

# Forensic Psychology – Master's Degree

## Background –

Forensic Psychology uses psychological assessments with individuals involved with the legal system. Two common careers are a forensic counselor and a jury/trial consultant.

**Forensic Counselor** - works at the intersection of the mental health and legal system to provide individuals convicted of crimes counseling services. As a counselor, you will generally work with individuals or small groups in therapy sessions on many issues such as substance abuse. Generally can receive a specialization in forensic counseling in addition to your master's degree in counseling. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, most of the prison counselors have a masters degree in clinical psychology and work under the supervision of a Ph.D.

**Jury/Trial Consultant** - works to ensure that those involved in a court case or testimony are prepared. Duties can include choosing jury members, ensuring jury members are unbiased, working with witnesses, choosing effective trial strategies with witnesses and lawyers. Consultants can be employed by many different agencies including the court, litigation agencies, attorneys, or consulting firms. May be required to have a Ph. D for some positions or to advance in this particular field.

a. More information - American Society of Trial Consultants –[astcweb.org](http://astcweb.org)

## What salary can I expect to make in these careers?

1. **Forensic Counselor:** \$74, 910\*
2. **Jury/Trial Consultant:** ~\$110,000\*\*

**What classes at GVSU may help me in my career?** Discuss with your advisor which courses among those on this list, along with other courses not listed here, would best serve your career goals.

1. **CJ 201** – Criminology
2. **CJ 330** – Correctional Process
3. **CJ 340** – Court Process
4. **CJ 420** – Juvenile Correctional Counseling
5. **CJ 482** – Culture, Crime, Justice
6. **PSY 302** – Psychology of Adjustment
7. **PSY 303** – Psychopathology
8. **PSY 310** – Behavior Modification
9. **PSY 330** – Behavioral Neuroscience

**What skills are applicable to this career field?** Interviewing abilities, oral and written communication skills (report writing), critical thinking skills, emotional stability, cultural competency, strong statistics background and interpersonal skills, motivation and commitment are all important to working in this field.

\* Individual & Family Services for 2017 ([bls.gov](http://bls.gov))

\*\* Glassdoor (2017)

**Employer Possibilities** - Government agencies, court systems, for profit trial consulting companies, counseling organizations, private practice

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