Forensic Science M.S. Degree Program

About Our Program

The nationally accredited Forensic Science Program at Marshall University is a two-year academic program leading to a master of science in forensic science. The program is one of a limited number of graduate-level programs that is FEPAC accredited (go to aafs.org for more details). MUFSP offers a unique opportunity of having accredited (ISO 17025) forensic testing and DNA databasing lab.

With the increasing introduction of scientific results into court testimony and the demand for standardized educational programs, Marshall University's Forensic Science Program satisfies federal and state standards and guidelines to enable its graduates to enter this fascinating field.

The program includes a five-semester core curriculum with both thesis and non-thesis options. In addition to this strong, broad-based core curriculum, four areas of emphasis are offered to gain more in-depth education and training. Students may select any combination of the emphases, up to 4, in the standard five semester program. These areas of emphasis include Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensics, DNA Analysis, and Forensic Chemistry.

On-site research and service forensic laboratories at the Marshall University Forensic Science Center (MUFSC) provide students opportunities to see the inner workings of a laboratory through shadowing professionals in one or more of the Center's labs; one of many reasons that our program is set apart. These include accredited laboratories providing CODIS databasing, parentage testing, and DNA casework, as well as forensic chemistry, digital forensics, microscopy/comparative sciences, and microbial forensics.

Admission Policy

Admission to the Forensic Science Program is highly selective, with ~20 students selected each year. Applicant materials should be submitted by March 1, program entrance begins the fall semester only. The program observes a rolling application policy so that individuals may apply and be admitted for the next fall class at any time.

The program reserves the right to withdraw its offer should the applicant fail to successfully meet all requirements for fall enrollment.

All application, admission, and degree-granting requirements and regulations shall be applied equitably to individual applicants and students regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion, or national origin.

Admission Requirements

- Submission of the Marshall University Graduate College Application available online via www.marshall.edu/graduate/
- Completion of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible at www.fafsa.ed.gov. (US Citizens).
- Submission of official transcript(s) documenting that the applicant has: A) Achieved an overall Grade Point Average of 3.0 or better. B) Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in a forensic or natural science, computer science, computer electronic or electrical engineering, information systems or information technology (or its equivalent coursework in a relevant field). C) Completed one academic year of the following courses with associated labs, with no grade of less than a C: Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics. Recommended Course: Biochemistry D) It should be noted that successful completion of an undergraduate course in biochemistry is recommended, but not required, prior to entry into this program.
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) – Tested AFTER 8/1/11, Applicants should perform in the top 50% of test-takers in each of the three categories: verbal, quantitative, and writing. Tested BEFORE 8/1/11, applicants should have a combined score (Verbal + Quantitative) of ≥1000.
- Formal Letters: Personal Request for Admission; Three Letters of Recommendation on formal letterhead from individuals familiar with applicant's moral character and academic record.

Full admission to the program (once an offer is made) is also contingent on successful completion of:

- A background check similar to those required for law enforcement officers are likely to be a condition of employment (Reference: NIJ Report NCJ 203099 – "Qualifications for a Career in Forensic Science." pp. 7-10). We encourage all students to maintain a drug-free lifestyle to ensure they will not be denied internships or future employment.
- Required Hepatitis B vaccination/titer or formal declination of vaccination.
- Receipt of other documentation required for enrollment.

Academic Common Market Information

Academic Common Market (ACM) is a program through which students from states without a M.S. program in Forensic Science may qualify for the equivalent of in-state tuition. As of 2011, those states include: GA, KY, LA, NC, SC, and TN.

Financial Aid Information

There are many forms of financial support available to U.S. citizen graduate students who have completed their FAFSA including: loans, graduate and teaching assistantships, work studies, and scholarship waivers. Please contact Marshall's Financial Assistance Office for more information, sfa@marshall.edu.

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Quick Facts

Small student to faculty ratio

Students complete a research-based internship in a working laboratory, at the local, state, or federal level

Multiple on-site forensic laboratories, as well as a mock Crime Scene House, provide real-world experience

Our alumni span the globe; many are employed by the FBI, ATF, DEA, AFDIL, Secret Service, State Department, state crime labs, private laboratories and agencies

Specializations available in up to four areas of emphasis: Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensics, DNA Analysis, and Forensic Chemistry.

Our M.S. Program is Fully FEPAC accredited by the American Academic of Forensic Science—aafs.org

FEPAC
Forensic Science Education Program Accreditation Commission

Areas of Emphasis

The FEPAC-accredited Forensic Science Program provides a broad-based graduate level curriculum in forensic science. In addition to the core curriculum, the Marshall University Forensic Science Program offers four areas of emphasis: Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensics, DNA Analysis, and Forensic Chemistry. While one area of emphasis is required, students may complete up to four areas of emphasis during their standard five-semester course of study. Completing multiple areas of emphasis is contingent on maintaining good academic standing while enrolled in the program. Our program is unique in that it encourages a variety of specialties, unlike other graduate programs that require a pre-enrollment commitment to a single field of study.

Core Curriculum		
Course		**Credits**
FSC 604	Genetics and DNA Technologies	3
FSC 606	Crime Scene & Death Investigation	2
FSC 612	Forensic Microscopy	2
FSC 618	Forensic Comparative Sciences	2
FSC 619	Forensic Science Statistics	3
FSC 622	Forensic Analytical Chemistry	3
FSC 623	Forensic Analytical Chemistry Lab	1
FSC 624	Biochemistry	4
FSC 630	Forensic Science Internship	5
FSC 632	Foundations and Fundamentals in Digital Evidence	3
FSC 665	Legal Issues in Forensic Science	3
FSC 680	Seminar (Semesters 1, 2, 4, 5)	4
	Approved Elective	3
	TOTAL	**38**

Digital Forensics	
Course	**Hrs**
FSC 605 Forensic Digital Imaging	3
FSC 609 Network Forensics	3
FSC 634 Digital Evidence Search & Seizure	3
FSC 676 Advanced Digital Evidence Detection & Recovery	2

DNA Analysis	
Course	**Hrs**
FSC 600 Cell and Molecular Biology *OR* BSC 550 Molecular Biology	3
FSC 603 Genetics & DNA Laboratory	1
FSC 627 Human Genetics	2
FSC 629 Advanced DNA Technologies	2

Forensic Chemistry	
Course	**Hrs**
FSC 608 Forensic Toxicology	3
FSC 626 Advanced Drug Analysis	2
FSC 628 Chemical Analysis of Trace Evidence	2

Crime Scene Investigation	
Course	**Hrs**
FSC 607 Bloodstain Pattern Analysis	3
FSC 615 Advanced Crime Scene Investigation	3
FSC 617 Advanced Photography and Documentation	3

Visit www.marshall.edu/forensics for more information or to download an Admissions Packet.

Digital Forensics

Computers and other digital devices hold a wealth of information including text, digital images, audio and video, which can serve as key evidence for solving crimes. Forensic software programs can be used to image digital storage media and the images can be analyzed using a variety of investigative software programs. Mobile phone forensics is an area that is emphasized in the forensic science courses, as well as investigation of computers and gaming devices. The opportunity to participate in hands-on experiences with investigative tools allows students to participate in mock investigations in preparation for careers in this exciting discipline.

DNA Analysis

The Marshall University Forensic Science Center is home to the academic program as well as a service-oriented DNA laboratory. The Combined DNA Indexing System (CODIS) for West Virginia is a secure facility that uses state-of-the-art technology. MU DNA Lab faculty and staff serve as instructors and supervisors for various DNA-based courses while providing select students with real-world experience, training, and exposure to the inner workings of a forensic DNA laboratory. The DNA emphasis exceeds the DNA Advisory Board standards by requiring a total of 12 graduate level credit hours addressing the DNA guidelines.

Forensic Chemistry

Students pursuing careers in forensic drug analysis, toxicology, and trace evidence will benefit from the completion of the Forensic Chemistry emphasis. As some agencies may require 30 or more hours of chemistry coursework, the Forensic Chemistry emphasis provides additional education and hands-on training to meet these federal and state guidelines.

Crime Scene Investigation

The Crime Scene Investigation emphasis provides students with the tools and hands-on experience to excel and become leaders in their field. The Forensic Science Program has its own Crime Scene House that allows students to obtain real-world experience and training through the completion of mock crime scene exercises. Upon completion of this emphasis, students qualify to sit for the International Association for Identification Basic Student Knowledge in Crime Scene Examination.

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Revised 03/12/12