

Career + Major Planning Guide

This document is a starting point and guide to those researching careers in forensic science. It is not an exhaustive list, but a list of careers students frequently ask about. Course suggestions are general recommendations and do not represent exact degree requirements. Please see your academic advisor to review your specific degree requirements.

JOBS & ORGANIZATIONS

[American Academy of Forensic Science](#)

[OK State Bureau of Investigation](#)

[Crime Scene Investigator Network](#)

[USA Jobs](#)

[International Association of Bloodstain Pattern Analysis](#)

[UCO Career Development Center](#)

[International Association for Identification](#)

[International Homicide Investigators Association](#)

[American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators](#)

[FBI Jobs](#)

Check city, county, and state government websites for relevant/additional postings.

ARSON/EXPLOSIVES INVESTIGATOR

Typically a commissioned officer with arresting power who investigates potential crimes and scenes involving arson or explosive devices (bomb tech).

Skills/Attributes

able to assess and process a scene, able to testify in court/public speaking

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Criminal Justice (scene processing)

Chemistry (lab analysis)

Class Suggestions

FRSC 3333 - Forensic Investigations of Mass Disasters

FRSC 4513 - Forensic Chemistry & Lab (if interested in lab analysis)

FRSC 3423 - Clandestine Laboratories

FRSC 4553 - Weapons of Mass Destruction Forensics

FRSC 4443 - Forensic Arson Investigation

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

[UCO Criminal Justice Club](#)

[Int'l Association of Bomb Technicians & Investigators](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Thomas Jourdan | tjourdan@uco.edu

Robert Doke | rdoke1@uco.edu

FORENSIC ART & GRAPHICS

Sketch suspects given descriptions from witnesses, prepare courtroom exhibits, create crimes scene reconstruction exhibits, and progression of age from old photographs.

Skills/Attributes

Art and/or computer graphics

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Art - Studio Art

Design - Graphic Design

Class Suggestions

FRSC 2613 - Behavioral Aspects of Crime Scenes

FRSC 4143 - Crime Scene Reconstruction

FRSC 4153 - Crime Scene Photography

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

[International Association for Identification](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Dr. Adams | dadams8@uco.edu

BEHAVIORAL CRIMINOLOGIST/PROFILER

Students interested in becoming FBI Profilers must understand that these positions are only available to seasoned FBI agents with 5-10 years' experience investigating violent crimes. To become an FBI Profiler, you must first become an FBI agent. BAU vacancies rarely occur and are highly competitive within the FBI.

Skills/Attributes

Experience investigating violent crimes.

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Psychology

Criminal Justice

Any Science

Class Suggestions

FRSC 2613 - Behavioral Aspects of Crime Scenes

FRSC 4163 -
Medicolegal Forensics

FRSC 4153 -
Crime Scene Reconstruction

FRSC 4313 - Forensic Pathology

FRSC 3323 - Forensic Interviewing

FRSC 4243 - Forensic Psychology

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

John Mabry | jmabry1@uco.edu

Wayne Lord | wlord1@uco.edu

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS

Process crime scenes for municipal, state, and federal agencies. Most agencies have civilian positions that do not require you to be a commissioned officer. This type of work goes by many names like: Crime Scene Investigator, Crime Scene Technician, etc.). Job responsibilities include writing narratives, photography, sketching and measurement, conducting detailed searches, and recording & collecting evidence.

Skills/Attributes

Detail oriented, organized, open to flexible work hours, can work under pressure, able to testify in court/public speaking

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Criminal Justice

Sociology

Photography

Psychology

Any Natural Science

Class Suggestions

FRSC 2613 - Behavioral Aspects of Crime Scenes

FRSC 4163 - Medicolegal Forensics

FRSC 4143 - Crime Scene Reconstruction

FRSC 4413 - Bloodstain Pattern Analysis

FRSC 4153 - Crime Scene Photography

FRSC 4423 - Bloodstain Pattern Analysis II

Related Clubs/Organizations

[Int'l Association of Bloodstain Pattern Analysis](#)

[International Association for Identification](#)

[Association for Crime Scene Reconstruction](#)

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[OK Division of the IAI](#)

[UCO Criminal Justice Club](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Craig Gravel | cgravel@uco.edu

John Mabry | jmabry1@uco.edu
(photography)

Keisha Jones | kjones78@uco.edu

FORENSIC CHEMIST

Tests drugs (ex: pills, plant material, powders), accelerants, and other chemicals for local, county, state (ex: OSBI), or federal (ex: FBI, DEA, and ATF) labs.

Skills/Attributes

Good laboratory practice and skills; able to testify in court/public speaking

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science-Chemistry paired with one of the following*:

Chemistry

Chemistry-Environmental Chemistry

Chemistry-ACS *recommended

Chemistry - Health Sciences

Class Suggestions

Specific forensic classes required in Forensic Science-Chemistry degree.

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[American Chemical Society](#)

[UCO Chemistry Club](#)

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Thomas Jourdan | tjourdan@uco.edu

DIGITAL ANALYST

Digital Forensics Examiners\Analysts use forensic tools and techniques to examine digital media in a forensically sound manner with the goal of identifying, preserving, recovering, analyzing, and presenting facts and opinions about digital information. Digital forensics analysts may be involved in the investigation of a range of criminal activities including other security incidents and internal investigations.

Skills/Attributes

Information Technology Skills: operating systems, networks, hardware and software, Analytical skills, Attention to detail, Communication skills, Organizational skills, Problem-solving skills, Strong ethics, and personal character

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science-Digital Forensics paired with one of the following*:

Information Systems and Operations Management-
Management Information Systems (MIS) *recommended

Computer Science-Information
Science

Computer Science

Computer Science-Applied

Software Engineering

Class Suggestions

FRSC 2713 - Digital Evidence

FRSC 4463-Digital Forensics & Lab

FRSC 4633 - Digital Forensics Tools
and Analysis & Lab

FRSC 4653 - Mobile Device
Forensics & Lab

FRSC 4673 - Network Forensics &
Lab

ISOM 3343 - IT Security and Risk
Management

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[Delta Mu Delta](#)

[UCO CS Club](#)

[Association of IT Professionals](#)

[Beta Gamma Sigma](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Mark McCoy | mmccoy@uco.edu

Rachael Elliott | relliott@uco.edu

DNA ANALYST

Generates DNA profiles from biology samples. Analyzes biological samples to determine their source (ex: blood, saliva, seminal fluid).

Skills/Attributes

Lab skills (take classes with labs), detail oriented, excellent hand-eye coordination, effective oral and written communication, critical thinking, able to testify in court/public speaking

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science-Molecular Biology paired with one of the following*:

Biology-Biomedical Sciences *recommended

Biology

Biology-Medical Laboratory Science

Class Suggestions

Specific classes required in Forensic Science-Molecular Biology degree.

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO BIO Clubs](#)

[Association of Forensic DNA
Analysts & Administrators](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

James Creecy | jcreecy@uco.edu

Rhonda Williams | rwilliams73@uco.edu

FINGERPRINT ANALYST

Collects, processes, and analyzes fingerprint evidence. Job duties include understanding and applying ACE-V methodology for the analysis and comparison of prints collected from a crime scene to known exemplars; developing prints using appropriate physical and chemical processing techniques; and utilizing AFIS technology.

Skills/Attributes

strong attention to detail; patience for repetitive tasks; ability to testify in court/public speaking; good visual acuity; comfortable utilizing software and computers for analysis; effective oral and written communication; ability to collect, organize and analyze data; ability to develop logical conclusions

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Criminal Justice

Chemistry

Any Natural Science

Class Suggestions

FRSC 4273 - Advanced Fingerprint Analysis

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO Criminal Justice Club](#)

[International Association for Identification](#)

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Cait Porterfield | cporterfield@uco.edu

FIREARMS/TOOLMARK EXAMINER

Analyzes impressions from tools and firearms. Function testing of firearms, distance determination of shots for crime scene reconstruction, comparison microscopy of fired bullets/cartridge cases, analysis of three-dimensional imaging instruments and computer comparison algorithms.

Skills/Attributes

Comfortable with frequent microscope use, able to testify in court/public speaking, suggested to get a masters in Forensic Science

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with:

Criminal Justice

Class Suggestions

FRSC 4153 -
Crime Scene Photography

FRSC 4353 -
Firearm & Toolmark Analysis

FRSC 4543 -
Advanced Firearm & Toolmark

FRSC 4273 - Advanced Fingerprint Analysis

FRSC 4533 - Forensic Microscopy & Laboratory

Related Clubs/Organizations

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

[Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners](#)

[International Association for Identification](#)

[UCO Criminal Justice Club](#)

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Eric Law | elaw@uco.edu

MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATOR

Typically works under the Medical Examiner's Office or Coroner documenting deceased individual's injuries and post-mortem changes to help determine cause and manner of death (the body is their evidence).

Skills/Attributes

Attention to detail. Able to testify in court/public speaking. Able to work and communicate with a multitude of different professionals in various medical, mortuary, and law enforcement fields. Able to work holidays, nights, and weekends. Will compile reports for forensic pathologists and procure evidence and examinations from both decedents and scenes where decedents are located.

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Biology

Criminal Justice

Funeral Services

Class Suggestions

FNRL 2214 - Intro to Human Anatomy/Dissection

FRSC 4163 - Medicolegal Forensics

FRSC 3333 - Forensic Invest. of Mass Disasters

FRSC 4263 - Forensic & Biological Anthropology

FRSC 4153 - Crime Scene Photography

FRSC 4313 - Forensic Pathology

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators](#)

[UCO Criminal Justice Club](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Timothy Dwyer | tdwyer@uco.edu

Rhonda Williams | rwilliams73@uco.edu

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST

Students should be prepared to do their bachelor, medical school, residency, then begin work in the field. Not many pathologist positions are out there, and they don't become available often. Pathologists perform autopsies to determine cause/manner of death.

Skills/Attributes

Perseverance, determination

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science- paired with:

Biology-Biomedical Sciences

Class Suggestions

FRSC 3333 - Forensic Invest. Of Mass Disasters

FRSC 4163 - Medicolegal Forensics

FRSC 4263 - Forensic & Biological Anthropology

FRSC 4313 - Forensic Pathology

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO BIO Clubs](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Wayne Lord | wlord1@uco.edu

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

Determines if an individual is competent to stand trial/interviewing suspects. Typically requires an advanced degree in psychology (UCO has an MS in Forensic Psychology program). Most are PHD.

Skills/Attributes

Patient and a good listener.

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with:

Psychology

Class Suggestions

FRSC 2613 - Behavioral Aspects of Crime Scenes

FRSC 4243 - Forensic Psychology

FRSC 3323 - Forensic Interviewing

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

John Mabry | jmabry1@uco.edu

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER (SANE)

Works under the YWCA on call to conduct examinations of victims after an alleged sexual assault. Not necessarily a job, more of a duty that ER nurses do that may require further training outside of the degree.

Skills/Attributes

Registered nurse, experience in advanced physical assessment skills (emergency, critical care and maternal child health)

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Nursing

Biology-Biomedical Sciences

Class Suggestions

FRSC 3323 - Forensic Interviewing

FRSC 4153 -
Crime Scene Photography

FRSC 4163 -
Medicolegal Forensics

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO Nurses Association](#)

[International Association of
Forensic Nurses](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Rhonda Williams | rwilliams73@uco.edu

TOXICOLOGIST

Examines biological and environmental samples (e.g., blood, urine, and tissues) for toxins. Works in local, county, state (ex: OSBI), or federal (ex: FBI, DEA, ATF, and EPA) labs.

Skills/Attributes

Good laboratory practice and skills; able to testify in court/public speaking

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science-Chemistry paired with one of the following*:

Chemistry

Chemistry-Environmental Chemistry

Chemistry-ACS *recommended

Chemistry - Health Sciences

Class Suggestions

Specific classes required in Forensic Science-Chemistry degree.

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO Chemistry Club](#)

[Society of Forensic Toxicologists](#)

[UCO Chemistry Club](#)

[Society of Environmental
Toxicology & Chemistry](#)

[American Academy of
Forensic Sciences](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Thomas Jourdan | tjourdan@uco.edu

TRACE EVIDENCE EXAMINER

Identifies and compares specific types of trace materials that could be transferred during the commission of a crime. These trace materials include human hair, animal hair, textile fibers and fabric, rope, soil, glass, and building materials. Typically involves microscopic analyses.

Skills/Attributes

ability to utilize a microscope; ability to testify in court/public speaking; effective oral and written communication; good visual acuity; ability to conduct chemical analyses and use instrumentation

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science or Forensic Science-Chemistry paired with one of the following:

Chemistry

Natural Science

Class Suggestions

FRSC 4513 Forensic Chemistry and Lab

FRSC 4533 Forensic Microscopy and Lab

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences](#)

<https://www.asteetrace.org/>

Forensic Faculty Expert

Heather Schafstall (OSBI Criminalist) | hschafstall@uco.edu

FORENSIC WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

Investigates illegal activities and deaths related to endangered species. Domestic work can look like Game Warden and Forestry dealing with poaching. International work can look like trafficking and illegal harvesting.

Skills/Attributes

Suggested to learn another language (French/Spanish/Portuguese, Malay, Filipino), likely will need higher degree

Major Pairing Suggestions

Forensic Science paired with one of the following:

Biology

Class Suggestions

BIO 3254 - Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy & Lab

FRSC 2823 - Wildlife Forensics

BIO 3803 - Mammalian Physiology I

FRSC 4263 - Forensic & Biological Anthropology

Related Clubs/Organizations

[UCO SAFS & DDE](#)

[UCO Wildlife Society](#)

[U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

[UCO BIO Clubs](#)

[U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#)

[National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration](#)

Forensic Faculty Expert

Wayne Lord | wlord1@uco.edu