

BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Forensic and Criminal Investigation

Overview:

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

This course is perfect if you have a keen interest in science and criminology. Students must be willing to learn new scientific skills, problem solve, and explore the exciting world of forensic science.

This National Foundation Diploma is equivalent to 2 A Levels. The course is weighted towards science but also includes police and crime scene investigations, criminology and provides the academic and practical skills for a potential role in the science and forensic industry.

Forensic and Criminal Investigation is ideal for students who can learn independently, research actively and methodically and be an active group member. You'll need to be able to plan and schedule coursework making sure that you meet deadlines set. This could include being able to prioritise what needs to be done and by when. Sound background knowledge in mathematics and science is essential. The first mandatory unit covers similar content to the Year 12 A level Biology, Physics and Chemistry courses, a sound understanding of the topics covered in all three science disciplines is required.

As this is a vocational course, there will be opportunities to take part in external visits and workshops including a field trip to Padley Gorge and university lab sessions.

Content:

The course involves a combination of internally and externally assessed components. The first year includes two units of written assignments; these are based around a variety of Scientific and Forensic practical and investigative techniques. There is also an external exam covering chemistry, biology and physics. In the first year you will also learn about presenting evidence in a mock courtroom trial as a professional witness, and develop an understanding of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). You will also carry out a mock crime scene examination and analyse the evidence you recover.

The second year will include two external assessments. The first will be based on different aspects of scientific investigation skills and techniques. The second exam will take place during the second year and will be based on applications of criminology. There will also be another two units of written assignments based on a variety of disorders affecting the human body and their treatments and the use of insects to estimate time of death. The units are listed below:

Year 1

Unit 1: Principles and Applications of Science I (externally assessed exam 12.5%)

Unit 2: Practical Scientific Procedures and Techniques (internally assessed assignments 12.5%)

Unit 4: Forensic Investigation Procedures in Practice (internally assessed assignments 12.5%)

Unit 6: Criminal Investigation Procedures in Practice (internally assessed assignments 12.5%)

Year 2

Unit 3: Science Investigation Skills (externally assessed exam 17%)

Unit 5: Applications of Criminology (externally assessed exam 17%)

Unit 8: Physiology of Human Body Systems (internally assessed assignments 8%)

Unit 9: Environmental Forensics (internally assessed assignments 8%)

Entry Requirements:

You will need a grade 5 in Science or a Merit grade at BTEC Science Level 2. You will also require at least a grade 5 in Maths and English Language or Literature. Students will need to be enthusiastic and have a keen interest in the applications of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. You must have good time management, organisation and an ability to work independently in order to succeed on this course.

How Assessed:

A combination of internally assessed assignments and externally assessed exams. For each unit a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade can be achieved.

There is one exam in the first year:

Unit 1: Principles and Application of Science 1 - 3 x 40-minute exams - 30 marks each

Three, 40-minute papers one for each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The paper will include a range of question types, including multiple choice, calculations, short answer and open response. The topic areas covered in this unit include, animal and plant cells, tissues, atomic structure and bonding, chemical and physical properties of substances related to their uses and waves and their application in communication.

There are two exams in the second year:

Unit 3: Science Investigation Skills

This unit will be assessed through a written task (Part B) worth 60 marks. The task is set and marked by Pearson and will be completed in one sitting, within a supervised assessment session timetabled by Pearson. The assessment task will assess learners' ability to plan, record, process, analyse and evaluate scientific findings, using secondary information/data from scientific investigations related to the unit content. In order to complete the written task in Part B, learners will be provided with Part A. Part A will outline the method/materials used to generate results/observations from a practical investigation. Learners will have 45 minutes to review Part A before they complete Part B. Part B will be one session lasting one hour and 30 minutes. Both Part A and B will be under supervised conditions.

Unit 5: Applications of Criminology

Learners examine selected theories of criminology that are used to explain, measure and tackle crime and criminal behaviour in England and Wales. This will be assessed through a three hour written exam.

All other units are composed of internally assessed written assignments

Progression:

The qualification may be complemented with other BTEC Nationals or A Levels to support progression to higher education courses in a wide variety of courses including those based around science, law, forensic science and criminology. The additional qualification(s) studied allows learners either to give breadth to their study by choosing a contrasting subject, or to give their studies more focus by choosing a complementary subject. You will gain a wide array of lab practical skills that are directly transferable into the work place. BTEC level 3 courses offer the equivalent UCAS points as A-Level subjects. This qualification can therefore offer higher education opportunities in a variety of professions such as nursing, veterinary nursing, pharmacy, zoo biology, radiography, forensic psychology, criminology, law, psychology, policing, law with criminology, sport science plus many more.

The requirements of the qualification will mean learners develop the transferable and higher-order skills that are highly regarded by both higher education and apprenticeship providers and employers. Skills include carrying out practical laboratory tasks, planning investigations, evaluating case studies/sources of information to draw arguments together and produce forensic reports for use in court hearings. Taken alongside other qualifications, it will prepare learners for progression to a wider range of degree

programmes. For example, if taken alongside an A Level in Psychology, learners can progress to psychology courses or an A Level in Sociology, learners can progress to criminology courses. However, these are just a few examples and the course complement a wide variety of BTEC and A Level courses extremely well.

Key Words:

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Applied Science