

Unit 31: Criminology

Unit code:	T/502/5576
QCF Level 3:	BTEC Nationals
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to know theoretical explanations of crime and how the aims of state penal policy relate to crime theories. Learners will also how competing definitions of crime influence its measurement and the role of the media in our perception of crime.

Understand what is crime and its extent. Do the media influence fear of crime? Why do people commit crime? How can crime be controlled? Why have the aims of state punishment changed over time? This content in this unit underpins the study of Forensic Science.

● Unit introduction

Criminology is the study of crime. When crimes are committed many clues are left as to the identity of the person who has committed the crime. Much of the work involved in catching a suspect has its base in science, and organisations involved in helping to solve crimes employ many scientists and science technicians. This unit gives learners an introduction to criminology. Learners will look at the different theories that explain crime in different ways, and as a result will consider types of crime and criminals that rarely feature in the media.

Crime and the media are inseparable; every day it is possible see news articles and programmes about crime. Criminals are often clearly identified and arguments about the extent of crime and also how to prevent it are set out in simple terms.

This unit aims to show learners that there are scientific debates about all of these issues, with the very concept of crime being far from straightforward. The two main measures of crime produced by the Home Office give different answers to the question about the extent of crime and learners will analyse information and be able to draw conclusions about the reasons for such differences. The role of the media in its portrayal of crime and the construction of fear of crime will be considered. Scientists have produced theoretical explanations of why people commit crime and learners will compare and contrast these explanations within the unit. Learners will also examine how crime prevention initiatives and state punishment policies are linked to theoretical explanations.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand how competing definitions of crime influence its measurement
- 2 Know the theoretical explanations of crime
- 3 Understand the role of the media in our perception of crime
- 4 Know how the aims of state penal policy relate to crime theories.

Unit content

1 Understand how competing definitions of crime influence its measurement

Definitions of crime: legal; normative

Measurement of crime: Home Office official statistics; police discretion; reported and recorded crime; British Crime Survey data; self reporting of crime; hidden crime; discrepancy between the two measures; quantitative and qualitative evidence

2 Know the theoretical explanations of crime

Criminological explanations of crime: positivist criminology, eg individual positivism (genetic and psychological explanations); emergence of realist explanations, eg left and right realism; influence of interactionism and labelling theories; conflict between determinism and voluntarism

Crime prevention measures aimed at individual: zero tolerance; CCTV; ASBOs

Crime prevention measures aimed at the community: 'Broken windows' theory, neighbourhood watch

3 Understand the role of the media in our perception of crime

Media: Cohen's moral panic explanation; media campaigns; labelling

Influence on crime figures and fear of crime: research on fear of crime against risk of crime; media sources of information

4 Know how the aims of state penal policy relate to crime theories

Review of penal policy: from early twentieth century deterrence to rehabilitation then reform and restorative justice; voluntarism; determinism; realism and linkage to theoretical perspectives

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe competing definitions of crime [IE1,2]	M1 draw conclusions from their analysis with consideration of how the figures are produced	D1 explain how the difference in crime figures relate to the reported/recorded crime figures and the definition of crime used by the agency
P2 analyse the crime figures produced by Home Office official statistics and the British Crime Survey [IE4]		
P3 describe theoretical explanations of crime [IE1,2]	M2 explain the ways in which the theoretical explanations have influenced current political policies on crime control	D2 explain the challenge of realism which replaced positivism as the major criminological theory in the late 20th century
P4 identify the influences that the theoretical explanations of crime have had on current crime control policies [SM7; EP4,5,6]		
P5 describe how the media influence our understanding of crime [CT2,3; RL2]	M3 report on factors which influence fear of crime	D3 outline the theoretical explanation of moral panics developed by S. Cohen and use it to illustrate a current crime problem
P6 explain the difference between the fear of crime and the actual risk of crime [CT2,3,4; RL2]		
P7 outline ways in which criminological theory influenced penal policy over the last century. [EP4,5,6]	M4 explain how crime theories have influenced penal policy.	D4 analyse the influence of positivism and realism on penal policy over the last century.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Tutors delivering this unit have the opportunity to use a wide range of techniques, not only to provide theoretical input but also to allow learners to collect and use both quantitative and qualitative data. Formal lectures, group discussions, presentations, site visits, practical compilation of self-reported crime measurements using either simulated data or data from websites, practical use of recorded crime data from Home Office websites, input from community police officers, and research using library resources, internet, newspapers and/or television would all be suitable.

The subject of this unit is always in the news. In their daily lives, learners will see evidence of crime control strategies such as CCTV cameras and media reports on the use of ASBOs. Many television programmes also highlight crime: either actual crime (eg Crimewatch) or fictional crime (eg The Bill). Therefore the delivery of this unit should not only educate learners (by making them aware of the fear and fascination of crime) but also motivate them and encourage a critical approach to the populist and common sense views of crime and 'criminals'.

To cover learning outcome 1 learners will need to understand that the fundamental concept of crime is itself contested and that different definitions of crime are used by the state in measuring crime. The legal definition is used by the agencies of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and this has implications in how official Home Office statistics are produced. The other main measure of crime used by the Home Office is the British Crime Survey. Learners will need to work with the statistics from both sources and draw out differences between the two to show the influence of different types of evidence. Debates and presentations would be appropriate to address this area but input from a police community officer on how the police measure crime would be a very valuable input. Knowledge gained in this learning outcome informs learners in their consideration of learning outcome 4.

For learning outcome 2 the theoretical positions of positivism, realism and interactionism need to be addressed and it is important that learners get the opportunity to not only consider the contested nature of the positions but also that there are linkages between theory and policy. This could lead to learners undertaking practical tasks to research crime control in their local community. Consideration of factors which led to the replacement of the dominant scientific positivist theory by realism should introduce learners to the way in which theory and politics interact.

In learning outcome 3 learners should have the opportunity to engage in practical exercises to research their local communities for evidence of media coverage of crime. Topical media campaigns against crimes are very relevant to this learning outcome and should be used to stimulate debates on fear of crime and risk from it. Ideally a visit to a local newspaper or other media organisations and an opportunity to talk to crime reporter/s would be extremely useful. Here, input from local magistrates to talk about initiatives such as ASBO's would be very relevant.

For learning outcome 4 the knowledge gained in the first learning outcome gives learners a base on which to relate policy changes over time to the influence of criminological theories. Here too political influences are relevant in the aims and operation of the criminal justice system. Debates by learners on the purpose of imprisonment would be very useful in drawing out different aims of that state sanction. Input from justice system agencies would be useful here to put the discussions into context.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction and outline of programme of assignments. Tutor input: Outline the key questions in the unit and how they will be covered.
Group based discussion: what does crime mean to learners; opportunity to differentiate between legally-defined and against normative crimes. Tutor input: competing definitions of crime linked back to learner experiences. Teaching and research session on types of crime which feature regularly in the media/press, how are they reported, who are the typical criminals. Follow up on hidden crime: why are some types of crime not covered, white collar/corporate crime. Tutor input: how Home Office official statistics are compiled, type of evidence, police methodology reported/recorded crime, discretion. Practical exercise: visit to police station or talk by community liaison officer on how crime figures are collected. Use examples of reported/recorded crime. Group activity: Home Office and British Crime Survey statistics.
Evidence collection by groups on the level of crime measured by these two methods for the same time period, eg 1998 figures show discrepancy of around 400%.
Assignment 1 – How Much Crime Exists in the UK? (P1, P2, M1, D1)
Tutor input: theories of crime; looking at developments over time. Case study activities: using current news items to look at assumptions about human behaviour. The scientific base of positivism and its dominance in much of twentieth century with examples from genetic and psychological theories to provide base for linkage to policy. Tutor input and discussion: challenges to positivism – interactionism and labelling theory then activities around labelling of young people. Tutor input: rise of right realism, link to political changes in UK (and USA) how did this influence crime control policies? Group exercises: situational crime control; discussions about ASBOs and their impact on individuals. Police input on ASBO's would be relevant here. Tutor input and group discussion: alternative left realist theory link to politics and crime control policies; social crime control. Practical activities and information gathering.
Assignment 2 – The Rise of CCTV (P3, P4, M2, D2)

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Tutor input: types of media used to report on crime in UK.

Group activities: research portrayal of crime, nationally and in the local area, collection of evidence, presentations.

Tutor input: describe the moral panic theory of S. Cohen.

Group activities: research moral panics; impact on people in local community and/or school/college. Learners could conduct surveys.

Tutor input: research about fear of crime and risk of crime.

Practical activities and information gathering.

Assignment 3 – Media Portrayal of Crime (P5, P6, M3, D3)

Research activity: collect evidence about penal policy from early twentieth century through to current day initiatives.

Tutor input: policy of deterrence and its linkage to theory.

Tutor input: rise of rehabilitation and link to positivism.

Tutor input: challenges to rehabilitation and rise of reform, linkage to realism; current initiatives including reformatory justice. Use input from justice system agencies if possible.

Practical activities and information gathering.

Assignment 4 – Penal Policy (P7, M4, D4)

Unit review and programme of assignments.

Assessment

The unit can be assessed by a variety of strategies which include essays, reports, presentations, posters and records of debates. All of the Pass grade criteria must be met for a learner to achieve this unit.

For P1, learners must be able to describe competing legal and normative (social constructionist) definitions of crime. Group discussions on what learners see as crime would provide evidence which could illustrate legal and normative crime. Historical evidence could also be used, for example in USA alcohol consumption was legal, it became a crime in Prohibition era then became legal again. For P2, learners need to analyse given crime data from the official Home Office statistics of recorded crime as well as reported crime data from British Crime Survey for the same year. For M1, learners must be able to relate the differences between the main measures of crime shown for P2 to their measurement. This involves identification of the types of evidence used to prepare both Home Office official statistics and British Crime Survey data. Here quantitative and qualitative data must be recognised as being fundamentally different and what they entail. To meet D2 criterion learners must move on from identification of the differences between the two main measures of crime to specifically link legal definition and recording of crime to Home Office statistics (crucially not all crimes reported to the police are then recorded by them). This must be contrasted with BCS use of normative crime definition and use of self reporting of crime.

For P3, learners must describe positivist, realist and interactionist explanations of crime, taking note of content guidance. For P4, from the theoretical explanations of crime learners must select those which influence crime control policies, again taking note of content guidance (realist theory is dominant here). For M2, learners need to look at the ways in which theoretical explanations of crime have influenced political policies on crime control, because changes in dominant criminological theories have a real impact on the practices of the criminal justice system. D2 achievers need to show an appreciation of factors which led to the replacement of positivism as the dominant criminological theory by right realism. These may include financial as well as political aspects.

For P5, learner must describe how the media influence our knowledge and understanding of crime. Evidence from local and national media campaigns would underpin this criterion. For P6, learners must be able to explain the difference between fear of crime and risk from it, taking into account various influencing factors. For M3, learners need to build on the basic information collected for P6 and move on to research factors which contribute to fear of crime. This needs to take account of the content guidance. For D3, the important explanation of moral panics is extremely relevant for learners to understand arguments about the role of the media in our perception of crime. Application of the Cohen argument to a recent moral panic is required to show the application of theory to current problems.

For P7, learners must be able to review penal policy and relate changes to crime theories with particular focus on the move from positivist to realist theory. For M4, learners need to consider the aims of the criminal justice system in relation to penal policy over time and draw links to criminological and political influences. For D4, learners need to be able to relate positivist and realist theories to penal policies used by the UK in the last century. The change from rehabilitation to reform must be specifically linked to key arguments about voluntarism and determinism (if crime is determined then offenders cannot be punished – positivism; if crime is voluntary then punishment is valid – realism).

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, M1, D1	How Much Crime Exists in the UK?	As a junior reporter on your local newspaper you want to investigate the concept of crime and how crime statistics are gathered.	Report/article.
P3, P4, M2, D2	The Rise of CCTV	You are a teacher in a local college. Your learners have seen a lot of CCTV systems in their local area and ask why that is the case. You need to plan a lesson to explain (this is one method of crime control which gained popularity in the 1970s) and stimulate class debate.	Presentation and notes.
P5, P6, M3, D3	Media Portrayal of Crime	You are on a visit to your local newspaper and have an opportunity to talk to the crime reporter. How does s/he get information about crime, how would it be reported? Does crime coverage have any influence on sales? Research, local surveys, questionnaires to gain information of local fear of crime covering different age/ethnic groups.	Essay/presentation with detailed notes.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P7, M4, D4	Penal Policy	On a class visit to your local prison, it was pointed out that the aims of the prison service had changed from rehabilitation to reform. Learners are asked to research on changes in the 1960s and to enquire why that happened.	Record of debate, essay/ presentation with notes and question/answer session.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Applied Science sector suite. This unit has particular links with:

Level 3
Criminal Psychology
Criminal Investigation Procedures
Criminal Investigations in Practice

Essential resources

The unit requires learners to have access to a library or learning resource centre, books and journals on crime, newspapers including tabloids, and the internet (eg to government statistical data Home Office and British Crime Survey).

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit would be greatly enhanced by group visits to local newspapers/media organisations, police stations etc. Alternatively, guest speakers from these employers could be arranged.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Becker H S – *Outsiders: Studies in Sociology of Deviance* (Simon & Schuster Ltd, 1997) ISBN 9780684836355

Kelling L and Coles C M – *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities* (Simon and Schuster Inc, 1998) ISBN 9780684837383

Maguire et al – *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (Oxford University Press, 2007) ISBN 9780199205431

Matthews R and Young J – *Rethinking Criminology: The Realist Debate* (Sage Contemporary Criminology Series) (Sage Publications Ltd, 1992) ISBN 9780803986213

Mirrlees-Black C et al – *The 1998 British Crime Survey: England and Wales* (Home Office, 1998) ISBN 9781840821833

Muncie J and McLaughlin E (editors) – *The Problem of Crime* (Sage Publications Ltd, 2001) ISBN 9780761969716

Office for National Statistics – *Social Trends* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) ISBN 9780230545649

Wilson J Q and Herrnstein R J – *Crime Human Nature: The Definitive Study of the Causes of Crime* (Free Press, 1998) ISBN 9780684852669

Journals

British Journal of Criminology

British Society of Criminology

Civil Liberties Review

Home Office Statistical Bulletin

Websites

www.bjc.oxfordjournals.org

www.brokenwindows.com/windows_theory.html

www.civitas.org.uk

www.crimestatistics.org.uk

www.criminology.fsu.edu/crimtheory

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html

The British Journal of Criminology

Broken Windows Theory

The Institute for the Study of Civil Society

Crime Statistics for England and Wales

Criminological Theory (Florida State University)

The Home Office

The British Crime Survey

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	[IE1,2] researching for information on competing definitions and theoretical explanations for crime [IE4] analysing crime figures
Creative thinkers	[CT2,3,4] investigating media portrayal of crime; discussing the difference between fear of crime and risk from it
Reflective learners	[RL2] setting goals for work involving surveys about media portrayal
Self-managers	[SM7] managing emotions when discussing crime control policies
Effective participators	[EP4,5,6] engaging with issues when presenting information to peers.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	[IE6] drawing conclusions from analysis of crime statistics [IE3] exploring issues and events from other perspectives
Creative thinkers	[CT2,4] asking questions of their own and others assumptions when interacting with guest speakers
Reflective learners	[RL1,5] assessing performance in group work [RL6] communicating learning in various ways to meet assessment criteria
Team workers	[TW1,6] work together on activities; providing constructive feedback to peers on presentations
Self-managers	[SM3,5] organising and planning assignments to fit in with other commitments
Effective participators	[EP1,4] reflecting on information gathered about theories, policies and crime.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	collecting and processing data
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning surveys and assignments
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	saving and restoring information held on assignments, surveys or presentations
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	carrying out work on computers safely
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	gathering information from a variety of sources to address assessment criteria
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	finding and retrieving information for assignments
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	entering survey data and results to develop presentation material
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	researching information on crime statistics
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	presenting survey results, group findings, presentations
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	collecting and retrieving evidence for portfolio
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	analysing statistical data from the Home Office and British Crime Survey
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	selecting and applying the skills needed to analyse statistics

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	listening to teachers or guest speakers; working in groups, giving and listening to presentations; carrying out local surveys
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching information, analysing theories and policies
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	reporting and writing assignments, preparing notes for presentations, preparing questions for guest speakers.