

Forensic Science Capstone FAQ Sheet

What is the Forensic Science Capstone?

Capstone is an opportunity to apply and test your understanding of what it means to be in the field of forensic science. It is required for all undergraduate forensic science majors (3 hours credit). Students have several options to fulfill their capstone requirement and must also complete the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam during their capstone semester.

When should I apply for Capstone?

Students should apply within 1 or 2 semesters before graduation. Application due dates are dependent on the semester you will be completing the capstone. Late applications are not accepted. Students are responsible for submitting the application by the following deadlines:

- Fall semester capstone applications due **February 7**
- Summer semester capstone applications due **February 7**
- Spring semester capstone packets due **September 7**

What requirements should I meet before completing my Capstone Application?

- Meet GPA and graduation requirements for both degrees (refer to your degree sheets)
- Nearing the completion of both degrees (within 1 or 2 semesters of graduation)
- Completed or currently enrolled in all required forensic science courses (Introduction to Forensic Science, Crime Scene Processing, Criminal Procedures, and Forensic Science Analysis)
- Most, if not all, forensic science elective courses completed or in progress

What is the Capstone Application process?

- The capstone application is located on the FSI website and must be submitted **before** your appointment with the Forensic Science Advisor.
- Students must meet with the Forensic Science Advisor before the deadline to receive a degree check, transcripts, and to ensure your Capstone Application has been properly completed - by appointment only.
- After the deadline, applications will be reviewed and students placed according to their preferences, GPA, primary degree, and forensic science electives.
- Students will be notified via their UCO email of their placement shortly after the deadline and be given permission to enroll in the appropriate corresponding Capstone course.
- **Capstone applications do not roll over to the next semester.** Students who apply for Capstone and are placed but fail to enroll themselves in the correct course or choose to complete it at a later time must reapply before the next Capstone deadline.
- All Capstone options will have their own syllabus with assignments and require the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam that covers FRSC 2503, 3043, 3123, and 4253.

What options do I have for Capstone?

FRSC 4900 Practicum in Forensic Science

The Forensic Science Practicum (3 hours) is an off-campus internship opportunity that requires students to complete 120 hours at a Practicum site. Most sites require additional paperwork, such as agency-specific applications, background checks, polygraphs, etc. Students will develop a work schedule with their assigned supervisor, and each site will have their own specific requirements. All Practicum students will receive a syllabus with assignments and are required to take the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam at the end of the semester.

Practicum placements are limited and therefore very competitive. Students who apply for an off-campus site but are not placed will be reserved a seat in the FRSC 4950 Internship class.

FRSC 4930 Individual Study in Forensic Science

The Individual Study in Forensic Science (3 hours) involves a field or research experience in a study selected by the student and a supervising instructor. Students must meet with a prospective instructor prior to completing the Individual Study Application to discuss an appropriate project and obtain his or her permission.

Capstone students must complete both the Capstone and Individual Study applications and meet all Capstone eligibility requirements and deadlines. Specific course requirements will be determined by the instructor, but all capstone students are required to take the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam.

FRSC 4940 Field Wildlife Forensic Science

The Field Wildlife Forensic Science course (3 hours) is a unique and exciting opportunity for students interested in maritime forensic science, wildlife pathology, and conservation to explore new career paths and apply their forensic science skills in an oceanic environment.

Capstone students must complete both the FRSC Capstone and Field Wildlife Forensic course applications and meet all Capstone eligibility requirements and deadlines. Students will receive a syllabus with assignments and be required to take the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam at the end of the semester.

For more information about additional course fees, dates and deadlines, please visit the [Field Wildlife Forensic Science](#) page on the FSI website.

FRSC 4950 Internship in Forensic Science

The Internship in Forensic Science course (3 hours) is an on-campus Capstone option that will explore and validate the skills acquired by students over the course of their forensic science training. Each student's experience will vary based on their area of interest as they proceed through the entire investigative process. The course may include the following activities for a mock case scenario:

- Documenting and processing a crime scene
- Drafting and executing a search warrant

- Developing investigative leads
- Performing requested laboratory analyses for evidence
- Drafting reports summarizing results of analysis
- Testifying to analysis in a Moot Court setting

All Internship course students will receive a syllabus with assignments and be required to take the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam.

What is the Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam?

The Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam is administered by the Capstone Coordinator and is scheduled near the end of your capstone semester. The exam constitutes 20% of your grade for the capstone course you are enrolled in. Questions come from the required courses for all forensic science majors: Introduction to Forensic Science, Crime Scene Processing, Criminal Procedures in Forensic Science, and Forensic Science Analysis and Lab. Students are encouraged to review material retained from these courses. See the [Forensic Science Comprehensive Exam Study Guide](#) on the FSI website for a list of general topics.

How do I know which Practicum sites I should apply for?

Students may apply for up to 3 different practicum sites. Information about each site should be taken into consideration when making your selections on the Capstone Application. Many of these sites only offer one internship position each semester. If you have not taken classes to prepare you for an internship at that site, you will likely not be selected. To increase your chances of getting placed at a practicum site, only choose those that match your degrees and/or courses you have taken. Refer to the information below about each site as a guide.

ARL Laboratory

This site is for students majoring in Forensic Science – Chemistry.

Bell & Rhodes Accounting

Students wishing to apply for this site should be Accounting and Forensic Science majors. Students should take/have taken courses in accounting in addition to their forensic science courses.

Department of Corrections

This practicum is geared towards students on the Digital Forensics track. This position is working with the DOC on contraband cellphones. Students looking to be placed in this position must have successfully completed the Mobile Devices course at the time of application.

DNA Solutions

This site is for students majoring in Forensic Science – Molecular Biology.

Edmond Police Department, Digital Lab

This site is geared towards students pursuing a career in digital forensics. Priority is given to students majoring in the Digital Forensics track and concurrently majoring in Computer Science or ISOM. Students applying for this site should have completed or be enrolled in digital forensic classes, such as Digital Evidence, Digital Forensics and Lab, Digital Forensic Tools and Analysis, and Mobile Device Forensics and Lab to be adequately prepared for this internship.

Edmond Police Department, Technical Investigative Unit

This unit performs crime scene investigations for Edmond Police Department. This internship is best fit for students looking for a career in crime scene investigations. Students should have completed advanced crime scene classes. These classes include, but are not limited to, Advanced Crime Scene Processing, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Crime Scene Photography, Fingerprint Classification, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Federal Aviation Administration, Toxicology Lab

This practicum is in the FAA toxicology lab and geared towards students on the Forensic Chemistry track. This site requires students to schedule a minimum of 2 **full** days every week during the semester to make the work productive and meaningful. When requesting placement at this site, be aware of this time requirement.

FSI Cold Case Course, UCO

This course is offered by UCO's Forensic Science Institute and reviews active cold cases. Students should have completed the following courses: Introduction to Forensic Science, Crime Scene Processing, Medicolegal Forensics, Crime Scene Reconstruction, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis. In addition to these courses, students must receive approval from the instructor of this course.

Kansas Bureau of Investigation

This agency offers internship positions in several disciplines. To be considered for a specific discipline you will need to take the appropriate courses. The following is a list degree requirements or recommended courses for each discipline.

- **Biology/DNA Analysis** – students majoring in Forensic Science – Molecular Biology
- **Chemistry** – students majoring in Forensic Science – Chemistry
- **Crime Scene Response** – students need to have taken classes including, but not limited to, Advanced Crime Scene Processing, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Crime Scene Photography, Bloodstain Pattern Analysis I & II, etc...
- **Digital Evidence** – students majoring in Forensic Science – Digital Forensics
- **Firearms/Toolmarks** – students need to have taken classes including, but not limited to, Firearm and Toolmark Analysis and Advanced Firearm and Toolmark Analysis and Lab
- **Latent Prints** – students need to have taken advanced latent print coursework, such as Advanced Fingerprint Analysis
- **Toxicology** – students majoring in Forensic Science – Chemistry

- **Trace** – students need to have taken courses including, but not limited to, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, Forensic Chemistry & Lab, WMD Forensics, etc...

It is also important to understand that KBI has four (4) laboratory locations throughout the State of Kansas. Not all disciplines are represented at each of the laboratories. Depending on requests and staffing, internships in specific disciplines may be fulfilled in one of the satellite laboratory locations. For specific information and locations, please visit http://www.kansas.gov/kbi/about/about_lab_internships.shtml

*Students wishing to be placed here for the summer semester will need to submit their Capstone Application no later than **January 28th** to be considered.

Mary Abbott Children’s House

Mary Abbott Children’s House is an organization that specializes in child abuse cases. This site is currently accepting one intern per semester in the following areas of service:

- **Medical Interns** – students will have the opportunity to gain experience working with a multidisciplinary team of advocates, forensic interviewers, DHS, and law enforcement. Medical interns will learn the basic information about all forms of maltreatment and will participate in all facets of caring for this type of patient. Potential experiential opportunities include preparing a patient for examination, obtaining vital signs, urine specimen collection, assisting with physical examination and photo documentation, written medical documentation, and chain of custody. The intern will also assist with data input and record keeping as well as keeping the exam room and supplies clean and tidy. While it is not absolutely necessary, ideally, students would have a background in nursing or medical assisting as well as experience with children.
- **Forensic Interview Interns** – students will have the opportunity to gain experience in collaborating with the different members of the multidisciplinary team. They will also gain experience in the forensic interview protocol, forensic interviewing best practices, research that supports the protocol, pre and post case staffing, forensic interview observation, the scheduling and intake process for program services, documentation, forensic interview report typing, preparation of interview evidence, DVD burning of interviews and court preparation.
- **Victim Advocate Interns** – students will gain experience in documentation/case management, presenting and filing crime victim rights/compensation, crisis management techniques, and collaboration with different members on the multidisciplinary team. Students will have the opportunity to understand best practices as it relates to child abuse response, mental health intervention, and the CAC model. Students are ideally majoring in forensic sociology, psychology majors, or related fields.

Midwest City Police Department Crime Lab

This unit performs crime scene investigations for Midwest City Police Department. This internship is best fit for students looking for a career in crime scene investigations. Students should have completed advanced crime scene classes. These classes include, but are not limited

to, Advanced Crime Scene Processing, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Crime Scene Photography, Fingerprint Classification, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Norman Police Department, Crime Scene Unit

This unit performs crime scene investigations for Norman Police Department. This internship is best fit for students looking for a career in crime scene investigations. Students should have completed advanced crime scene classes. These classes include, but are not limited to, Advanced Crime Scene Processing, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Crime Scene Photography, Fingerprint Classification, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Oklahoma City

The OCME has the sole responsibility for investigating sudden, violent, unexpected, and suspicious deaths. Information gained from these medicolegal investigations is frequently required in the form of evidence and expert testimony in both criminal and civil legal proceedings. This internship is best fit for students looking for a career in death investigations. Students should have completed advanced classes related to death investigations including, but not limited to, Medicolegal Forensics, Forensic Investigations of Mass Disasters, Forensic and Biological Anthropology, and Crime Scene Photography.

Office of Student Conduct, UCO

Students selected for this internship can expect to gain valuable experience in investigations and interviewing, case management, conducting background checks, and other relevant practices for those pursuing a career in fields such as law enforcement and forensics. It is applicable for students pursuing a degree in forensic science, psychology, sociology, and criminal justice.

Oklahoma City Police Department, Crime Scene Unit

This unit performs crime scene investigations for Oklahoma City Police Department. This internship is best fit for students looking for a career in crime scene investigations. Students should have completed advanced crime scene classes. These classes include, but are not limited to, Advanced Crime Scene Processing, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Crime Scene Photography, Fingerprint Classification, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis.

Oklahoma City Police Department, DNA Laboratory

This site is for students majoring in Forensic Science – Molecular Biology seeking a career in DNA analysis.

Oklahoma Indigent Defense System, Norman Capital Trial Division

This practicum is geared towards students with an interest in investigations. A background in psychology is preferred. Students will assist in the defense attorney's investigation of capital crime cases awaiting jury trial. The OIDS will conduct interviews of students to determine the suitability for the position as students will be trusted with highly confidential information. These cases are often graphic in nature and require objectivity with no strong opinions about

the death penalty. The office is located in Norman, but some work can be performed remotely.

Oklahoma Innocence Project

The OKIP at the Oklahoma City School of Law is dedicated to identifying and remedying cases of wrongful convictions in Oklahoma. The OKIP only pursues cases in which there is credible evidence of factual innocence. This site is beneficial for Forensic Science students also majoring in Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, Molecular Biology, etc.

- **UCO Class** – Students will meet at OCU law school in the evening for class to review active cases with OCU law students. Files will be reviewed to identify those that meet specific criteria, identify cases with DNA evidence, and review trial transcripts for discrepancies. Students may also have the opportunity to assist and attend hearings.
- **Clinic** – Students will assist the OKIP clinic with projects and other administrative duties related to case management.

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, Forensic Science Center

This internship site currently offers positions in the following lab units:

- **Drug Chemistry** – Forensic Chemistry majors
- **Toxicology** – Forensic Chemistry majors
- **Biology** – Forensic Molecular Biology majors
- **Latents** – must have taken advanced coursework in latent evidence such as Advanced Fingerprint Analysis
- **Digital** – Digital Forensics majors
- **Firearms** – must have taken advanced coursework such as Firearm and Toolmark Analysis
- **Cold Case** – students placed in this unit will digitize crime scene and autopsy photos from negatives, review cold cases, prepare a solvability worksheet for each case for review, and scan case reports and miscellaneous documents.

YWCA Rape Crisis Center, Oklahoma City

This site is geared towards students wishing to pursue a career in forensic psychology or sociology and work as a victim's advocate. It is highly recommended that students wishing to be placed at this site have taken Forensic Psychology. Students majoring in Nursing and Forensic Science are also encouraged to request this site to work alongside the SANE Nurse program.

How do students get chosen for each Practicum site?

Students are grouped by discipline (Crime Scene, DNA, Digital Forensics, etc...). Students competing for the same practicum sites will be chosen based on overall GPA and the courses taken in preparation for the internship at that site.

What if I want to apply for a Practicum site not listed?

If a student finds a location not listed that is willing to accept an intern for 120 hours during a semester, it must first be approved to fulfill the capstone requirement. The student must

submit a description of the duties that will be performed as part of the internship with that organization to Capstone Coordinator Keisha Jones (kjones78@uco.edu) for approval. It will only be approved if it is a non-paid position and the duties align with the program at the FSI. It is the student's responsibility to work out this partnership and coordinate with the site to ensure all the requirements are met. It is still mandatory for students to complete all the other requirements for the practicum as outlined in the syllabus. Students are **NOT** to contact practicum sites listed in this FAQ sheet or on the FSI website.

What if I do not get selected for one of the Practicum sites I requested?

If you are not selected to complete the capstone at one of the sites you requested, you will be given permission to enroll in the FSI Internship course. Students will receive an email informing them of this placement and will be given further instructions. The FSI Internship capstone experience takes the student from crime scene to courtroom and includes evidence examination, as well as courtroom testimony. Students are **NOT** to contact practicum sites directly for special permission to be placed at that site.

Will I be required to complete a polygraph or background check for my internship?

Some practicum sites require students to complete an additional application and undergo a screening process for final approval. The process is different for each agency. However, it is important that **all** students know and understand the statement on drug abuse and background checks related to the Forensic Science Program:

Individuals seeking careers in forensic science and related fields are subject to background checks as they will work with sensitive information. These careers demand a high level of trust, unquestioned ethics, and professionalism. Students pursuing a degree in forensic science can also expect a background check as part of the required internship or practicum program. A background investigation typically includes review of arrest or conviction records; drug and alcohol use and abuse screening; review of credit reports; interview of friends, teachers, and supervisors; and possibly a polygraph examination. Issues derived from background investigations often preclude internships and employment in forensic science or related fields. Even though law enforcement agencies may differ in specific policies, tolerance levels, and practices related to the background investigation, it is unlikely that a candidate failing a background check will be accepted for an internship or able to secure employment in the forensic science field.

What if my primary major also requires a capstone?

Each department has individual requirements, which should be discussed with the advisor for that major. Internships completed for another major cannot be used for the forensic science capstone requirement.