

# Department of Forensic Science



## Forensic Science Career Path

There is no single path that guarantees a career in forensic science. Competitive candidates must demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities that are important to the field. Forensic scientists must be able to apply scientific principles to civil or criminal cases and communicate effectively in the courtroom.

Most forensic scientists work in laboratories and medical examiner's offices where they handle, analyze, report and interpret scientific findings.

---

*A strong scientific background is necessary in order to pursue a career in forensic science*

---

Traditionally, most forensic scientists begin with a bachelor's degree in a natural, physical, or biological science. This is important because forensic scientists must have a sound understanding of basic scientific principles. The most common undergraduate majors are chemistry and biology, since these provide a strong foundation for so many of the forensic science disciplines including DNA, controlled substances, toxicology, trace evidence and more.

Due to the competitive nature of the field and increased emphasis on scientific validity and rigor, advanced degrees are becoming more important in terms of securing employment.

---

*Candidates with a graduate degree in forensic science, following a baccalaureate degree in the natural sciences are highly sought after*

---

A full listing of undergraduate degrees and majors offered at SHSU can be found online in the Undergraduate Catalog and additional information is available on the following departmental websites:

### Department of Chemistry

<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/chemistry/>

### Department of Biological Sciences

<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/biological-sciences/>

---

*Sam Houston State University offers a variety of undergraduate degrees that are well-suited to a career in forensic science*

---

A number of undergraduate courses in chemistry and biology are particularly important for candidates hoping to pursue a graduate degree in forensic science or seek employment. For the forensic chemistry-related disciplines, these may include *Organic Chemistry, Quantitative Analysis, Instrumental Analysis, Analytical Chemistry and Biochemistry*. For the forensic biology-related disciplines these may include *Molecular Biology, Genetics, Biochemistry and Population Genetics*.

---

*The Department of Forensic Science also offers a minor in forensic science that is well-suited for undergraduate science majors*

---

Because forensic science is part of the criminal justice system, personal honesty, integrity, and scientific objectivity are paramount. Those seeking careers in this field should be aware that criminal background checks and drug testing may be conditional for employment or internship placements.

If you are interested in forensic psychology, anthropology or pathology, a graduate degree in Forensic Science will not qualify you for these professions. Advanced degrees and specialized training are required.

For more information on forensic science at SHSU visit us online at <http://forensics.shsu.edu/home/>

