

MINOR IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & SCIENCE MAJORS

The minor in forensic science is tailored towards science majors who may have an interest in traditional (laboratory based) careers in forensic science, and non-science majors (e.g., criminal justice) interested in pursuing investigative or non-laboratory based careers (e.g., crime scene investigation).

The minor in forensic science is most suitably paired with (but not limited to) the following majors: Chemistry, Forensic Chemistry, Biology, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Computing Science, and Psychology.

The structure of the minor is sufficiently flexible to meet the diverse needs of both criminal justice and science majors. Students are able to select online course offerings and must complete 18 credit hours, of which at least six credits must be 4000 level courses. Required courses for the major cannot count towards this minor.

Completion of the minor in forensic science will not qualify you for a graduate degree in Forensic Science or position in an accredited laboratory. To be eligible for graduate school, as well as employment in forensic science laboratories, a bachelor's degree in a natural science such as chemistry, biology, or forensic science is required.

The minor in forensic science will appeal to students majoring in other areas that have a general interest in forensics, want to pursue investigative or forensic career paths, or intend to apply for graduate programs in forensic science.

Example course pairings for students with investigative and science based interests are shown below:

INVESTIGATIVE FOCUS:

- CRIJ 2368** Criminal Investigation (3)
- FORS 3366** Forensic Science (3)
- FORS 4310** Physical Evidence Techniques (3)
- FORS 4330** Fingerprint Examination (3)
- FORS 4364** Crime Scene Investigation Techniques (3)
- FORS 4380** Ethics and Professional Practice (3)
- TOTAL: 18 credit hours**

SCIENCE FOCUS:

- FORS 3366** Forensic Science (3)
- FORS 3380** Introduction to Forensic Chemistry (3)
- FORS 4310** Physical Evidence Techniques (3)
- FORS 4317** Applied Statistics for Forensic Science (3)
- FORS 4320** Fundamentals of Forensic Biology (3)
- FORS 4380** Ethics and Professional Practice (3)
- TOTAL: 18 credit hours**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS PURSUING CAREERS IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

Forensic Analyst Licensing

Pursuant to its legislative mandate, the Texas Forensic Science Commission established qualifications and adopted administrative rules with regard to forensic analyst licensing that are published in **Texas Administrative Code Chapter 651, Subchapter C**. Requirements for forensic analysts and/or technicians to become licensed include minimum education requirements, specific coursework requirements, successful completion of a General Forensic Analyst Exam, in addition to other requirements.

Requirements by forensic discipline are listed in **§ 651.207 of the Texas Administrative Code**.

Traditionally, most forensic scientists begin with a bachelor of science degree in natural science (e.g., chemistry or biology). This is important because forensic scientists must have a solid understanding of basic scientific principles before these are applied in a legal setting. Due to the competitive nature of forensic science today, an advanced degree in natural or forensic science is now common.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.

Not all states require forensic analysts to be licensed, but Texas has been a leader in forensic science reform for over a decade. Throughout the nation, new standards are in development for all the forensic disciplines at the federal level. This is being accomplished through the **OSAC for Forensic Science**, administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The Department of Forensic Science at Sam Houston State University is a recognized leader in forensic science education. It offers **graduate degrees in forensic science** and was the first in the nation to offer a PhD in Forensic Science in 2015, following recommendations from the **National Academies of Science**.

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If you plan to pursue a career in forensic science and are currently majoring at the undergraduate level in the basic sciences at SHSU, **here is what you need to know**.

The Department of Forensic Science offers an online minor that pairs well with natural science majors. Once you have graduated with the required major for your forensic discipline, and have met the undergraduate coursework requirements, an accredited forensic laboratory in Texas may require you to take the General Forensic Analyst Exam. The examination is comprised of seven domains which were chosen due to their general application across all forensic disciplines. **The crosswalk between each domain and the applicable FORS course at SHSU is shown below:**

Evidence Handling	☐ FORS 4310
Basic Statistics for Forensic Application	☐ FORS 4317
Brady/Micheal Morton Act	} FORS 4380
Expert Testimony	
Professional Responsibility	
Human Factors	
Root Cause Analysis	

The Department of Forensic Science has included these topics in its graduate curriculum for many years; however, students majoring in science may not have been exposed to all of them. Therefore, courses offered in the **forensic science minor** can assist students meet these requirements, improving preparedness for the licensing exam, workforce readiness, or competitiveness for graduate study in forensic science.

The minor in forensic science requires the completion of 18 credit hours of approved FORS or CRIJ courses which include:

CRIJ 2368	Criminal Investigation
CRIJ 2394	The Courts & Criminal Procedure
FORS 3366	Forensic Science
FORS 3380	Intro to Forensic Chemistry
FORS 4310	Physical Evidence Techniques
FORS 4317	Applied Stats for Forensic Science
FORS 4320	Fundamentals of Forensic Biology
FORS 4330	Fingerprint Examination
FORS 4364	Crime Scene Investigation Techniques
FORS 4380	Ethics & Professional Practice

For more information, visit our website at shsu.edu/forensicscience or contact:

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