The Evidence Speaks for Itself

Over the past decade, employment in the forensic science sector has grown at an unprecedented rate due to the increased reliance on forensic techniques by law enforcement agencies. The Master of Science in Forensic Science is a specialized, professional degree designed for students, professionals, or existing practitioners who want to further their knowledge in this area. In the forensic science fields, a graduate degree is rapidly becoming the standard of training required for advancement into leadership positions.

“Science cannot exist in secrecy.”

Dr. Joseph Rotblat, Nobel Laureate

Faculty

As a graduate student, you will work with a number of outstanding faculty members representing the sciences of criminal justice, biology, and chemistry. Each of these nationally-recognized and award-winning professors have years of educational and research experience and are dedicated and committed professionals.

Coursework

The Master of Science in Forensic Science (MSFS) is one of a very small number of graduate programs in the nation that has achieved full accreditation from the Forensic Science Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC). The MSFS program requires completion of 44 graduate semester hours that can be completed in two years. The coursework includes a support sequence in biological sciences, chemistry, and criminal justice. Additional coursework in specialized areas of forensic science is provided as well.

Forensic science courses are designed to provide both classroom and laboratory exposure to the field of criminalistics, forensic toxicology, pattern evidence, and forensic anthropology. Emphasizing the development of problem-solving abilities, the curriculum encourages concentration in at least one forensic science specialty area and exposes students to both relevant laboratory techniques and medicolegal developments.

Core Curriculum

- Forensic instrumental analysis
- Trace evidence and microscopic analysis
- Pattern and physical evidence concepts
- Controlled substance analysis
- Forensic biology
- Forensic toxicology
- Seminar in forensic science
- Quality assurance and ethical conduct
- Law and forensic science
- Internship in forensic science
- Capstone research

Electives

- Advanced biochemistry
- Advanced genetics
- Advanced forensic chemistry
- Advanced forensic DNA
- Advanced forensic toxicology
- Analytical spectroscopy
- Behavioral genetics
- Crime scene investigation
- Electron microscopy
- Firearms & toolmarks
- Forensic anthropology
- Forensic entomology
- Neuropsychopharmacology
- Population genetics
- Statistical genetics
- Questioned documents

You will have access to state-of-the-art facilities and laboratories containing analytical instrumentation and equipment that are commonly found in crime laboratories. Our graduate teaching laboratories and research projects will expose you to DNA analysis, real time PCR (polymerase chain reaction), automated DNA extraction platform, gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS), liquid chromatography/mass spectrometry/mass spectrometry (LC/MS/MS), FT-IR (fourier transform infrared spectroscopy), ion mobility mass spectrometry (IMS), pyrolysis gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (Py/GC/MS), polarized light microscopy (PLM), scanning electron microscopy (SEM), gas chromatography-flame ionization detection/ nitrogen phosphorus detection (GC/NPD and GC/FID) and digital microscopy. Working with these tools of the trade will prepare you for a successful career in a public or private sector forensic science laboratory.
Internships
Internships are an integral part of all degree programs in the College of Criminal Justice, providing you with the opportunity to integrate theory with practice. You also gain benefits from the professional development and networking found through a field placement experience.

The majority of graduate placements are designed to provide applied research, teaching, and administrative learning experiences, but you are also encouraged to explore other roles. You will receive six semester credit hours for an internship.

An internship is especially important in forensic science, where you will receive hands-on training in areas such as forensic DNA, controlled substance analysis, forensic toxicology, firearms, latent prints, or trace-evidence analysis.

The MSFS program collaborates with numerous city, county, state and federal agencies, both in and out of state, to provide a wide range of internship opportunities in a variety of forensic disciplines.

Scholarships, Assistantships & Financial Aid
Scholarship opportunities, assistantships, and financial assistance are available. Student assistantships and scholarships are awarded based upon previous lab experience, GRE scores, academic performance, and letters of recommendation. Financial awards are available, including out-of-state tuition waivers. University policy requires all students to pay in-state tuition.

The College of Criminal Justice
The College of Criminal Justice's Department of Forensic Science is rich in history yet heavily geared toward the future. The Forensic Science Department at SHSU was the first to offer an accredited Master of Science in Forensic Science degree and continues to make strides in the field today. The MSFS program is accredited by the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) and gives students the flexibility to tailor a degree toward their specific interests and professional goals. Our graduates have placement rates of over 90% in forensic laboratories and research positions across the nation. Students utilize campus resources such as the latest scientific equipment found in crime labs and the opportunity to conduct research at the Southeast Texas Applied Forensic Science Facility, one of six facilities in the United States. From the laboratory to the courtroom and everything between, we have the tools you need to build a career in forensic science.

Sam Houston State University
Since 1879, Sam Houston State University has touched the lives of over 93,000 graduates and helped shape the economic, social, and cultural development of the state and nation. Steeped in tradition and Texas hospitality, the university offers the type of educational experience most often found at private institutions. The low student-to-faculty ratio allows for more individual attention, while our beautifully maintained campus and historic architecture provide a serene backdrop to high-tech facilities, equipment, and amenities. Our tuition rates, combined with exceptional faculty and academic programs, is one of the best educational values in Texas.

BE ONE OF THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST
Further your studies and career at Sam Houston State's top criminal justice college. The minimum requirements to be considered for this program are:

- A bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution in chemistry, biology, or a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in a forensic or natural science with the equivalent of a minor in either chemistry or biology.
- Coursework prerequisites in undergraduate-level chemistry and biology.
- Acceptable Graduate Record Examination scores, within the last five years.
- TOEFL scores for international students.
- Three letters of recommendation, at least two from academic sources.
- Official copies of all transcripts.
- Personal essay of the applicant's career goals and aspirations.
- An application supplement listing pertinent undergraduate courses taken.

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For specific information on the MSFS Program, contact:

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All required materials should be sent to the Office of Graduate Admissions