FORENSIC SCIENCE

Graduate Program Head: Wendy Hanna-Rose
Program Code: FRNSC
Campus(es): University Park (M.P.S.)
Degrees Conferred: Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.)
The Graduate Faculty: View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fa&prog=FRNSC)

The Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.) in Forensic Science is an inter-college degree program housed in the Eberly College of Science and includes ties with Departments of Anthropology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Chemistry, Entomology, Psychology, and Sociology. The program is offered by Penn State Graduate Faculty members, with enrichment by mentors from the academic faculty, public crime laboratories, and private forensic laboratories. The curriculum is designed to provide students with innovative, hands-on, and multidisciplinary learning approaches to educate and train them in crime scene investigation, the science behind forensics, courtroom proceedings, and the ethical and social issues that they will be exposed to when they join the forensic community. In addition, the program will develop teamwork and communication skills, which will be important when working actual cases in a crime laboratory.

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/).

The Master of Professional Studies degree in Forensic Science is appropriate for students with a baccalaureate degree in the biological sciences, chemistry, or a related field of study. Applicants are required to have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in their undergraduate degree. Submission of GRE scores is optional. In addition, each applicant is asked to provide a personal statement describing professional interests and career goals and two letters of reference. Letters of reference should be submitted by the student’s undergraduate adviser, research adviser, an instructor for an upper level course taken as part of their major, internship supervisor, or employer (only if the applicant was employed in a position related to forensic science or a relevant natural/physical science). Individuals providing letters of reference will also be required to complete a subjective evaluation of the applicant. Unofficial transcripts from each institution of higher education attended as an undergraduate or graduate student must be submitted. International applicants must also provide a TOEFL or IELTS score unless exempt in accordance with Graduate School policy. Applicants may be selected for interview by members of the forensic science faculty. Admission to the program is based upon a thorough review of all applicant qualifications.

Degree Requirements

Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/).

Chemistry Emphasis

A minimum of 41 credits are required for completion of the program, with at least 19 credits from courses at the 500 and 800-level, and at least 6 credits at the 500 level. Students are required to take 27 credits from the core courses listed below and 11 additional credits of Chemistry coursework. Elective credits are from courses which are determined based on interest and career track. FRNSC 801 will serve as the capstone course for completion of the M.P.S. in Forensic Science.

Biology Emphasis

A minimum of 42 credits are required for completion of the program, with at least 20 credits from courses at the 500 and 800-level, and at least 6 credits at the 500 level. Students are required to take 27 credits from the core courses listed below and 12 additional credits of Biology coursework. Elective credits are from courses which are determined based on interest and career track. FRNSC 801 will serve as the capstone course for completion of the M.P.S. in Forensic Science.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 400</td>
<td>Courtroom Proceedings and Testimony</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 410</td>
<td>A Scientific Approach to Crime Scene Investigation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 411</td>
<td>Criminalistics: Trace and Impression Evidence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 413</td>
<td>Criminalistics: Biology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 415W</td>
<td>Laboratory in Crime Scene Investigation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 475</td>
<td>Forensic Science Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 532</td>
<td>Drug Chemistry and Toxicology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 541</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 561</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 894</td>
<td>Research Projects in Forensic Science</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional Courses

Select one of the following emphases: 11-12

- **Forensic Chemistry Emphasis**
  - CHEM 425W Chromatography and Electrochemistry
  - CHEM 500 Seminar in Chemistry
  - FRNSC 831 Forensic Chemistry II

- **Forensic Biology Emphasis**
  - BMB 400 Molecular Biology of the Gene
  - BMBB 590 Colloquium
  - FRNSC 821 Forensic Molecular Biology II

Electives

Select at least 3 credits of the following: 3

- CRIM 406 Sociology of Deviance
- CRIM 423 Sexual and Domestic Violence
- CRIM 425 Organized Crime
- CRIM 432 Crime and the American Court System
- CRIM 453 Women and the Criminal Justice System
- PSYCH 471 Psychology of Adjustment and Social Relationships
Forensic Science

Culminating Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRNSC 801</td>
<td>Professional Development in Forensic Science</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td></td>
<td>41-42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 FRNSC 801 serves as the capstone course for completion of the M.P.S. in Forensic Science.

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/) and GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master’s (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/)
- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master’s (https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/)

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/) section of The Graduate School’s website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/) set by The Graduate School.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Forensic Science (FRNSC) Course List (https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/frnsc/)