Master of Science in Forensic Anthropology

Awarding institution: Liverpool John Moores University
Teaching institution: LJMU
JACS Code: F410
Programme Duration: Full-Time: 1 Year
Language of Programme: All LJMU programmes are delivered and assessed in English
Subject benchmark statement: The programme has taken account of the QAA's Master's degree characteristics documents (2015).
Programme accredited by: The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences
Description of accreditation: http://www.csofs.org/
Validated target and alternative exit awards:
- Master of Science in Forensic Anthropology
- Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic Anthropology
- Postgraduate Certificate in Forensic Anthropology

Programme Leader: Matteo Borrini

Educational aims of the programme

The overall aim of the MSc in Forensic Anthropology programme is to provide the framework for the students to develop the skills that are necessary for a career in a very demanding and competitive field. The programme will obtain this goal by delivering a curriculum designed to prepare graduates for work in a variety of different settings (e.g. Disaster Victim Identification, Mass Graves, Medical Examiner's offices, Private Forensic Companies, etc.). The programme will produce postgraduates who are able to play a significant role in the search of missing people, recovery of evidence and human remains from clandestine graves, identification of unknown corpses by osteological analysis. The curriculum and approach to Teaching, Learning and Assessment aims to meet the challenges of employment in a global society through the development of intellectual, analytical and research skills relevant to this area of study.

The specific aims of the programme are:

1. To provide students with specialist knowledge of biological anthropology applied to forensic contexts including both theoretical and practical aspects.
2. To enhance students' critical, analytical and practical skills relevant to the modern multidisciplinary forensic industry.
3. To enable students to extend their capacity for independent study and to make an original contribution to research.
4. To enhance students to develop their capacity for teamwork.
5. To enhance students to improve and refine their oral and written communication skills.
6. To develop those learning, IT, communication and reflective skills necessary to enable students to participate in lifelong learning.

Alternative Exit/ Interim Award Learning Outcomes - Postgraduate Certificate

A student who is eligible for this award will be able to:

Engage with advanced levels of theories and practice in relation to the field of forensic anthropology
Explore and test appropriate research methodologies
Demonstrate appropriate levels of critical analysis, reflection and contextual awareness in focused areas of study

Alternative Exit/Interim Award Learning Outcomes - Postgraduate Diploma

A student who is eligible for this award will be able to:

Engage with advanced levels of theories and practice in relation to the field of forensic anthropology.

Identify and apply appropriate research methodologies.

Take an informed position in relation to the field of forensic anthropology.

Demonstrate personal skills in critical analysis, reflection and contextual awareness in a wide range of modules associated with the field of study.

Target award Learning Outcomes - Master of Science

A student successfully completing the programme of study will have acquired the following subject knowledge and understanding as well as skills and other attributes.

A student who is eligible for this award will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the fundamental facts, concepts, principles and theories of forensic anthropology supported by in-depth critical knowledge of classical and contemporary literature.

2. Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of forensic archaeology techniques.

3. Demonstrate a critical understanding of various aspects of human identification from skeletal remains supported by classical and contemporary literature.

4. Integrate different methods for the resolution of forensic anthropological and scientific questions.

5. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the professional and ethical responsibilities of the forensic anthropologist including relevant laws and regulations informing expert witness testimony.

6. Critically evaluate information and data from a variety of sources.

7. Apply planning, research methodology and analytical skills to an in-depth study of a topic in a chosen field of study.

8. Select the appropriate tools for analysing and presenting complex concepts and ideas, communicating findings clearly.


10. Critically appraise laboratory methods and the design of laboratory experiments, their implementation and interpretation of their results.

11. Assimilate, integrate and critically discuss research findings.

12. Apply problem solving skills to the analysis of human remains.

13. Convey their findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences in an appropriate manner.

14. Collect, analyse and interpret experimental data.

15. Display autonomy in planning, design and execution of experiments.

16. Critically evaluate current research and scholarship in the student's chosen discipline.

17. Develop the organisational skills to manage resources and time.

18. Communicate effectively by discussions, written materials, use of images and data to make oral, written and poster presentations. Use of IT to enable this effective communication.

19. Collect, record and interpret numerical data.

20. Exercise initiative and personal responsibility.

21. Develop an ability to make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The methods used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated are as follows:

Lectures, seminars, data handling workshops, case studies, research project proposal and dissertation. Intellectual skills are developed throughout the teaching and learning programme. Critical analysis and problem solving skills are embedded in all modules and are taught, developed and practised through workshops, formative assessment exercises and all forms of project work. Experimental research and design skills are further developed and practised through a broad range of coursework activities, laboratory work and all project
work. Individual feedback is given on all work submitted. The expert witness statement and oral defence within the law and court room skills module assesses a range of specific practical skills. Transferable skills are embedded in the programme. Skills are learned through completion of written assignments, participating in workshops and collecting and transferring data via IT networks, and through the Dissertation. They are assessed via oral presentations (including oral defence of expert witness statement), poster presentations, portfolio, dissertation, project reports and grant proposal assessment.

Most modules are assessed separately at the end of the semester in which they are delivered. The assessment may take a number of forms allowing the acquisition and development of a range of work-related skills.

**Programme structure - programme rules and modules**

The taught component of the programme covers a period of seven months and the project five months. To obtain an MSc., students must acquire 180 L7 credits. Intermediate awards are Postgraduate Certificate (60 L7 credits) and Postgraduate Diploma (120 L7 credits). Students who achieve the full 180 credits with an average mark of 70% or above are awarded MSc. with Distinction. Students who achieve the full 180 credits with an average mark of 60-69% are awarded MSc. with Merit.

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<tr>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Potential Awards on completion</th>
<th>Master of Science</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Award Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7100NATSCI DISSERTATION (60 credits)</td>
<td>7101FSBMOL TRACE EVIDENCE ANALYSIS (20 credits)</td>
<td>140 core credits at level 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7105NATSCI TAPHONOMY AND TRAUMA ANALYSIS (20 credits)</td>
<td>7101NATSCI ADVANCED OSTEOMETRY AND SKELETAL PATHOLOGY (20 credits)</td>
<td>40 option credits at level 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7106FSBMOL LAW AND COURT ROOM SKILLS (20 credits)</td>
<td>7102FSBMOL FIRE INVESTIGATION (20 credits)</td>
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<td>7106NATSCI HUMAN IDENTIFICATION AND FORENSIC DNA (20 credits)</td>
<td>7104NATSCI DENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY (20 credits)</td>
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<td>7114NATSCI FORENSIC RESEARCH METHODS (20 credits)</td>
<td>7105FSBMOL FORENSIC BIOSCIENCE (20 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7116NATSCI ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SKILLS (20 credits)</td>
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**Information about assessment regulations**

All programmes leading to LJMU awards operate within the University’s Academic Framework.
https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-framework

**Opportunities for work-related learning (location and nature of activities)**

Students may be offered a research project in a related area of Forensic Anthropology which may be based within an institution in the UK or elsewhere. All work offers individuals the opportunity to develop their critical reasoning and complex problem solving skills further. Throughout the programme, emphasis is focused on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills that would secure future employment within the area of forensic investigation and forensic anthropology using a range of techniques, such as case studies, to deliver work related information.

**Criteria for admission**

**Mature entry**

A 2.1 honours degree (or better) in physical/biological anthropology, forensic sciences or a related field.

Students who do not meet the normal entry requirements but do hold a nationally recognised higher qualification (HNC/HND) and relevant industrial experience are interviewed to assess if they have the necessary skills to complete the programme. Applicants not holding an honours degree in a relevant subject will be considered on their individual merits in relation to the proposed programme. Professional experience, publications, written reports, CPD activities and other suitable evidence of accomplishment will be taken into account. All such applicants may be interviewed by the Programme Leader and, like their counterparts with relevant honours degrees, must provide a satisfactory reference from a suitable person such as their employer or line manager.

**Overseas qualifications**
Admission will be judged on an individual basis for overseas students, at an equivalent level to UK entry requirements. For North American students, normally a GPA of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 is required, or an equivalent. Applicants with demonstrable relevant experience will be considered on an individual basis by the Programme Leader. If English is not their first language they must have IELTS at 6.5 or the equivalent (with a minimum of 6.0 in each category). If they do not meet the IELTS requirement, they can take a pre-sessional English course. Admissions are made on the basis of demonstrated ability, qualifications, experience, references, and, occasionally, interviews. A completed application form, references, official transcripts, or a list of modules and grades/marks stamped by the applicant's undergraduate department or student registry are required of all applicants.

External Quality Benchmarks
All programmes leading to LJMU awards have been designed and approved in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in the UK (FHEQ) and subject benchmark statements where applicable.

The University is subject to periodic review of its quality and standards by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Published review reports are available on the QAA website at www.qaa.ac.uk

Programmes which are professionally accredited are reviewed by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and such programmes must meet the competencies/standards of those PSRBs.

Support for students and their learning
The University aims to provide students with access to appropriate and timely information, support and guidance to ensure that they are able to benefit fully from their time at LJMU. All students are assigned a Personal Tutor to provide academic support and when necessary signpost students to the appropriate University support services.

Students are able to access a range of professional services including:

- Advice on practical aspects of study and how to use these opportunities to support and enhance their personal and academic development. This includes support for placements and careers guidance.
- Student Advice and Wellbeing Services provide students with advice, support and information, particularly in the areas of: student funding and financial matters, disability, advice and support to international students, study support, accommodation, health, wellbeing and counselling.
- Students studying for an LJMU award at a partner organisation will have access to local support services.

Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Student Feedback and Evaluation
The University uses the results of student feedback from internal and external student surveys (such as module evaluations, the NSS and PTES), module evaluation questionnaires and meetings with student representatives to improve the quality of programmes.

Staff development
The quality of teaching is assured through staff review and staff development in learning, teaching and assessment.

Internal Review
All programmes are reviewed annually and periodically, informed by a range of data and feedback, to ensure quality and standards of programmes and to make improvements to programmes.

External Examining
External examiners are appointed to programmes to assess whether:

- the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for awards in accordance with the FHEQ and applicable subject benchmark statements
- the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with University policies and regulations
- the academic standards are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which external examiners have experience
- the achievement of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which
the external examiners have experience
and to provide informative comment and recommendations on:

- good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by external examiners
- opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students

**Please note:**

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme guides.