

FORENSIC SCIENCE, B.S.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

Forensic Science is the application of scientific principles and methods to assist criminal and civil investigations and litigation. This major is an inter-college collaboration among academic units and provides students with a strong foundation in the biological, physical, and mathematical sciences. It introduces them to relevant topics in criminalistics, forensic chemistry, forensic biology, crime scene investigation, and appropriate social sciences. Students are educated on the role of forensic scientists in the criminal justice system, the collection and analysis of scientific evidence, and the manner in which evidence is presented in court. Graduates of this major could pursue employment as a scientist in a federal, state, or private forensic laboratory or with insurance companies, homeland security agencies, or the judicial community. Graduates could also choose to pursue advanced degrees, for example, in forensic science, medicine, psychology, anthropology, pathology, odontology, entomology, toxicology, law, or in the general sciences.

What is Forensic Science?

Forensic Science is the application of science to matters of the law. A forensic scientist may develop a deep understanding of and hands-on lab experience in serology, biochemistry, and forensic molecular biology, with particular emphasis on forensic DNA analysis. A forensic scientist might also use analytical, physical, and inorganic chemistry for the forensic analysis of controlled substances, trace evidence, fire debris, ignitable liquids, and firearms and gunshot residue. In the United States, there are over 4,000 crime laboratories administered by federal, state, and local governments or private industry. Our Forensic Science program provides a strong scientific foundation and general criminalistics education that allows room for all students to individualize their educational experience towards specific degree and career goals.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are interested in utilizing your scientific knowledge to help solve complex problems concerning civil, criminal, and homeland security issues.
- You like and want to further study several science disciplines.
- You want to understand how evidence is collected at the crime scene, analyzed in the laboratory, and presented in courts of law.
- You want to utilize state-of-the-art instrumentation to analyze materials as part of laboratory exercises.
- You want to pursue a career in forensic science casework, research, or education.