

Post-16 Curriculum - Criminology

Subject Curriculum Overview

Subject	Criminology
Qualification / Specification	Level 3 Diploma in Criminology
Awarding Body	WJEC
Level	3
Curriculum Lead	Nick Binfield
Teaching Staff	Dawn Garey, Carly Andrews
Guided Learning Hours	360
Year(s) Delivered	12 & 13
Last Review Date	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2027

1. Curriculum Intent

The WJEC Level 3 Applied Diploma in Criminology explores the causes of criminal behaviour, the functions of the criminal justice system, and the societal response to crime. The curriculum supports progression to university degrees in fields such as Criminology, Law, Psychology, Policing, and Forensic Science, while providing a foundation for careers in the police, probation, prison services, and social work. It meets industry needs by fostering critical analysis, research skills, and the ability to apply complex theories to real-world criminal justice scenarios. Success for learners is defined by their ability to critically evaluate justice agencies, apply criminological theories to practical case studies, and demonstrate mastery across both controlled assessments and external examinations.

2. Foundational Knowledge

Area	Essential Knowledge / Skills	Why It Matters
Unit 1: Changing Awareness of Crime	Types of crime, media representation, and methods for campaigning for social change.	Develops understanding of public perception and the influence of campaigns on policy and awareness.

Unit 2: Criminological Theories	Understanding social constructions of criminality, and biological, individualistic, and sociological theories of crime.	Provides the framework to critically explain the causes of criminal behaviour and inform policy.
Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom	Investigative techniques, evidence processing, trial procedures, and agency roles.	Enables the critical review of trial processes and the assessment of the safety and justice of verdicts.
Unit 4: Crime and Punishment	Law-making processes, aims of punishment, and the effectiveness of social control agencies.	Evaluates the effectiveness of justice policy and agencies in maintaining social control.

3. Powerful Knowledge

Powerful Knowledge Area	Why It Matters	Evidence of Understanding
Media construction of crime and campaign impact	Enables students to challenge public perceptions and understand how campaigns drive legal and social change.	Critical evaluation of media representations and successful proposal of a campaign for change.
Theoretical application to policy development	Provides the analytical framework to explain criminal behavior and advocate for evidence-based crime control policies.	Successful application of sociological and psychological theories to real-world criminal scenarios and policy recommendations.
Critical analysis of investigative integrity and miscarriage of justice	Crucial for understanding systemic failures in the justice system and ensuring the reliability of criminal verdicts.	In-depth critical review of specific criminal cases, identifying flaws in evidence processing or trial procedures.
Evaluation of the effectiveness of social control agencies	Allows for a critical assessment of whether punishment mechanisms successfully manage crime and maintain societal order.	Nuanced evaluation of the aims of punishment and the functional effectiveness of various justice agencies.

4. Curriculum Implementation

Term / Unit	Key Content	Foundational Knowledge	Powerful Knowledge	Assessment Opportunities
Unit 1: Changing awareness of crime	Crime reporting, media representation, campaigns for change	Understanding public perception of crime	Ability to evaluate media impact	8-hour controlled assessment
Unit 2: Criminological theories	Social constructions, biological, individualistic, sociological theories	Understanding why crime happens	Application of criminological theories	90-minute examination
Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom	Criminal investigations, prosecution, trial processes, evidence	Knowledge of CJS processes	Ability to review criminal cases	8-hour controlled assessment
Unit 4: Crime and Punishment	CJS structure, punishment aims, social control agencies	Role of punishment and social control	Evaluation of agency effectiveness	90-minute examination

5. Assessment Strategy

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency
Diagnostic	Initial assessments of prior knowledge	Beginning of Y12/Y13
Formative	Practice exam questions, mock controlled assessments	Throughout Y12/Y13
Summative	Unit 1 & 3 controlled assessments; Unit 2 & 4 examinations	End of unit/year
Synoptic	Evaluative tasks linking theories to practice	Throughout Diploma course