# FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Forensic psychology is much broader than what is portrayed in popular culture “i.e. criminal profiler”, in which there are very few positions. Instead, students should understand that forensic psychology is a diverse field. As defined by the American Psychological Association, “Forensic psychology is a specialty in professional psychology characterized by activities primarily intended to provide professional psychological expertise within the judicial and legal systems”. For example, forensic psychologists may provide assessments to resolve various legal issues, such as the competency to stand trial or providing counseling to incarcerated adults and youth offenders. Moreover, forensic psychologists may work with police and other public safety agencies to help fulfill the agencies’ missions by providing assessments, clinical intervention and consultation. Typically, to enter the field of forensic psychology, students need to obtain advanced degrees at the masters or doctoral level. To prepare for graduate school, students should consider undergraduate degrees in psychology and/or criminal justice and take the following psychology courses: Statistics (2700), Research Methods (2900), Abnormal Psychology (4050), Introduction to clinical psychology (3080) Forensic Neuroscience (3360), Quantitative methods II (3700). Additionally, students should consider obtaining an internship in a forensic setting. Some students confuse forensic psychology with forensic biology, which are separate fields. To learn more about forensic biology, students may wish visit <https://www.findlay.edu/arts-humanities-social-sciences/justice-sciences/forensic-science-biology>

People working in the field of ***forensic psychology*** typically have earned graduate degrees in the following areas:

Ph.D. in clinical psychology with forensic psychology focus

PsyD. in clinical psychology with a forensic psychology focus

Masters’ Degree in Mental Health Counseling with forensic psychology focus or forensic counselor

Of the forensic psychologists that only conduct research, many have:

Ph.D. in Human Factors

Ph. D in Industrial Organizational Psychology

Ph. D in Social Psychology

**How do I become a criminal profiler?**

“The vast majority of profilers are police officers first and work their way up through the ranks. Criminal profilers look at data derived from crime scenes to make predictions about the likely characteristics of unknown serial offenders.  The FBI originally developed profiling techniques and were the primary people doing profiling.  The FBI now also trains local and state police officers to do profiling.  There are also a few private organizations, staffed primarily by retired FBI agents, that offer training in profiling.  Although there are a few psychologists nationwide who are involved in providing profiling services to law enforcement, it is probably safe to say that the vast majority of profilers are police officers.  All training is currently provided by law enforcement agencies and is typically open only to law enforcement personnel.  Even among police officers, very few receive training in profiling.  This is a highly specialized activity, and is an unrealistic career goal for most people, even if you are fortunate enough to be able to join the FBI”.

Source: <https://www.policepsychology.org/Students>

To learn more about the broad field of ***forensic psychology,*** students should visit

American Psychological Association (Division 41) <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-41/>

BGSU Department of Criminal Justice  <https://www.bgsu.edu/health-and-human-services/programs/department-of-human-services/criminal-justice/career-advice.html>

Society for Police and Criminal Psychology <https://www.policepsychology.org/Students>