# MODULE SPECIFICATION

| Part 1: Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Module Title | Forensic Science and Society | | |
| Module Code | USSKMA-15-M | Level | Level 7 |
| For implementation from | 2020-21 | | |
| UWE Credit Rating | 15 | ECTS Credit Rating | 7.5 |
| Faculty | Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences | Field | Applied Sciences |
| Department | HAS Dept of Applied Sciences | | |
| Module Type: | Standard | | |
| Pre-requisites | None | | |
| Excluded Combinations | None | | |
| Co-requisites | None | | |
| Module Entry Requirements | None | | |
| PSRB Requirements | None | | |

## Part 2: Description

**Educational Aims:** See Learning Outcomes

**Outline Syllabus:** Forensic Science issues of relevance to society:
Public perception of forensic scientific evidence especially in the light of media portrayal. Reality of the certainty of results, their interpretation and presentation to court. The regulation of forensic science and its role regarding public confidence. The limitations of forensic scientific evidence and background data for its interpretation.

Communication regarding forensic evidence:
Communication skills required by forensic scientists and their modes of communication. Interactions with law enforcement professionals and the media, and media portrayal of forensic science (both in fiction and case reporting).

Legal issues relating to forensic evidence:
The current legal framework within which forensic evidence is required and is used. The role of the jury and decision making regarding forensic evidence and expert witnesses. The influence of media reporting before trials. Civil liberty issues with databases and forensic investigations.

Transferable Skills:

Development of skills in this multidisciplinary area (involving aspects of science, law, criminology, forensic psychology and science communication) benefits communication with professionals in a range of environments. Critical evaluation of the investigation, prosecution and reporting of criminal cases. Engagement with current issues relating to forensic science of interest and relevance to society.

**Teaching and Learning Methods:** Scheduled Learning

The theoretical underpinning of the module is delivered through an online lecture series. Students are supported in their learning at timetabled/weekly tutorial sessions.

Independent Learning

It is additionally expected that students will spend a significant proportion of the study time for this module engaging with relevant literature and three case studies, as directed by academic staff.

**Part 3: Assessment**

Component A:
Component A is a presentation of the forensic evidence in a criminal case to an audience of potential stake holders. Students will be required to explain both the evidence in the case and the techniques used to analyse that evidence in an interactive and engaging manner and at an appropriate level for the audience. The formal presentation is followed by a question and answer session. Students will develop and utilise a questionnaire for the presentation audience, as a means of evaluating their own performance. This coursework will enable students to develop and evaluate skills in the communication of complex concepts to non-experts, an essential skill for forensic scientists.

Students will receive feedback on their presentation plans during a coursework support session and will be taught questionnaire design, through tutorial sessions.

Component B:
Component B is a critical evaluation of four different media reports of forensic evidence in relation to a criminal case.

Through critical comparison of the scientific evidence and the media reporting of that evidence, students will gain an in depth understanding of opinions and expectations of the public in relation to the forensic science evidence in serious criminal casework.

This coursework is supported by in-class consideration of media reports pertaining to a different case to that used in the coursework.

| First Sit Components | **Final Assessment** | **Element weighting** | **Description** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Case Study - Component B | ✓ | 50 % | Critical evaluation of media reporting of forensic evidence in a criminal case. |
| Presentation - Component A | | 50 % | Presentation of forensic evidence from a criminal case (20 minute presentation with 10 minute question and answers). |
| Resit Components | **Final Assessment** | **Element weighting** | **Description** |
| Case Study - Component B | ✓ | 50 % | Critical evaluation of media reporting of forensic evidence in a criminal case. |
| Presentation - Component A | | 50 % | Presentation of forensic evidence from a criminal case (20 minute presentation with 10 minute question and answers). |

**Part 4: Teaching and Learning Methods**

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

| Module Learning Outcomes | Reference |
|---|---|
| Demonstrate an understanding of issues relating to the effective communication of forensic science to lay audiences . | MO1 |
| Critically evaluate the media presentation and reporting of forensic evidence. | MO2 |
| Critically appraise the legal framework and processes relating to forensic science journalism. | MO3 |
| Appraise relevant forensic reporting methods and strategies relate to the forensic investigation of crimes. | MO4 |

Contact Hours

| | |
|---|---|
| **Independent Study Hours:** | |
| Independent study/self-guided study | 117 |
| **Total Independent Study Hours:** | 117 |
| **Scheduled Learning and Teaching Hours:** | |
| Face-to-face learning | 33 |
| **Total Scheduled Learning and Teaching Hours:** | 33 |
| **Hours to be allocated** | 150 |
| **Allocated Hours** | 150 |

Reading List

*The reading list for this module can be accessed via the following link:*

https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/usskma-15-m.html

**Part 5: Contributes Towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study: