

PHD IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

Mission

The mission of the PhD in Forensic Science is to provide students with the critical thinking ability; problem-solving skills; and advanced, discipline-specific knowledge to allow them to advance into leadership positions.

This is accomplished by demonstrating the ability to perform independent, original research; the successful completion of multidisciplinary academic coursework; hands-on experience in the laboratory; and collaboration with accredited forensic laboratories, institutes, and partners.

Educational Objectives

1. Provide students the knowledge, skills, and abilities to prepare them for successful careers in forensic science.
2. Develop students' critical thinking ability, problem-solving skills, and advanced discipline-specific knowledge.
3. Produce high quality graduates capable of advancement into leadership positions.
4. Engage in collaborative research that demonstrates industrial relevance and wider scientific awareness.

The PhD in Forensic Science requires the completion of 86 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. Students complete:

Code	Title	Hours
Requirements		
	Core Coursework	43
	Dissertation Research	15
	Electives ¹	28
Total Hours		86

¹ Dissertation research hours may be substituted for electives (15 SCH maximum) with approval of the Department Chair.

The curriculum is designed to deliver an essential core curriculum in forensic science, together with specialized electives and intensive research in the area of interest. Students are expected to fulfill the requirements during approximately five years of full-time study.

Students with an MS in Forensic Science from a FEPAC-accredited institution may be eligible to transfer credit towards the eighty-six credit hour requirement.

Program Breakdown

Degree Type	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
Length	86 credit hours
Enrollment	Fall
Tuition/Costs	Rates per Semester

Applicants seeking admission to the doctoral program in forensic science must submit the following directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/prospective-students.html>):

- Graduate Admissions Application (<http://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply-texas.html>)
- Application Fee (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/application-fee.html>)
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in chemistry, biology, forensic or natural science
- Official transcript(s) from degree granting institution(s)
- Official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended
- GPA of 3.5 or higher
- Program Application (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/forensic-science/documents/phd-app.pdf>)
- Personal statement (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/forensic-science/documents/phd-app.pdf>), not to exceed 1000 words
- Three letters of recommendation in addition to the Admission Recommendation Checklist (<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/cdba7bf5-4863-4a5a-9698-9f4f5607eb9b.pdf>). A minimum of two letters must be from faculty who are sufficiently acquainted with the student to comment on potential for success in the doctoral program
- Current resume or vita
- Official GRE (<http://www.ets.org/gre/>) scores (GRE is *preferred*, but not required due to COVID)
- In some instances, a personal interview may be requested.

The program requires the completion of a minimum of eighty-six hours of graduate credit, as prescribed in the plan below.

Students must register full-time and maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all courses. In order to advance to candidacy students must have successfully completed (or be currently enrolled in) forty-four graduate credit hours of coursework and research, submit a portfolio for review, write a formal research proposal and orally defend the proposal typically by the close of the second spring semester. Once the doctoral program committee determines that the portfolio, proposal and defense are satisfactory, the student may enroll in dissertation research.

A minimum of fifteen hours of dissertation credits are required and students must maintain continuous enrollment until they graduate. Students must complete and defend a doctoral dissertation, which is the product of original scholarly research and is of sufficient publishable quality to represent a meaningful contribution to knowledge in the field of forensic science.

During the first year of study, students are exposed to the major forensic disciplines in addition to the forensic internship. After successfully completing core coursework during the first year, students identify their discipline of study and commence research under the direction of their faculty advisor.

Students with an MS in Forensic Science from a FEPAC-accredited institution may be eligible to transfer credit towards the eighty-six credit hour requirement.

Code	Title	Hours
Doctor of Philosophy in Forensic Science		
Required Courses		
FORS 5445	Forensic Instrumental Analysis	4
FORS 5117	Controlled Substance Analysis	1
FORS 5360	Pattern and Physical Evidence Concepts	3
FORS 5435	Trace/Microscopical Analysis	4
FORS 5440	Forensic Biology	4
FORS 6446	Forensic Toxicology	4
FORS 5116	Seminar In Forensic Science	1
FORS 5226	Law And Forensic Sciences	2
FORS 6224	Quality Assurance and Ethical Conduct in Forensic Science	2
FORS 6014	Forensic Science Research ¹	6
FORS 6371	Forensic Science Internship	3
FORS 7331	Research Methods	3
FORS 7332	Scientific Communications	3
FORS 7390	Forensic Laboratory Management	3
Electives ²		
Select twenty-eight semester credit hours of approved graduate courses in BIOL, CHEM, CRIJ, FORS, or PSYC.		28
Dissertation		
FORS 8099	Dissertation ³	15
Total Hours		86

¹ FORS 6014 must be taken for a total of six credit hours.

² Once the minimum number of dissertation research hours have been met, dissertation hours may be substituted for electives (18 SCH maximum) with approval of the department chair.

³ Once enrolled in FORS 8099, students must enroll in this course every semester until graduation.

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 PhD 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.
- Advanced instrumental understanding and technical troubleshooting skills.
- Ability to conduct original research.