

BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Forensic and Criminal Investigation

What are the 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. You will need to show a good level of interest and enthusiasm. Students will need to have a keen interest in general science and industry applications of the three main disciplines 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.

Level and Size of qualification:

Diploma – 2 x A Level equivalent (10 hours a week for 2 years)

What does the course involve?

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. Unit 1 consists of three formal exams one in chemistry, one in biology and one in physics. Unit 6 learners will complete key vocational tasks, including presenting in a mock courtroom trial as a professional witness, and develop an understanding of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The second year will include two external assessments. One exam is based on a variety of practical skills and techniques. The other is based on applications of criminology. There will also be another two units of written assignments based on a variety of aspects of human physiology including the use of insects to estimate time of death. The units are listed below:

Year 1

- Unit 1: Principles and Applications of Science I
- Unit 2: Practical Scientific Procedures and Techniques
- Unit 4: Forensic Investigation Procedures in Practice
- Unit 6: Criminal Investigation Procedures in Practice

Year 2

- Unit 3: Science Investigation Skills.
- Unit 5: Applications of Criminology
- Unit 8: Physiology of Human Body Systems
- Unit 9: Environmental Forensics

How will I be assessed?

The course involves a combination of internally and externally assessed components. The first year includes two units of written assignments, a set task based around the Criminal Justice System and presenting evidence in court and three formal exams one in chemistry, one in biology and one in physics.

The second year will include two external assessments, one based on scientific investigation skills and the other based on aspects of criminology, and two units of written assignments. For each unit a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade can be achieved. Unit 1, Unit 3 and Unit 5 are externally assessed.

Unit 6: Criminal Investigation Procedures in Practice learners will complete key vocational tasks, including presenting in a mock courtroom trial as a professional witness, and develop an understanding of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). Learners will also develop an understanding of the legal framework that criminal investigators must work to in order to

protect individual rights, as well as the adversarial system where prosecution and defence set out evidence in court to determine guilt or innocence. Learners will draw together their knowledge and understanding from across the qualification in order to appreciate the role of criminal investigators. Learners complete the tasks using knowledge and understanding from their studies of the sector and apply both transferable and specialist knowledge and skills.

Progression

The qualification may be complemented with other BTEC Nationals or A Levels to support progression to higher education courses in forensics 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 an 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 and radiography as well as the food and drink industry or environmental health. Skills would also be gained that could lead to employment in a hospital laboratory, research laboratory or college. The requirements of the qualification will mean learners develop the transferable and higher-order skills that are highly regarded by both higher education 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. The qualification is intended to carry UCAS points and is recognised by higher education providers as contributing to admission requirements for many relevant courses. Taken on its own, the National Diploma in Forensic and Criminal Investigation will offer learners the opportunity to progress to some applied degree courses. 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. This course provides the transferable knowledge and skills that prepare learners for progression to university.

Anything else I need to know?

This course offers students the opportunity to develop lab practical skills that are valuable in the work place. If you wish to study or work in the science industry then this course offers the appropriate experience and skills. Assignments will involve both independent and collaborative work. Students will need to be good at working to deadlines and be well organised to keep work up to date. As this is a vocational course pupils would be provided with opportunities to attend external visits and potentially work experience.

Where can I find out more?

Speak to Mr O'Brien to get more details and to find out if it will be suitable for you.