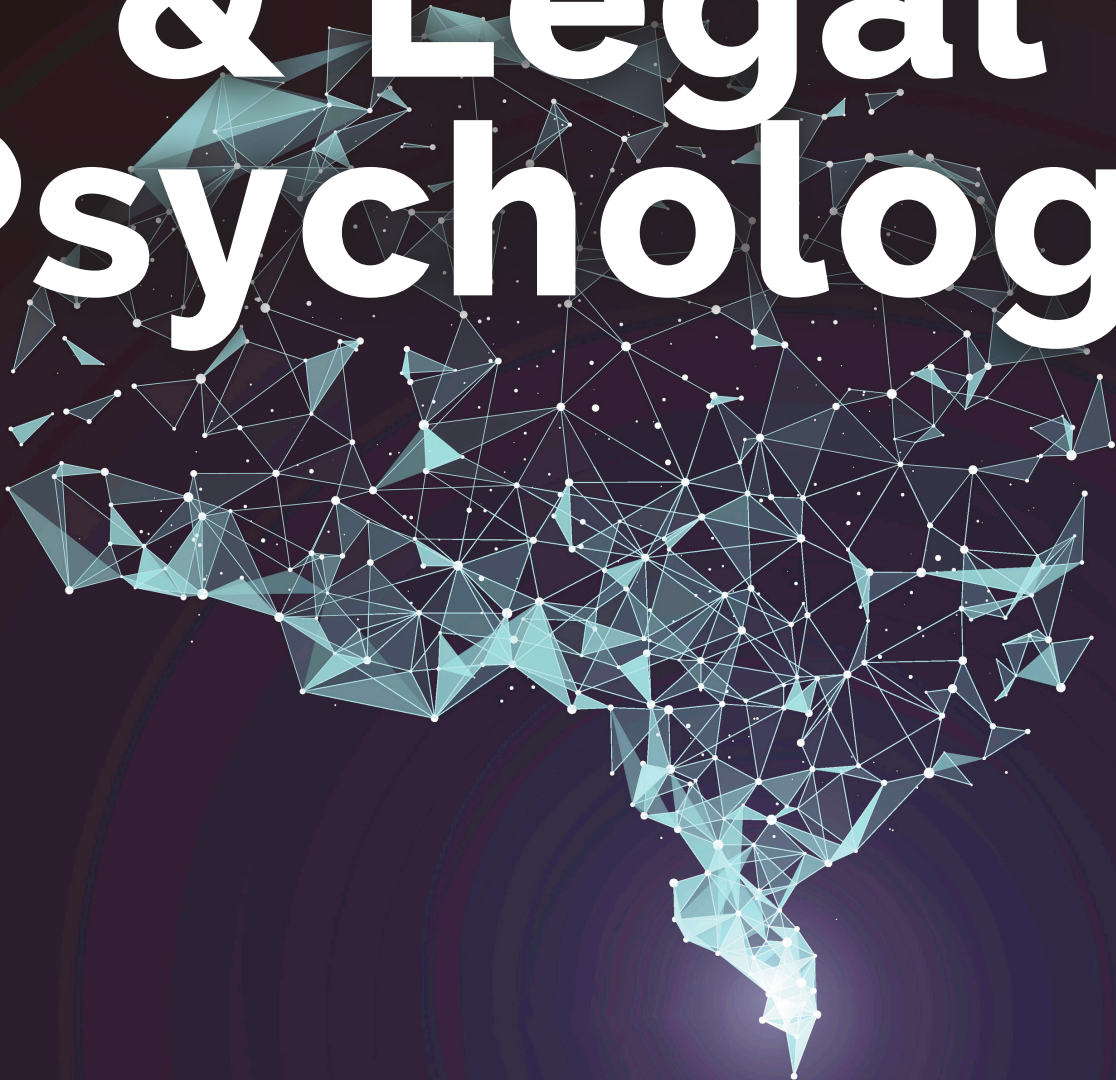




MARYMOUNT
UNIVERSITY

A Guide to Getting
a Master's in
**Forensic
& Legal
Psychology**





About this Guide

This guide is designed to give an overview of the field of forensic & legal psychology, as well as what it means to pursue a Master of Arts in Forensic & Legal Psychology at Marymount University. The Admissions team at Marymount hopes to provide you with an informative overview of what pursuing a career in forensic & legal psychology would be like, making it just a little easier for you to make your next academic move.



About Marymount University

Marymount University is an independent, coeducational Catholic university located in suburban Northern Virginia that was founded in 1950 by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM). A Marymount education is grounded in the liberal arts, promotes career preparation, and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Marymount also prides itself on providing a graduate education that is immediately applicable to the workplace. As a student-centered learning environment, Marymount is dedicated to the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development of each individual.



About the Author

Dr. Jason Doll is an associate professor of Forensic & Legal Psychology at Marymount University. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice Studies in 1998 from the University of South Dakota. During his undergraduate studies, he was searching for a way to combine the skills and knowledge he was acquiring from both majors and came across the area of forensic psychology.

Dr. Doll received his PhD in Forensic Psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology (now Alliant International University) in 2004. For his doctoral dissertation, he examined the effects of community policing on residents' fear of crime. He also received a Master of Arts degree in Organizational Behavior in 2002 while engaged in his doctoral studies.

Dr. Doll has worked with local police departments and county and state correctional facilities, examining organizational issues and cultures that are present in these organizations. His main areas of interest are police psychology and legal psychology (e.g., witness memory/identification, false confession, and deception detection).

What is Forensic & Legal Psychology?

Forensic & legal psychology (or psychology and law) involves the application of scientific and professional aspects of psychology to questions and issues relating to law and the legal system. This field encompasses contributions made in a number of different areas - research, practice, public policy and teaching/training among them - from a variety of orientations within the field of psychology.



Legal psychology:

Refers to the application of experimental or research-oriented areas of psychology (e.g., social, cognitive, physiological) to legal issues. Legal psychology also includes the scientific study of the effect of laws on people and the effect people have on laws. Witness identification, deception detection, investigative interviewing, and trial consulting are just some of the issues that comprise legal psychology.



Forensic psychology:

Composed of such issues such as competency to stand trial, mental status at the time of the offense, violence risk assessment, and child custody and visitation. While there is some disagreement in the field as to what is meant by forensic psychology (with some equating it to psychology and law), others define it as the application of clinical specialties (e.g., clinical and counseling psychology) to legal institutions and people who come in contact with the law.

Forensic and legal psychology professionals work in a variety of areas, such as:

- ◆ Law enforcement/intelligence
- ◆ Corrections
- ◆ Child and victim advocacy
- ◆ Mitigation and sentencing
- ◆ Jury consulting
- ◆ Social/public policy
- ◆ Psycholegal research



Career Outlook

What will the job salary and career outlook be for professionals in the FLP field over the next five years?

Some [research](#) suggests that “Forensic psychology salaries vary widely, based on education, experience, and geographic location. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics doesn’t provide salary information for forensic psychologists but reports a [median salary of \\$72,580 per year for psychologists overall](#). The employment of psychologists is expected to increase [19 percent from 2014 to 2024](#), much faster than the average rate of growth for all occupations. This anticipated growth is due to the expected increasing demand for psychological services in social service organizations and in the criminal justice system. Psychologists who have a doctoral degree in an applied specialty, such as forensic psychology, have the best prospects for finding a job.”

While the figures above will generally reflect professionals with a doctorate in forensic psychology, individuals who pursue a master’s degree can often find work in intelligence analysis, local, state, and federal law enforcement (e.g., FBI, Secret Service, DEA, ATF, etc), corrections, probation and parole, crime analysis, social science research, mitigation investigation, sentencing advocacy, trial consulting, offender management, victim advocacy/assistance, child advocacy, and policy analysis.






Marymount University's Forensic & Legal Psychology Program

[Marymount's Forensic & Legal Psychology program](#) is interdisciplinary and combines study in criminal justice, law, and public policy, in addition to the many subfields of psychology. It addresses questions of value, such as how best to achieve fairness and justice in the American adversarial legal system, as well as empirical issues such as the origins of criminal behavior, problems with eyewitness testimony, evaluation of threats against public figures, personalities of political leaders, the origins of terrorism, evaluation and treatment of offenders, and the effectiveness of trial consultation.

Each course incorporates an ethics component to encourage you to grapple with the extremely complicated issues involved in a career in forensic and legal psychology.

Once enrolled in the M.A. program, students may apply for and complete a concentration in [Intelligence Studies](#), which provides the knowledge and skills necessary to be competitive in the Intelligence Community and the private-sector companies that support it.



Note: Marymount University is the first Washington D.C.-area university to offer the Master of Arts in Forensic & Legal Psychology. In addition, the Forensic and Legal Psychology program hosts multiple events during the year (e.g., Annual Appreciation Dinner, Speaker Seminar Series); provides extensive networking opportunities to students; employs adjuncts who are distinguished professionals in their field; and maintains connections with various law enforcement agencies, court systems, and other justice-related organizations in the Metropolitan D.C. region.

Courses in the program focus on such topics as:

- ◆ Forensic assessment
- ◆ Treatment of the juvenile offender
- ◆ Criminal behavior
- ◆ Eyewitness identification
- ◆ Wrongful convictions
- ◆ Deception detection
- ◆ Intelligence
- ◆ Terrorism
- ◆ Jury decision-making
- ◆ Legal reasoning skills
- ◆ The legal system
- ◆ The war on drugs
- ◆ Capital punishment
- ◆ Abortion
- ◆ Prison conditions



Is an undergraduate degree in psychology required?

There is no specific undergraduate major requirement, but having a major or minor in psychology will be of benefit. It is, however, strongly recommended that applicants have taken a few courses in psychology, criminal justice, and criminology.

Are there opportunities to study abroad within the FLP program at Marymount?

At Marymount University, we believe very strongly in developing students' understanding of their place in the larger global community and of how the global context in which we live and work affects our day-to-day existence at the local level. All of our departments have created innovative study-abroad programs in a variety of formats that allow students to explore the world, develop cultural awareness, learn more about themselves, and apply their course content in a very different environment. Additionally, through the Center for Global Education, students can apply for study-abroad programs that are run through other institutions; the opportunities are endless! [Click here](#) for more information about our global initiatives.





Students in the FLP program have had the opportunity to study abroad in places such as:

- ◆ England
- ◆ Cambodia
- ◆ Czech Republic
- ◆ Sweden
- ◆ Israel
- ◆ The Netherlands

Is there an internship requirement in Marymount's FLP program?

All students must complete an internship selected from the wide-variety of applicable sites in the D.C. region. Students are required to complete a total of 300 hours. Students must enroll in, attend, and complete the requirements for FLP 599 during the same semester in which they complete their internship requirement.

Students have completed internships at such locations as the:

- ◆ FBI (including its National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime)
- ◆ NCIS
- ◆ ATF
- ◆ Fairfax County Public Defender's Office
- ◆ Arlington County Police Department
- ◆ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- ◆ Federal Bureau of Prisons
- ◆ Vera Institute of Justice
- ◆ Northern Virginia Capital Defender's Office



What types of careers do students obtain once they graduate from Marymount's FLP program?

Alumni have secured employment in a variety of positions, including:

- ◆ Correctional counselor/specialist
- ◆ Correctional officer
- ◆ Crime analyst
- ◆ Court diversion coordinator
- ◆ Intelligence analyst
- ◆ INTERPOL analyst
- ◆ Investigative analyst
- ◆ Juvenile justice reform program manager
- ◆ Law enforcement officer
- ◆ Mitigation specialist
- ◆ Policy analyst
- ◆ Pretrial services officer
- ◆ Probation/parole officer
- ◆ Research analyst
- ◆ Sentencing advocate
- ◆ Sex offender supervisor
- ◆ Suicidology researcher
- ◆ Trial consultant
- ◆ Victim specialist



Where have graduates of Marymount's FLP program obtained employment?

Locations where alumni have obtained employment include:

- ◆ American Association of Suicidology
- ◆ Arlington County Police Department
- ◆ Arlington County Probation and Parole
- ◆ Center for Clinical and Forensic Services
- ◆ Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency
- ◆ Department of State
- ◆ DC Metropolitan Police Department
- ◆ Drug Enforcement Agency
- ◆ Fairfax County Adult Detention Center
- ◆ Fairfax County Child Protective Services
- ◆ Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center
- ◆ FBI - National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime
- ◆ Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- ◆ Jury Services, Inc.
- ◆ Justice Policy Institute
- ◆ Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Northern Virginia Capital Defender's Office
- ◆ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- ◆ National Institute of Justice
- ◆ Naval Criminal Investigative Services
- ◆ Naval Research Laboratory
- ◆ Offender Aid and Restoration
- ◆ Police Executive Research Forum
- ◆ Transportation Security Administration
- ◆ Virginia Indigent Defense Commission

Next Step

The Marymount Admissions team hopes that this guide has been helpful in outlining the general career field and overall professional outlook for those seeking a career in forensic & legal psychology. Our aim is to provide you with resources to reference and conditions to consider as you make plans toward your next academic venture.

Have a question specific to our forensic & legal psychology program? Please feel free to contact our program coordinator below.

Sonja Williams
Coordinator, Graduate Enrollment Manager
swilliam@marymount.edu

Have a question regarding our graduate admissions process? Send us an email, and we'll be in touch soon!

Graduate Admissions Main Office
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grad.admissions@marymount.edu

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