



Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in  
Introduction to Principles of Criminology  
Specification

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Ofqual Number:</b>             | <b>500/1411/0</b> |
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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

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| Version and Date | Change Detail       | Section    |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|
| V2 November 2025 | Updated Review Date | Front Page |

## ABOUT ASCENTIS

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Ascentis was originally established in 1975 as OCNW, a co-operative scheme between Universities and Colleges of Further Education. Ascentis was the first 'Open College' in the UK and served the needs of its members for over 34 years. Throughout this period, OCNW grew yet maintained its independence in order that it could continue to respond to the requirements of its customers and provide a consistently high standard of service to all centres across the country and, in recent years, to its increasing cohorts of overseas learners.

In 2009 OCNW became Ascentis – a company limited by guarantee and a registered educational charity.

**Ascentis** is distinctive and unusual in that it is both:

- **an Awarding Organisation** regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual, England), Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA, Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales

and

- **an Access Validating Agency (AVA)** for 'Access to HE Programmes' licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

Ascentis is therefore able to offer a comprehensive ladder of opportunities to centres and their students, including Foundation Learning, vocational programmes and progression to QAA-recognised Access to HE qualifications. The flexible and adult-friendly ethos of Ascentis has resulted in centres throughout the UK choosing to run its qualifications.

## ASCENTIS CONTACT DETAILS

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### Introduction

Criminology is the scientific study of crime and criminals. It is a multi-disciplinary approach that draws together methods and perspectives from a range of social sciences, including sociology and psychology. There are therefore some areas of commonality within these subjects; however, none of these subjects alone provide the same insights as are to be gained from the multi-disciplinary approach of criminology.

The Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to Principles of Criminology is designed to provide learners with an effective experience in developing study skills and the initial stages of learning about the discipline in terms of the concepts, theories and perspectives which characterise criminology. It is designed as an introduction to the study of criminology, and as such it does not provide, on its own, progression to work in criminology or a career as a criminologist or in any other forensic service(s).

There are several features of this qualification that make it very appropriate for its target learners:

- Unit certification is available for each of the units
- Verification and certification can be offered throughout the year, allowing maximum flexibility for centres
- It can be delivered either as a classroom-based course or as a blended learning programme
- Evidence can be generated within a wide range of organisational contexts, allowing the qualification to meet the specific occupational requirements of learners

### Aims

The aims of the qualification are:

- 1 To provide a foundation of academic study skills as the basis for a range of related progression options
- 2 To provide an introduction to a range of substantive areas, basic concepts and theories within criminology
- 3 To provide an introductory level of application of criminology to a limited range of issues of direct relevance to the interests of learners

### Target Group

The qualification is aimed at learners who wish to develop a range of skills, gain an introductory knowledge of criminology and wish to progress to further study in a variety of courses.

### Regulation Code

Qualification Number (Ofqual): 500/1411/0

## Rules of Combination

To achieve the Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to Principles in Criminology, the learner must successfully complete both mandatory units.

| Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to Principles of Criminology |         |              |     |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|-----|----------------|
| Title                                                            | Level   | Credit Value | GLH | Unit Reference |
| Aspects of Crime                                                 | Level 2 | 3            | 30  | T/500/2458     |
| Criminal Justice System, Crime and Social Groups                 | Level 2 | 3            | 30  | A/500/2459     |

Unit certification is available for all units.

## Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

The recommended guided learning hours for this qualification is 60.

## Total Qualification Time (TQT)

The total qualification time for this qualification is 60.

## Time Limit for the Process of Credit Accumulation and Exemptions

Credit accumulation is usually within the lifespan of the qualification. Exemptions may have been achieved prior to the qualification start date; each case will be considered separately.

## Recommended Prior Knowledge, Attainment and/or Experience

No recommended prior learning or experience is required.

## Age Range of Qualification

This qualification is suitable for suitable for young people aged 16–18 and adult learners.

## Opportunities for Progression

It is intended that these qualifications will help learners towards the following progression routes:

- Vocational or subject-specific learning at Level 2 or above
- A range of programmes of study at Level 3 including the Access to HE Diploma in a variety of subjects dependent on unit choices and any pre-entry requirements
- Employment

## Resources to Support the Delivery of the Qualification

Ascentis has devised a learner workbook and tutor presentation resource for each unit in this qualification. The workbooks should support the delivery of the qualification but may not represent all learning material within the respective unit. They have been carefully designed and mapped to most assessment criteria; however, due to the nature of some assessment criteria, additional evidence may be required and tutors should always ensure this. The tasks may be contextualised for learners.

## Centre Recognition

This qualification can only be offered by centres recognised by Ascentis and approved to run this qualification. Details of the centre recognition and qualification approval process are available from the Ascentis office (tel. 01524 845046) or from the Customer Centre on the website at [www.ascentis.co.uk](http://www.ascentis.co.uk).

## Qualification Approval

If your centre is already a recognised centre, you will need to complete and submit a qualification approval form to deliver this qualification. Details of the qualification approval process are available from the Ascentis office (tel. 01524 845046) or from the Customer Centre on the website at [www.ascentis.co.uk](http://www.ascentis.co.uk).

## Registration

All learners must normally be registered with Ascentis within seven weeks of commencement of a course via the Ascentis electronic registration portal.

## Status in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This qualification is available in England and Northern Ireland. It is only offered in English. If a centre based overseas (including Scotland) would like to offer this qualification, they should make an enquiry to Ascentis.

## Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

In the development of this qualification, Ascentis has made every attempt to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to achievement. For learners with particular requirements, reasonable adjustments may be made in order that they can have fair assessment and demonstrate attainment. There are also arrangements for special consideration for any learner suffering illness, injury or indisposition. Full details of the reasonable adjustments and special considerations are available from the Customer Centre on the website [www.ascentis.co.uk](http://www.ascentis.co.uk) or through contacting the Ascentis office.

## Enquiries and Appeals Procedure

Ascentis has an appeals procedure in accordance with the regulatory arrangements in the Ofqual *General Conditions of Recognition*<sup>1</sup>. Full details of this procedure, including how to make an application, are available from the Customer Centre on the website [www.ascentis.co.uk](http://www.ascentis.co.uk) or through contacting the Ascentis office.

## Useful Links

Web links and other resources featured in this specification are suggestions only to support the delivery of this qualification and should be implemented at the centre's discretion. The hyperlinks provided were live at the time this specification was last reviewed. Please kindly notify Ascentis if you find a link that is no longer active.

**Please note:** Ascentis is not responsible for the content of third-party websites and, whilst we check external links regularly, the owners of these sites may remove or amend these documents or web pages at any time.

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In Northern Ireland it is the CCEA General Conditions of Recognition and Qualifications Wales is the Standard Conditions of Recognition..

## ASSESSMENT AND VERIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS

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### Assessment

All units are internally assessed through the learner building up a portfolio of evidence that covers the relevant assessment criteria, internally assessed and verified by the centre and then externally verified by Ascentis.

On completion of learners' evidence for either the individual units or the Certificate, the assessor is required to complete the Summary Record of Achievement for each learner. The Summary Record of Achievement asks assessors and the internal verifier to confirm that the rules of combination have been followed. The Summary Record of Achievement form is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

Centres are required to retain all evidence from all learners for external verification and for 4 weeks afterwards in case of any appeal made.

### Internal Assessment

Evidence for each unit is through building up a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that all the assessment criteria within the unit have been achieved. The evidence will be assessed by the assessor at the centre, who may or may not be the tutor teaching the course.

Portfolios of evidence should include a variety of evidence to demonstrate that the assessment criteria for each unit have been met. Examples of evidence that could be included are:

- Observation record
- Questions and discussions
- Photographs
- Video
- Worksheets
- Audio recordings
- Self-assessments
- Workbook activities
- Multiple-choice tests
- Essay writing

If the learner fails to meet the assessment criteria on the first attempt at an activity, they may redraft the work following feedback given by the tutor. However, tutors must not correct the work of the learner, and all feedback given by the tutor must be included within the learner's evidence.

Learners' portfolio work should include a Tracking Sheet to show where the evidence for each assessment criterion is to be found. Some activities could produce evidence for more than one unit, which is acceptable as long as there is clear reference to this on the Tracking Sheet. Example Tracking Sheets can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

### The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessments

There are potential risks associated with the use of AI in assessments, such as the possibility of bias and the potential for cheating.

Centres are expected to detect and monitor the use of AI tools in assessments. Centres must be satisfied that the work provided is that of the learner. All learners must be aware that they are responsible for ensuring they are not cheating in assessments by using AI tools. All learners must cite the use of AI in their assessments where this is allowed.



## Verification

### Internal Verification

Internal verification is the process of ensuring that everyone who assesses a particular unit in a centre is assessing to the same standards, i.e., consistently and reliably. Internal verification activities will include: ensuring any stimulus or materials used for the purposes of assessment are fit for purpose; sampling assessments; standardisation of assessment decisions; standardisation of internal verification decisions. Internal Verifiers are also responsible for supporting assessors by providing constructive advice and guidance in relation to the qualification delivered.

Ascentis offer free refresher training in support of this role through an Ascentis Internal Quality Assurance course. The purpose of the course is to provide staff in centres with knowledge and understanding of Ascentis IQA processes and procedures, which will enable them to carry out their role more effectively. To book your place on a course or request further information, please contact the Ascentis Quality Assurance Team ([qualityassurance@ascentis.co.uk](mailto:qualityassurance@ascentis.co.uk)).

Further information is available from the login section of the Ascentis website [www.ascentis.co.uk](http://www.ascentis.co.uk).

### External Verification

Recognised centres will be visited in accordance with a verification model that is considered most appropriate for the provision. More frequent verifications can be requested from the Ascentis Quality Assurance team, for which there is usually an additional charge. External verification will usually focus on the following areas:

- A review of the centre's management of the regulated provision
- The levels of resources to support the delivery of the qualification, including both physical resources and staffing
- Ensuring the centre is using appropriate assessment methods and making appropriate assessment decisions according to Ascentis' requirements
- Ensuring the centre has appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements as outlined within the relevant qualification specification
- Checking that the centre is using appropriate administrative arrangements to support the function of delivery and assessment

External Verifiers will usually do this through discussion with the centre management team and assessment and Internal Quality Assurance staff, verifying a sample of learners' evidence, talking to learners, and reviewing relevant centre documentation and systems.

## Knowledge, Understanding and Skills Required of Assessors and Internal Verifiers

Centres must ensure that those delivering and assessing Ascentis qualifications are knowledgeable and competent within the relevant subject area.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all staff involved in the delivery of the qualification are appropriately qualified. Ascentis will not be held responsible for any issues that relate to centre staffing which could impact on the successful delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications.

Those delivering the qualification should preferably hold or be working towards a recognised teaching qualification. Assessors must be able to make appropriate assessment decisions. Internal Quality Assurers need to have knowledge and experience of the internal quality assurance processes.

Centres are required to ensure that appropriate training and support is in place for staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal verification of Ascentis qualifications.

Ascentis offers free support for centres. Further information on the support that is available can be found on the Ascentis website.

## UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

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Unit Title: **Aspects of Crime**

Unit Reference: **T/500/2458**

**Credit Value of Unit: 3**

**GLH of Unit: 30**

**Level of Unit: 2**

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### Introduction

This unit aims to allow the learner to understand the underlying principles of crime and deviance, as well as the basic principles of crime recording.

| Learning Outcomes                                                       | Assessment Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The learner will be able to:                                            | The learner can:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1. Understand key issues relating to defining crime and deviance        | 1.1 Give examples of different ways of defining crime and deviance                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                         | 1.2 Distinguish between corporate crime, white-collar crime, organised crime, state crime and street crime                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2. Understand different explanations of crime                           | 2.1 Describe the main features of a range of biological explanations of crime                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                         | 2.2 Describe the main features of a range of psychological explanations of crime                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                         | 2.3 Describe the main features of a range of sociological explanations of crime                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3. Understand key differences between the main sources of data on crime | 3.1 Identify the main sources of data on crime and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Official crime statistics</li><li>• Self-report studies</li><li>• Victim studies, including the Crime Survey for England and Wales</li></ul> |

**Please note that the indicative content supplied below is intended as a suggested guide only.**

## **1. Understand key issues relating to defining crime and deviance**

### **1.1 Give examples of different ways of defining crime and deviance**

- Basic definitions of crime and deviance, including examples
- Difference between crime and deviance
- Defining crime based on where it occurs, including time, place, social situation, culture and reactions
- Theories of deviance, e.g. functionalists, conflict theorists and interactionists

### **1.2 Distinguish between corporate crime, white-collar crime, organised crime, state crime and street crime**

- Corporate crime – committed by organisations, e.g. bribery, counterfeiting, embezzlement and blackmail
- White-collar crime – financially motivated, non-violent crime committed by individuals, e.g. fraud, tax evasion; distinction between white- and blue-collar crime
- Organised crime – planned criminal behaviour by a group, e.g. racketeering, smuggling
- State crime – crimes committed by governments, e.g. genocide, funding terrorist groups
- Street crime – criminal offences in public places, e.g. prostitution, pickpocketing

## **2. Understand different explanations of crime**

### **2.1 Describe the main features of a range of biological explanations of crime**

Theories could include:

- Lombroso
- Sheldon
- XYY Male

### **2.2 Describe the main features of a range of psychological explanations of crime**

Theories could include:

- IQ testing
- Robert Hare
- Hans Eysenck
- John Bowlby

### **2.3 Describe the main features of a range of sociological explanations of crime**

Theories could include:

- Structural theoretical approach
- Subcultural theories
- Conflict theory
- Ecological criminology

## **3. Understand key differences between the main sources of data on crime**

### **3.1 Identify the main sources of data on crime and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, including:**

- Official crime statistics
  - Role of the police
  - Unreported crimes
  - Unrecorded crimes
- Self-report studies
  - Offending, Crime and Justice Survey
  - Types of data included
- Victim studies, including the Crime survey for England and Wales
  - Islington Crime Survey
  - International Crime Survey
  - Information collected
  - Impact of findings

## UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title: **Criminal Justice System, Crime and Social Groups**

Unit Reference: **A/500/2459**

**Credit Value of Unit: 3**

**GLH of Unit: 30**

**Level of Unit: 2**

### Introduction

This unit aims to allow the learner to fully understand the journey that an offender takes from police investigation, through trial and sentencing to punishment and rehabilitation.

| Learning Outcomes                                                                                              | Assessment Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The learner will be able to:                                                                                   | The learner can:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1. Understand key aspects of the criminal justice system                                                       | 1.1 Describe the main features of the criminal justice system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policing</li><li>• The courts and sentencing</li><li>• Prisons</li><li>• Community sentencing</li></ul>                                                                        |
| 2. Understand factors that can influence the way in which individuals experience the criminal justice system   | 2.1 Describe factors that can impact on an individual's experience of the operation of the criminal justice system with reference to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender</li><li>• Ethnicity</li><li>• Social class</li><li>• Age</li></ul>                            |
| 3. Understand how crime and criminal justice are linked to aspects of the social context in which crimes occur | 3.1 Explain the relationship between crime, criminal justice and at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The media</li><li>• Urbanism</li><li>• Homicide</li><li>• Drugs</li><li>• Victims of crime</li><li>• Anti-social behaviour</li><li>• Terrorism</li></ul> |
| 4. Understand the limitations of research on crime                                                             | 4.1 Outline key criticisms of research on crime                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Indicative Content

**Please note that the indicative content supplied below is intended as a suggested guide only.**

### **1. Understand key aspects of the criminal justice system**

1.1 Describe the main features of the criminal justice system, including:

- Policing – the role of the police in investigating and managing crime, including cautions and out-of-court disposals
- The courts and sentencing – the role of the courts in dispensing justice, including trial by peers, burden of proof, open justice
- Prisons – the role of prisons in dispensing justice and reducing reoffending, including rehabilitation and restorative justice
- Community sentencing – preventing reoffending, including rehabilitation, community payback and restorative justice

### **2. Understand factors that can influence the way in which individuals experience the criminal justice system**

2.1 Describe factors that can impact on an individual's experience of the operation of the criminal justice system with reference to the following:

- Gender – boys more likely to offend than girls, girls as a minority group
- Ethnicity – over representation of BAME, underrepresentation of other minority groups
- Social class – impact of care system, low educational attainment, previous involvement in offending behaviour
- Age – challenging behaviour, correlation between offending at a young age and repeat offending

### **3. Understand how crime and criminal justice are linked to aspects of the social context in which crimes occur**

3.1 Explain the relationship between crime, criminal justice and at least one of the following:

- The media – positive impact, including deterrent effect; negative impact, including exposure to violence/desensitisation
- Urbanism – opportunity for crime, loss of community spirit, higher levels of poverty
- Homicide – rates and patterns across demographic areas
- Drugs – types of crime, impact of addiction
- Victims of crime – perception of crime, impact of social class
- Anti-social behaviour – impact on local communities, cost to society
- Terrorism – global impact, perceived threat on a local level

### **4. Understand the limitations of research on crime**

4.1 Outline key criticisms of research on crime

- Limitations may include:
  - Lack of consistency in reporting/sentencing across geographical regions
  - Availability of resources/funding allocated to data production
  - Incident reports involving a number of offenders/crimes
  - Unreported 'dark figures of crime', leading to underrepresentation
  - Lack of willingness to participate in victim surveys, especially for more personal crimes
  - Statistics do not take into account action taken in regions to tackle crime
  - Presentation of statistics to the public by the media

## APPENDIX 1

### Summary Record of Achievement

#### Level 2 Certificate in Introduction to Principles of Criminology

| Unit Title                                       | Level   | Credit Value | Date Completed | Assessor Signature | Internal Verifier Signature (if sampled) |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Aspects of Crime                                 | Level 2 | 3            |                |                    |                                          |
| Criminal Justice System, Crime and Social Groups | Level 2 | 3            |                |                    |                                          |

Learner Name \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Credit Value of Qualification: 6

I confirm that the minimum number of credits at the appropriate level have been achieved in order for a claim for certification to be made. I can confirm that the credit has been achieved from the correct combination of mandatory and optional units as specified within the Rules of Combination.

Assessor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Verifier Signature (if sampled) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### Tracking Sheet

Unit Title: **Aspects of Crime**

Unit Reference: **T/500/2458**

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Assessment Method | Evidence Details | Portfolio Reference | Completion Date |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1.1 Give examples of different ways of defining crime and deviance                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 1.2 Distinguish between corporate crime, white-collar crime, organised crime, state crime and street crime                                                                                                                                                                       |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 2.1 Describe the main features of a range of biological explanations of                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 2.2 Describe the main features of a range of psychological explanations of crime                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 2.3 Describe the main features of a range of sociological explanations of crime                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 3.1 Identify the main sources of data on crime and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official crime statistics</li> <li>• Self-report studies</li> <li>• Victim studies, including the British Crime Survey</li> </ul> |                   |                  |                     |                 |

**The above evidence has been assessed against the standards and has been judged for validity, authenticity, currency, reliability and sufficiency.**

Learner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Verifier (if sampled) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### Tracking Sheet

Unit Title: **Criminal Justice System, Crime and Social Groups**

Unit Reference: **A/500/2459**

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Assessment Method | Evidence Details | Portfolio Reference | Completion Date |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1.1 Describe the main features of the criminal justice system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policing</li> <li>• The courts and sentencing</li> <li>• Prisons</li> <li>• Community sentencing</li> </ul>                                                                           |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 2.1 Describe factors that can impact on an individual's experience of the operation of the criminal justice system with reference to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Ethnicity</li> <li>• Social class</li> <li>• Age</li> </ul>                               |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 3.1 Explain the relationship between crime, criminal justice and at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The media</li> <li>• Urbanism</li> <li>• Homicide</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Victims of crime</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Terrorism</li> </ul> |                   |                  |                     |                 |
| 4.1 Outline key criticisms of research on crime                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |                  |                     |                 |

**The above evidence has been assessed against the standards and has been judged for validity, authenticity, currency, reliability and sufficiency.**

Learner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Verifier (if sampled) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_