9 - 12 months on a full-time basis to maximize academic and personal growth. However, the Work Placement Year mandates a minimum of 24 weeks in duration, ideally on a full-time basis, but no less than 21 hours per week. This enables those undertaking an unpaid placement to work on a part-time basis alongside.

The criteria to be applied are:

- A good University attendance record and be in 'good academic standing'.
- To undertake the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year, it is normally required that students must have achieved an average of 50% across all modules in Semester 1 at Level 5. Places on the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year are then conditional on achieving an average mark of 50% across all Level 5 modules.
- Students with up to 15 credits of re-assessment who meet the 50% requirement may progress to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work Placement Year. Where no Semester 1 marks have been awarded performance in 1st year marks and ongoing 2nd year assessments are taken into account.
- Alternatively, students may be accepted with lower grades on the discretion of the School/Faculty following an interview with the School Placements and Projects Manager, and Schools' Academic Placement Link.
- Should a placement be unpaid, as part of the formal approval process, the student will be asked to provide assurances regarding how they will support themselves financially. If this is not clear, the placement may not be approved. The student will also be signposted to appropriate funding streams they may have access to.
- Students undertaking work placements will be expected to fully engage with the placement approval process and not begin their placement until authority to start has been granted. Students should also complete any necessary risk assessments required prior to commencing their placement and will be required to complete the online Health and Safety training hosted via Keele Careers Online.
- (*International students only*) Due to visa requirements, it is not possible for international students who require a Tier 4 Visa to apply for direct entry onto the 4-year with Work Placement Year degree programme. Students wishing to transfer onto this programme should discuss this with student support, the academic tutor for the work placement year, and the Programme Lead. Students should be aware that there are visa implications for this transfer, and it is the student's responsibility to complete any and all necessary processes to be eligible for this programme. There may be additional costs, including applying for a new Visa from outside of the UK for international students associated with a transfer to the work placement programme.

Students may not register for both an International Year and a Work Placement Year.

Student Support

Students will be supported whilst on the Work Placement Year via the following methods:

- Regular contact between the student and a named member of staff who will be assigned to the student as their University supervisor. The University supervisor will be in regular contact with the student throughout the year, and be on hand to provide advice (pastoral or academic) and liaise with the Placement supervisor on the student's behalf if required.
- Two formal contacts with the student during the placement year: the University supervisor will visit the student in their placement organization at around 5 weeks after the placement has commenced, and then visit again (or conduct a telephone/video call tutorial) at around 15 weeks into the placement.
- Weekly supervision sessions will take place with the placement supervisor (or his/her nominee) throughout the duration of the placement.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes specified in the main text of the Programme Specification, students who complete the 'with Work Placement Year' option will be able to:

1. apply the forensic science theories and laboratory skills learnt to real situations in the workplace to design, plan and critically evaluate workplace tasks.
2. advance key professional skills in the accurate documentation of information.
3. advance employability skills in the presentation and communication of data/information; the writing of reports; and the ability to work effectively both individually and as part of a team.
4. explain how their perspective on forensic science has been influenced by working in a forensic science workplace.

These learning outcomes will be assessed through the non-credit bearing Work Placement Year module (NAT-30010) which involves:

1. submittal of a reflective diary on the student's placement experience, documenting key activities and reflecting on skills gained from those activities
2. report summarising the background to the work completed, the results obtained, and the methodology used
3. oral presentation on the forensic science work undertaken by the student on their placement year
4. evaluation of student's performance on placement by the work placement host

Regulations

Students registered for the 'with Work Placement Year' option are subject to programme-specific regulations (if any) and the University regulations. In addition, during the Work Placement Year, the following regulations will apply:

- Students undertaking the Work Placement Year must successfully complete the zero-credit rated Work Placement Year module (NAT-30010)
- In order to ensure a high quality placement experience, each placement agency/provider will sign up to a placement learning agreement.
- Once a student has been accepted by a placement organisation, the student will inform their Placements and Projects Manager who will be responsible for the placement approval process, ensuring that the placement meets the work placement year module criteria, and fulfils all health and safety criteria.
- The placement student will also sign up an agreement outlining his/her responsibilities in relation to the requirements of each organisation.

Students will be expected to behave professionally in terms of:

- (i) conforming to the work practices of the organisation; and
- (ii) remembering that they are representatives of the University and their actions will reflect on the School and have an impact on that organisation's willingness (or otherwise) to remain engaged with the placement.

Additional costs for the Work Placement Year

Tuition fees for students on the Work Placement Year will be charged at 20% of the annual tuition fees for that year of study, as set out in Section 1. The Work Placement Year can be included in your Student Finance allocation; to find out more about your personal eligibility see: www.gov.uk

Students will have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their placement provider, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the placement provider additional costs may include parking permits, travel and transport, suitable clothing, DBS checks, and compulsory health checks.

A small stipend may be available to students from the placement provider during the placement but this will need to be explored on a placement-by-placement basis as some organisations, such as charities, may not have any extra money available. Students should budget with the assumption that their placement will be unpaid.

Eligibility for student finance will depend on the type of placement and whether it is paid or not. If it is paid, this is likely to affect student finance eligibility, however if it is voluntary and therefore unpaid, should not affect student finance eligibility. Students are required to confirm eligibility with their student finance provider.

International students who require a Tier 4 visa should check with the Immigration Compliance team prior to commencing any type of paid placement to ensure that they are not contravening their visa requirements.

18. Annex - Programme-specific regulations

Programme Regulations: Forensic Science (Single Honours)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Final Award and Award Titles | BSc Forensic Biology BSc Forensic Biology with International Year BSc Forensic Biology with Work Placement Year |
| Intermediate Award(s) | Diploma in Higher Education Certificate in Higher Education |
| Last modified | July 2024 |
| Programme Specification | https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmespecifications |

The University's Academic Regulations which can be found on the Keele University website (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>)[1] apply to and regulate the programme, other than in instances where the specific programme regulations listed below over-ride them. These programme regulations list:

- *Exemptions* which are characterised by the omission of the relevant regulation.
- *Variations* which are characterised by the replacement of part of the regulation with alternative wording.
- *Additional Requirements* which set out what additional rules that apply to students in relation to this programme.

The following **exemptions**, **variations** and **additional requirements** to the University regulations have been checked by Academic Services and have been approved by the Faculty Education Committee.

A) EXEMPTIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where an exemption from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

For the whole duration of their studies, students on this Programme are exempt from the following regulations:

- **No exemptions apply.**

B) VARIATIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where a variation from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

Variation 1: Level 4 to Level 5 Progression

In order to progress from level 4 to level 5, students must pass the compulsory modules. Students with outstanding reassessment attempts on assessments in these modules may not progress before these assessments have been completed. At the discretion of the local module board, this may be discounted.

Additional Requirements

The programme requirements listed below are in addition to the University's Academic Regulations:

Additional requirement 1: Practical Classes

1. Laboratory and practical sessions are compulsory and are essential in fulfilling the intended learning outcomes of modules of which they are part, and a requirement of the Chartered Society of Forensic

Sciences and Royal Society of Biology accreditation. Over a semester, failure to attend >70% of the laboratory/practical classes without approval, may result in failure of the relevant modules with no reassessment being offered. In addition, students must meet any ILOs related to practical sessions in each module, where appropriate. Failure to attend laboratory/practical sessions in a given module, without approval, may result in failure of the relevant modules with no reassessment being offered.

2. Any student failing to follow the health and safety guidelines in the undergraduate laboratory will be asked to leave. This may include inappropriate dress, refusal to follow reasonable requests of staff, late attendance resulting in missed safety briefings, or attending under the influence of alcohol or other substances. The student will not be permitted to make up the missed session.
3. Students may be given opportunity to submit assessed work based on an alternative practical session, in agreement with the module leader; with the approval of the Chemical and Physical Sciences Local Module Board, a small element of the laboratory assessment (up to 33%) may be disregarded with the final mark for the assessment being recalculated from the remaining elements.

Additional requirement 2: Coursework Assessment

Failure to engage appropriately with a module's coursework assessment items without good cause (that is, by failing to submit more than 50% of coursework items) may result in reassessment being denied.

Additional requirement 3: Transferring from another institution

Any student who is wishing to transfer to this programme from another institution, at Level 5 or above, must demonstrate that they have transferred from a programme that covered the same material in their Level 4 year as would be covered at Level 4 on this programme.

[1] References to University Regulations in this document apply to the content of the University's Regulatory Framework as set out on the University website here <https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>.

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 28 March 2025

Previous documents

| Version No | Year | Owner | Date Approved | Summary of and rationale for changes |
|------------|------|-------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
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