

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

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## Mission

Our mission is to provide Master of Science in Forensic Science students the knowledge, skills, and abilities to prepare them for successful careers in forensic science. This mission is accomplished through academic coursework, hands-on experience in the laboratory, research, and the completion of an internship in a forensic science laboratory.

Our overall program goals are:

- To provide full support combined with continual improvement in the quality of education, scholarship and service in compliance with the mission of the university;
- To develop an understanding of the areas of knowledge that are essential to forensic science; and
- To provide students with the practical skills, knowledge and problem solving abilities that will promote their advancement within the field of forensic science

We try to meet these goals by having specific, well defined and measurable objectives wherever possible:

- Students will command detailed competence of core course material in forensic science.
- Students will acquire practical skills in forensic science and apply this knowledge.
- Students will be oriented in professional values, concepts, ethics and problem solving.
- Students will demonstrate integration of knowledge and skills necessary for future success in the field of forensic science.

The Master of Science in Forensic Science program requires the completion of 44 graduate semester hours of core and forensic science coursework that can be completed in two years of full-time study. The program is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to forensic science. This unique and interdisciplinary program was the first of its kind in Texas. Graduate level topics include:

- forensic biology
- Forensic chemistry
- forensic toxicology
- controlled substances
- trace evidence and microscopy
- instrumental analysis
- crime scene investigation
- pattern evidence
- law and forensic science
- ethics
- quality assurance
- statistics

These core topics are complemented with advanced coursework and laboratory instruction. The program maintains strong ties with accredited forensic laboratories in both the private and public sectors.

Students are required to:

- complete an internship in a forensic laboratory,
- complete an independent research project, and
- demonstrate good oral and written skills that will prepare them for future success in both the laboratory and in the courtroom.

Those seeking careers in this field should be aware that background checks similar to those required for law enforcement officers are likely to be a condition of employment. Drug testing, history of drug use, criminal background checks, and other factors including use of social media may be considered for employment or internship placements.

Please submit all document to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Admission considerations include:

1. Graduate Application (<http://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply-texas.html>)
2. Application fee (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/application-fee.html>)
3. A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in chemistry, biology, forensic or natural science
4. Official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended
5. Official test scores from the Graduate Record Examination (DRE scores are *preferred*, but not required due to COVID)

6. Three letters of recommendation with checklists, at least two from academic sources
7. A personal essay of the applicant's career goals and aspirations
8. An application supplement listing pertinent undergraduate courses taken. Applicants should have completed instrumental analysis and molecular biology at the undergraduate level. However, exceptional students who have not taken these courses may be required to take these stem courses during their first year.

The Application Recommendation Checklist, personal essay instructions, and the application supplement are available at Application Resources ([http://www.shsu.edu/academics/criminal-justice/resources/documents/grad-add\\_fs-sup.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/academics/criminal-justice/resources/documents/grad-add_fs-sup.pdf)).

A holistic review of each student's application will be completed on a competitive basis.

The Master of Science in Forensic Science does not require a thesis. However, students complete an intensive research experience FORS 6014 during both long semesters of the second year. Students must orally defend their research in a public forum and achieve a grade of B or higher in this capstone course to satisfy the University's comprehensive exam requirement.

During the first year of study students are exposed to the major forensic disciplines in addition to the forensic internship. However, students are expected to develop a highly specialized degree plan, tailored towards their specific career goals. This is accomplished through specialized electives, advanced coursework, and forensic research.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Master of Science in Forensic Science (Non-thesis)</b>		
<b>Required Courses</b>		
FORS 5116	Seminar In Forensic Science	1
FORS 5117	Controlled Substance Analysis	1
FORS 5226	Law And Forensic Sciences	2
FORS 5360	Pattern and Physical Evidence Concepts	3
FORS 5435	Trace/Microscopical Analysis	4
FORS 5440	Forensic Biology	4
FORS 5445	Forensic Instrumental Analysis	4
FORS 6014	Forensic Science Research <sup>1</sup>	6
FORS 6224	Quality Assurance and Ethical Conduct in Forensic Science	2
FORS 6371	Forensic Science Internship	3
FORS 6446	Forensic Toxicology	4
<b>Electives</b>		
Select ten credit hours of approved graduate courses in FORS, CRIJ, BIOL, PSYC, or CHEM		10
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>44</b>

<sup>1</sup> FORS 6014 must be taken for a total of six semester credit hours.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) marketable skills initiative is part of the state's **60x30TX plan** and was designed to help students articulate their skills to employers. Marketable skills are those skills valued by employers and/or graduate programs that can be applied in a variety of work or education settings and may include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas.

The MS in Forensic Science is designed to provide graduates with the following marketable skills:

- Advanced discipline-specific knowledge.
- Hands-on laboratory skills.
- Familiarity with legal, ethical, and quality assurance issues.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Impartiality and scientific objectivity.
- Application of statistical concepts to forensic science.
- Familiarity with consensus-based scientific standards in forensic science.