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Combining science, experience and technology, a forensic scientist paints a picture of a crime scene and reveals clues about the perpetrators by analyzing evidence. Working side by side with investigators, forensic scientists comb through evidence at crime scene and piece together probable models that help to bring criminals to justice. Forensic
scientists work on-site at a crime scene, in a laboratory and often testify at court hearings about their findings. You may be asking what are the duties of a forensic scientists to analyze a crime scene, collect evidence and provide an
initial impression of the crime. It's common for forensic scientists to specialize in a specific area of criminology. Article continues below this adThe different types of forensic scientists include: Firearms examiner: An expert in guns, this type of forensic scientists analyzes shell casings and provides ballistic information that may link a weapon to a
crime. Pathologist: Performing autopsies, this medical doctor provides critical information about the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about through the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about through the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about through the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about through the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about through the time and manner of death. Article continues below this adToxicologist: Using chemistry and pharmacology, this forensic scientist analyzes the body to provide information about the time and manner of death. Article continues below this add to the time and the time
criminal, a forensic psychologist provides criminal profiles, mental state and the competence of a criminal to be tried in court. Blood Splatter Analyst: Analyzing blood splatter and blood stains, this forensic scientist provides insight into what happened to the victim during the crime. Digital Forensic Investigator: Focused on technological clues, a digital
forensic investigator dives into cyberspace to find clues about cyber crimes and other evidence that proves a crime was committed. Article continues below this adQuestioned Document Examiner: This forensic scientist is an expert on handwriting and piecing together documents that may be partially destroyed. Bugs that are present in a dead body
can help determine the time of death. For example, the blow fly is usually present 48 hours after death. Even if you move a file to the trash on your computer, it remains in a hidden file that a digital forensic investigator can find. Evidence of forensic science being used to solve a crime goes all the way back to 44 B.C. and is tied to the death of Julius
Caesar. When you look into forensic science facts about fingerprints, it's important to note that even though they are unique to each person, it can be difficult to tell them apart without technological assistance. Innocence Project If you want to be a forensic sciencia science facts about fingerprints, it's important to note that even though they are unique to each person, it can be difficult to tell them apart without technological assistance.
After you graduate, seek professional experience in a crime laboratory, governmental setting or police department. If you want to specialize, you'll need to continue your education by enrolling in a certificate program or a graduate program or a graduate program in forensic science. Article continues below this adIn 2019, the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the
median, annual pay for forensic science technicians was $59,150 or $28.44 per hour. Median is the midpoint of the salary scale, meaning half of all earners made more than that amount, while half earned less. If you specialize and become noted in the field, you can expect to earn more. The top 10 percent of earners in this profession earned $97,350,
and the lowest reported earning $35,620. A strong job growth of 14 percent is expected for this profession between now and 2028. Skills you'll need As well as having an exceptional eye for detail, you'll also need: good colour vision analytical thinking problem solving consistent and methodical approach research skills teamwork working to
deadlines and under pressure ability to simplify complex information Finding work experience in a lab will help you develop relevant skills. It's also worth volunteering with the police to understand what it's like to work in an investigative environment. Try looking for work by: gaining work experience or shadowing related
occupations, like the police, hospital or university labs volunteering as a police cadet or youth volunteer joining the Chartered Society of Forensic Scientists (CSFS) as a student member - this will give you access to resources and contacts that might lead to work experience. How to get a job as a forensic scientist The sorts of employers looking for
graduate forensic scientists include police forces with forensic science units, commercial companies, government departments, medical schools, university research departments and public health laboratories. Check the websites of relevant professional bodies, police forces and key employers. The CSFS, Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI)
New Scientist Jobs and Scottish Police Authority all advertise vacancies. What it's like to be a forensic scientist, you'll search for, examine and prepare scientific evidence for use in courts of law. Depending on your role and specialisation, you'll search for, examine and prepare scientist, you'll search for, examine and prepare scientist.
blood grouping and DNA profiling examining fluid and tissue samples for traces of drugs and poisons studying splash patterns and ballistics recovering data from computers, mobile phones and other electronic equipment attending crime scenes, like a murder or fire
giving scientific evidence in court researching and developing new technologies Forensic scientists tend to work regular hours and office environments. The job can be emotionally demanding particularly if attending crime scenes. Once qualified, there is likely to be additional on-the-job training and courses to
attend to keep up to date with forensic technologies as well as health and safety, presentation skills and project management. You'll usually need between £25,000, going up to between £25,000 with experience although it will
vary depending on your area of expertise. For example, a senior digital forensic officer at the Serious Fraud Office could earn £40,000-£46,000, depending on experience. Is a role as a forensic scientist right for you? Forensic science offers a range of career opportunities within various settings, including crime laboratories, law enforcement agencies
government agencies, research institutions, and private consulting firms. If you have great attention to detail, analytical skills, and the ability to handle potentially disturbing or emotionally challenging situations, a role as a forensic scientist could be for you. You can get into this job through: a university course an apprenticeship applying directly You
could apply to do a Degree Apprenticeship, such as: Scientist Level 6 Research Scientist Level 6 Research Scientist Level 7 It will help if you do your aprenticeship with a company that provides forensic science services, or with a police force that has its own in-house lab facilities. Entry requirements You'll usually need: 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) and A levels, or
equivalent, for a degree apprenticeship More Information You can apply directly to forensic services providers if you've got a lot of lab experience, and qualifications in science, especially chemistry. If you want to specialise in recovering data from computers and mobile phones, you'll need relevant experience and qualifications. Useful subjects
include computing, electrical engineering, electronics or physics. Professional and industry bodies You can join The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences for professional development and advice. The society has student membership, for undergraduates aiming to get into a forensic science career. Further information You can find out more on
careers in forensics from The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences. Murder scenes can produce a wealth of evidence, from shell casings to human blood and hair. Investigators gather all of this evidence, from shell casings to human blood and hair. Investigators gather all of this evidence, from shell casings to human blood and hair. Investigators gather all of this evidence, from shell casings to human blood and hair. Investigators gather all of this evidence, from shell casings to human blood and hair.
the bullet. Trace evidence of gunshot residue can land on the hands of the person firing the weapon or on the victim. Police use tape or a swab to lift residue off the hands of a suspected shooter. Then the forensics technician uses a scanning electron microscope to examine the sample. Because elements in gunpowder have a unique X-ray signature,
examination under the electron microscope can help determine whether the substance is actually gunshot residue. Technicians will also use dithiooxamide (DTO), sodium rhodizonate or the Greiss test to detect the presence of chemicals produced when a gun is fired. Infrared spectrometry/spectroscopy identifies substances by passing infrared
radiation through them and then detecting how much of the radiation they absorb. It can identify the structure and chemical components of various substances like soil, paint or fibers. With this technique, forensic technicians can match fibers found on a victim's body to those in a piece of clothing or furniture. Fingerprinting relies on the unique
pattern of loops, arches and whorls that cover each person's fingertips. Visible prints are made on a card or on a type of surface that creates an impression, such as blood or dirt. Latent prints are made when sweat, oil and other substances on the skin reproduce the fingerprints on a glass, murder weapon or any other surface the perpetrator has
touched. These prints can't be seen with the naked eye, but they can be made visible using dark powder, lasers or other light sources. Making Invisible uses cyanoacrylate — the same ingredient in superglue. When it's heated inside a fuming chamber, cyanoacrylate
releases a vapor that interacts with the amino acids in a latent fingerprint, creating a white print. Technicians may also use a wandlike tool that heats a mixture of cyanoacrylate and fluorescent pigment. The tool then releases gases on the latent prints, to fix and stain them on the paper. Other chemicals that react with oils in fingerprints to reveal
latent prints include silver nitrate (the chemical in black-and-white film), iodine, ninhydrin and zinc chloride. A number of tests are used to analyze blood, semen, technicians use acid phosphatase, an enzyme found in semen. If the test turns purple, it's positive
for semen. To confirm the results, technicians look at stained slides of the sample under a microscope. The stain colors the heads of the sperm red and the tails green (which is why the test is referred to as the "Christmas tree stain"). Blood: the Kastle-Meyer test uses a substance called phenolphthalein, which is normally colorless, but turns pink in the
presence of blood. Saliva: The phadebas amylase test is used to detect α-amylase, an enzyme in human saliva. If amylase is present, a blue dye will be released. "Understanding what type of testing or comparison will be done to evidence on the back end allows the students to be better at what they should do on the front end." Charla Perdue, Instructor
in Forensic Science and Undergraduate Program Director for Public Safety & Security, Florida State University Crime scene investigation is composed of many different parts. Toxicology, ballistics, financial, and cyber divisions can all come into play within a single crime. These diverse elements work in the service of one individual: the
forensic investigator, also known as the lead detective. The role of a forensic investigator is a complex leadership position. Often working for a local, state, or federal law enforcement agency, he or she shares many responsibilities and competencies with detectives: conducting interviews, securing crime scenes, analyzing public and private records,
and writing detailed investigative reports. By taking on the lead role, a forensic investigator is also responsible for managing diverse and often siloed forensic teams while orchestrating the overall strategic direction of an investigation. Further still, a lead detective may have to coordinate with his or her counterparts at other federal, state, and local
agencies to maintain smooth communication and chain-of-evidence integrity. Forensic investigators may specialize in a particular discipline of criminal justice, such as cybercrime or financial crime expert may work in the Internal Revenue Service's investigations arm, and a cybercrime expert
may work for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cyber Division, for example. However, as criminal elements grow increasingly sophisticated and investigations become more interdisciplinary, even local law enforcement agencies are looking for dedicated talent in previously niche areas of specialization. Lead detectives are now expected to be
familiar with the varied languages of multiple investigative departments. Lead detectives need to be detail-oriented, strategically-minded multitaskers who can manage multiple teams working in a fast-paced environment that contains little room for error as the stakes can sometimes involve human lives. The work environment varies and can be
physically demanding as working hours can be long and arduous. Considering all of the work in the pursuit of justice, a spotless sense of ethics—with background checks to verify that sense—is mandatory. While the stress and requirements of this job can be significant, so is the reward: the satisfaction of making the world a safer and fairer place to
live. According to Bloomberg, crime rates are falling in the United States. However, the need for competent forensic investigators is not likely to fade any time soon. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS 2024) does not distinguish between police officers and detectives, but the general estimation for this group of professionals is a 3 percent job
growth between 2022 and 2032. Salary rates are similarly tricky to unpack. The BLS (May 2023) does have salary and employment data for detectives on record was $91,100 a year. Lead detectives, however, are likely to possess higher levels of education and
more experience than the average detective and, thus are more likely to earn an above-average salary. Returning to the BLS data, here is a breakdown of the salary percentiles among all detectives and criminal investigators in the country: United States Number of professionals employed 106,730 Annual mean wage $91,100 10th percentile $50,670
25th percentile $64,830 50th percentile (median) $91,100 75th percentile $116,170 90th percentile $154,360 A significant factor to consider when looking at salary and employment data is geographic location. Since forensic investigators typically work for federal, state, and local law enforcement, the largest number of detectives is in the states with
the largest populations: Texas: 16,460 detectives and criminal investigators employed California: $121,770 annual mean wage Hawaii: $121,000 Maryland: $119,900 New York: $118,350 California: $115,910 All states
mentioned above pay detectives an average of over $100,000 a year. Large metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles, and geographically well-positioned places for the profession—such as Washington DC, home to all federal agencies—have high employment numbers. New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA: 7,950 detectives and criminal
investigators employed Washington-Arlington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV: 4,880 Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA: 2,740 Top-paying metropolitan areas for detectives and criminal investigators include: San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA: $140,760 Washington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arlington-Arl
benefits package. However, the road to this career can be arduous, and persistence and dedication are necessary. Read on to get a step-by-step guide on becoming a forensic investigator. Step 1: Complete a bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
Criminal justice and forensic investigation are majors that can prepare a graduate for various positions. Students who intend to specialize later in their career—for example, in biological sciences, cybercrime, financial crime, or digital forensics—may choose to orient their undergraduate education in that direction. Outside of the standard curriculum,
many students choose to get an internship while completing their degree. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) all offer opportunities for students to get a head start with some real-world
experience. Step 2: Gain real-world experience (one to five years). No one's putting a rookie in charge of much more than picking up donuts and coffee. To earn the role of the lead detective, young detective, young detective, young detective, young the ranks of a
municipal or state police department towards the role of detective. Those who work at any public sector agency will often be put through rigorous hands-on training. Those who completed a specialized degree can find roles in the private sector. Jobs in finance and IT, for example, can provide critical experience in actual investigations. Law
enforcement agencies, especially at the federal level, take such hands-on knowledge into account when hiring from outside for positions in their cybercrime or financial crime departments, for example. No matter which path one chooses, this step of gaining experience is critical in the pursuit of becoming a lead detective. Step 3: Earn a master's
degree (optional, two years). Investigative work is a thinking person's game, and with an increase in both the quantity and complexity of criminal justice or forensic science, or they can either add a new specialization
or bolster an existing one. Furthermore, graduate-level degrees in relevant fields can include leadership and organizational training in preparation for someone to manage an investigator from continuing with his or
her work and gaining further hands-on expertise. Step 4: Continue professional development (ongoing). For leaders in any field, the cycle of gaining experience and further education never ends. As technology and investigative practices evolve and become more sophisticated, detectives must stay on top of new trends in the field. One way to keep
abreast of developments is to join a professional society, such as the Federal Criminal Investigators Association (ICSIA). These types of organizations not only provide academic and technical resources but also foster a network of like-minded professionals dedicated to becoming
experts. Another avenue for aspiring lead detectives to explore is gaining official certification. Programs like the National Detective/Investigator positions at federal, state, and local agencies. Those who specialize in a particular area of investigation can look into
professional journals in their sub-disciplines, such as the Journal of Digital Forensics, Security, and Law or the International Journal of Information Security and Cybercrime (IJISC). For those ready to get started on their journey to becoming a forensic investigator, below are a few bachelor's- and master-level programs: Florida State University
 Panama City Florida State University in Panama City offers a bachelor of science program in crime scene investigation, evidential reasoning for research and investigation, and computer applications for public safety and security. Notably, students also have
the option to complete a certificate in underwater crime scene investigation. Location: Panama City, FL Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); American Academy of Underwater Sciences (certificate program) Expected Time to Completion: Varies, depending on program Arizona State
University Arizona State University's Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions offers both a BS in criminal justice, which can be completed online. The BS program equips students with the skills and knowledge to explore the impact of crime and implement effective strategies for reducing it. The MA
degree prepares students to advance their criminal justice careers. Made up of 120 credits, the BS in criminal justice crime control policies and practices; introduction to corrections; courts and sentencing; and gender, crime, and criminal justice. The MA program
consists of 33 credits, including coursework in applied data analysis in criminal justice; criminal justice planning and program evaluation; and theory and practice in criminal justice applicants to the BS will need to possess a high school diploma, while MA degree applicants must have a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited
institution with a minimum grade point average of 3.0. High-achieving students in the BS in criminal justice program with a GPA of 3.40 or higher will be eligible to apply for an accelerated program that will allow them to complete their BS and MA in criminal justice in just five years. Location: Phoenix, AZ Accreditation: Higher Learning Commission
of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Expected Time to Completion: BS (48 months); MA (24 months) Maryville University's online bachelor of arts in criminal justice program prepares students for cutting-edge careers in criminal courts, corrections, and law enforcement. Students will choose between two
tracks: police academy training and a project-based learning experience. The program, which comprises 128 credits, includes courses such as introduction to criminal justice, 
bachelor of science program in cybersecurity comprising 128 credits and an online master of science program in cybersecurity made up of 30 creditation: Higher Learning Commission (HLC); Accreditation Council for Business
Schools and Programs (ACBSP) Expected Time to Completion: BS and BA (48 months); MS (12 months); transfer students will be able to complete their bachelor's in 30 months George Mason University Geor
students to be change agents and leaders in this field. Students in this program receive real-world insights and scientific knowledge necessary for evaluating, selecting, and implementing efficient, fair, and effective criminal justice practices and policies. A unique feature of this program is the resume-building research practicum project, in which
students partner with a justice agency to translate research into practice and present their work before a panel of criminal justice experts. The program consists of 30 credits, including courses on evidence-based crime and justice policy, leadership in justice organizations, legal and ethical issues in criminal
justice, criminal justice research methods and data analysis, and evaluation of crime and justice policies and practices. George Mason University also offers an MS in forensic graduate certificate (18 credits), a BS in forensic science (120 credits), an MS in forensic science (36 credits), and a forensics graduate certificate (18 credits). Location: Fairfax, VA
Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Expected Time to Completion: BS (48 months); MS (24 months) Utica University A master of science in cybersecurity efforts in government
agencies, investigative units, or businesses. Students have seven specialization options to choose from: computer forensics, cyber operations, data analysis. The program includes a two-day online virtual residency during which students will interact with their classmates and
professors and will work together in a truly immersive environment. Utica University's unique partnership with CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to become CipherTrace (a leading cryptocurrency intelligence company) will allow students to be company to the company of the comp
requirements to the program include a completed online application, a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average of 3.0, transcripts from all previous universities and colleges attended, two recommendation letters, a current resume, and a personal statement. The program, which comprises 30 credits, includes courses on principles of
cybersecurity, cyber intelligence, critical national infrastructures and national security, principles of cybercrime investigations, international terrorism, network forensics, autonomous cyber operations, cyber ethics, and data mining. At the undergraduate level, students can pursue either a BS in fraud and financial crime investigation or a BS in
cybersecurity program that allows them to specialize in cybercrime and fraud investigation, network forensics and incident response, cyber operations, or information assurance. Location: Utica, NY Accreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education Expected Time to Completion: BS (48 months); MS (24 months) Stevenson University
Stevenson University's online master of science in forensic investigation program prepares students to effectively conduct interviews and collect physical evidence to synthesize the results into reports and court testimony. This degree will equip students with the knowledge and skills for analyzing and evaluating testimonial evidence and documentary
evidence vital to criminal trials and investigations. As part of the program, students will delve into topics such as litigation theory and practice; investigation and analysis; and white-collar crime. The major admission requirements for the program
include a completed online application, completion of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution, a cumulative grade point average of 3.0, a personal statement, and official college transcripts from all previous academic work. Students who wish to advance their careers in this field can pursue a fully online graduate certificate in
forensic investigation. Additionally, Stevenson University offers an online master of science program in cybersecurity and digital forensics or crime scene investigation. Location: Owings Mills, MD Accreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Expected Time to Completion: 24 months University of Maryland Global Campus
A master of science program in digital forensics and cyber investigation offered by the University of Maryland Global Campus prepares students will learn how to determine whether a digital system has been compromised and attacked and will master reliable methods
for identifying, preserving, analyzing, and presenting evidence for administrative proceedings and legal prosecution. This 36-credit program includes coursework in cybersecurity foundations, digital forensics technology and practices, digital forensic response and analysis, advanced forensics, and a capstone in cybersecurity. The
University of Maryland Global Campus also offers a bachelor of science program in investigative forensics; criminal procedure and evidence; crime scene investigation; cybercrime and security; medical and legal investigations of death; and principles of
digital analysis. Location: Largo, MD Accreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education Expected Time to Completion: BS (48 months); MS (24 months) John Jay College of Criminal Justice balances theory
and practice through study in law, criminal justice, and computer science. Graduates will be qualified to work as digital forensic scientists. To get accepted into the program, applicants must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0, GRE scores, three letters of recommendation, a personal
statement, and official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended. The 33-credit program includes courses on law and high-tech crime, network security, operating system architecture and vulnerabilities, digital forensic applications, and forensic applications, and forensic management of digital evidence. John Jay College of Criminal Justice also allows students to
pursue their baccalaureate and master's degrees simultaneously. This option is available for students studying forensic psychology, public administration, and criminal justice. Location: New York, NY Accreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education Expected Time to Completion: 24 months Published on February 11, 2023 · Updated on
March 23, 2023 Published on February 11, 2023 · Updated on March 23, 2023 Jump to section... What Do Forensic Scientist Field Steps to Becoming a Forensic Scientist How Long Does it Take to Become a Forensic Scientist? What is the
Difference Between Forensic Scientists and Criminalists? FAQ Whether working alongside law enforcement at crime scenes or analyzing evidence in laboratories, forensic scientists utilize a toolbox of science-based skills and specialized knowledge that they obtain through various
undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. Often a fulfilling career, these professionals can expect this field to grow by as much as 16% over the next decade. On the following page, we explore what forensic scientists do, their career prospects, and the steps you'll take to begin your career. Keep reading to learn more about this exciting and
growing career. What Do Forensic Scientists Do? Forensic scientists work alongside law enforcement and assist in criminal investigations. These professionals help collect and analyze evidence and, depending on their specialization, work with crime scenes or in a laboratory setting. Forensic science generalists—also known as criminalists—perform a
 broad range of duties while utilizing their own set of specialized skills. Forensic science professionals who primarily work in laboratory settings often have job titles such as forensic chemist or forensic biologist. We've highlighted some standard job requirements below. Analyze crime scenes and collect evidence Diligently record information and
 observations at crime scenes Document and photograph crime scenes and evidence Use databases to catalog evidence Perform various biologists and toxicologists Forensic Scientist Salary and Career Outlook According to the Bureau of Labor
Statistics (BLS), forensic science technicians earn a median annual salary of nearly $62,000. And while projections don't guarantee job growth, students preparing for a career in forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science technicians earn a median income only tells part of the story—a forensic science technicians earn a median annual salary of nearly $62,000. And while projections don't guarantee job growth, students preparing for a career in forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science technicians earn a median annual salary of nearly $62,000. And while projections don't guarantee job growth, students preparing for a career in forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic science can anticipate a career in forensic science and a state of the story—a forensic sci
scientist's location, experience, and specific role can significantly impact how much they earn. Top earning forensic science technicians work for various governmental employers at the state and local levels. These professionals also find themselves working in various testing, medical
and diagnostic laboratories. Alongside earning a bachelor's degree, forensic science professionals can expand career opportunities and earning potential through various certificate programs, professional certifications, and graduate degrees. How to Know if You Would Enjoy a Job as a Forensic Scientist Field Before embarking on your forensic
science career, it's worth considering whether or not this career is a solid choice. Forensic science students typically have a knack for STEM-based coursework with an interest in working in a collaborative, lab-based environment. Prospective forensic scientists should also feel comfortable working alongside law enforcement. Some common skills for
forensic scientists include critical thinking, decision-making, interpersonal skills, and attention to detail. As with many careers, computer proficiency, time management, and communications skills are also essential. Future forensic scientists should also recognize that they will likely encounter violent crime scenes and human loss. Steps to Becoming a
Forensic Scientist While there's not a single path toward becoming a forensic scientist, you'll need to secure at least a bachelor's degree, preferably a forensic science degree or biology degree. Additionally, some students pursue graduate degrees or professional certificates to enhance their career options. In the following section, we outline the step
you need to take when pursuing a career in forensic science. How Long Does it Take to Become a Forensic scientist? Forensic scientists traditionally hold at least a bachelor's degree in forensic science. Students can complete these 120-credit programs in about four years and tackle core classes that include topics such as criminal procedure,
criminalistics, and digital forensics. Those holding a bachelor's degree who want to enhance their credentials or start a new career can enroll in a master's programs often allow distance learners to earn their degrees more quickly. Standard master's
coursework covers topics like forensic biology, forensic accounting, and organizational information systems. Forensic science graduate certificate programs cover topics such as death investigation, toxicology, drug chemistry, and DNA and serology. What is the Difference
Between Forensic Scientists and Criminalists? Discerning the difference between forensic scientists and criminalists can be tricky. This is further muddied because the BLS lumps forensic scientists and criminalists can be tricky. This is further muddied because the BLS lumps forensic scientists and criminalists can be tricky.
Other specializations include forensic computer examiners, digital forensic computer examiners, digital forensic chemists. FAQ Get more Universities.com's college news, advice, updates, financial aid, and more straight to your inbox. Editorial Note: We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our
editors' opinions or evaluations. The criminal justice system relies on forensics experts to investigate crime scientists do? Forensics is the application of scientific methods to crime solving. Law enforcement agencies rely on forensic scientists to documen
and process evidence, including fingerprints, DNA and weapons. Forensic scientists can also specialize in toxicology, ballistics and digital crime. As experts in their field, forensic scientists work closely with law enforcement and the court system to prosecute crimes. They create detailed reports documenting their investigative procedures and testify
in court as expert witnesses. Careers in forensic science require specialized training and a bachelor's degree. Is forensic scientists collect and analyze evidence for legal proceedings. They gather evidence in the field and analyze it in forensic
laboratories. Then, these professionals partner with law enforcement to build a legal case against suspects. As part of their job duties, forensic scientists may testify in court as expert witnesses. Forensic scientists may testify in court as expert witnesses. Forensic scientists draw on diverse analytical methods and techniques, using their specialized knowledge to shape their approaches. Specializations within
the broad field of forensic science include toxicology, DNA, firearms and trace evidence. Common job titles in the forensic sciences include: Crime scene investigator Forensic chemist Forensic medical examiner Forensic science also encompasses tech
focused roles in digital forensics, including computer forensic examiners, fraud examiners and forensic examiners and forensic examiners, including laboratories, medical facilities and law enforcement agencies. They also work in the
field, visiting crime scenes to collect evidence. In addition, forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court. How To Become a Forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court. How To Become a Forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court.
the-job training, gain experience and pursue optional professional certifications. Earn a Bachelor's Degree What degree do you need to be a forensic scientest? Many roles in this field require a bachelor's Degree what degree do you need to be a forensic scientest? Many roles in this field require a bachelor's Degree what degree do you need to be a forensic scientest? Many roles in this field require a bachelor's Degree what degree do you need to be a forensic scientest?
degrees to advance their education and move into specialties that require additional training. Choose a Specialty The forensic science field encompasses many specialties. For example, professionals in this field can specialized
training during college, where they choose electives or a concentration based on their career goals. For example, crime scene investigators may need to attend a police academy and meet the requirements to become a police officer. Gain Workforce.
Experience Early-career forensic scientists complete on-the-job training under experience can also help forensic scientists gain specialized skills. As forensic scientists complete on-the-job training under experience can also help forensic scientists gain specialized skills.
scientists must invest in professional development and continuing education to stay current. Consider Professional Certifications require a mix of education and career experience, with many requiring 1-3 years of full-time experience in the certification
area. Generally, these credentials are voluntary for forensic science roles. Though some employers may prefer to hire candidates with professional certifications, most forensic scientist jobs do not require them. Forensic Scientist Salary and Job Outlook Careers in this field report above-average salaries and faster-than-average growth projections
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), forensic scientists who work for state and local government agencies made an average salary of $64,500 in 2022, whileso the top 10% of earners made over $104,330. Earning potential varies by industry. For instance, forensic scientists who work for state and local government agencies made over $104,330. Earning potential varies by industry.
their counterparts in medical and diagnostic laboratories earned only an average of $42,600. Experience earned average salaries $16,000 higher than their counterparts with less than one year of experience. The BLS projects
careers in this field will grow 13% from 2022 to 2032, a faster-than-average rate. This demand reflects the need for skilled professionals—the criminal justice system relies on forensic scientists' expertise to process evidence, testify in trials and provide forensic information to law enforcement agencies. As caseloads grow and technological advances
continue, demand for forensic scientists will likely remain high. Certifications for Forensic scientists Forensic science, organizations offer certifications in specialized areas like bloodstain pattern analysis, forensic DNA and forensic toxicology.
International Association for Identification Forensic Certification: The IAI offers certification forensic Certification, footwear identification, forensic photography and fingerprint analysis. Members of the IAI pay $300 for certification, while non-members pay $400. American Board of Criminalistics Certifications: Forensic
scientists can pursue certifications in biological evidence screening, drug analysis and forensic DNA from the American Board of Criminalistics. Candidates need a bachelor's degree in forensic science or the natural sciences from an accredited institution. Each credential requires between one and two years of full-time employment. Applicants pay
$325 for the application and examination fees. American Board of Forensic Toxicology Certifications: ABFT offers certifications for forensic toxicologists at three levels: analyst, fellow and diplomates need at least a bachelor's degree and fellows need at least a bachelor's degree at least a bachelor's degree
doctorate. Both fellows and diplomates need three years of work experience. The certifications cost $300. Professional Organizations for Forensic Scientists Joining professional Organization O
membership discount for students or early career professionals. American Academy of Forensic Sciences: AAFS advocates for forensic science education and research. The academy dates back to 1948 and hosts meetings with networking opportunities. Members can access a peer-reviewed journal, educational resources and a job board. American
Society of Trace Evidence Examiners: Trace evidence specialists can join ASTEE. The association welcomes students, academics and professionals. In addition to publishing a journal, the society offers annual awards. Association for forensic scientists
specializing in firearm and toolmark identification. The association offers certification and training seminars, publishes a peer-reviewed journal and hosts a forum for members to connect. Association of Forensic DNA analysts and Administrators: DNA experts can join AFDAA to stay current on forensic methods, share research and network at
conferences. Members can also participate in training and continuous education programs, attend presentations and engage in professional development. International Association of Forensic Sciences: A worldwide association hosts
international meetings where professionals connect and share knowledge. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Becoming a Forensic scientists collect and analysis and toxicology. Forensic scientists work in law enforcement to identify and
prosecute suspects. Forensics uses scientific methods to solve crimes. Forensic scientists analyze evidence in laboratory settings using techniques such as fingerprinting, DNA analysis and handwriting analysis. Most forensic scientists hold a bachelor's degree in forensic scientists hold a bachelor's degree in forensic scientists analyze evidence in laboratory settings using techniques such as fingerprinting, DNA analysis and handwriting analysis.
master's in forensic science. Many forensic sciences a bachelor's degree and specialized training in areas like DNA analysis, toxicology and fingerprint analysis.
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills help prospective forensic science can prepare you for a career in forensic science, biology or another natural science can prepare you for a career in forensic science, biology or another natural science can prepare you for a career in forensic science, biology or another natural science can prepare you for a career in forensic science, biology or another natural science can prepare you for a career in forensic science, biology or another natural science can prepare you for a career in forensic science.
on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations. The criminal justice system relies on forensics experts to investigate crime scientists do? Forensics is the application of scientific methods to crime solving. Law
enforcement agencies rely on forensic scientists to document and process evidence, including fingerprints, DNA and weapons. Forensic scientists work closely with law enforcement and the court system to prosecute crimes. They create detailed
reports documenting their investigative procedures and testify in court as expert witnesses. Careers in forensic science require specialized training and a bachelor's degree. Is forensic scientists Do? Forensic scientists collect and analyze evidence for legal proceedings.
They gather evidence in the field and analyze it in forensic laboratories. Then, these professionals partner with law enforcement to build a legal case against suspects. As part of their job duties, forensic scientists may testify in court as expert witnesses. Forensic scientists draw on diverse analytical methods and techniques, using their specialized
knowledge to shape their approaches. Specializations within the broad field of forensic science include toxicology, DNA, firearms and trace evidence. Common job titles in the forensic science include toxicology, DNA, firearms and trace evidence. Common job titles in the forensic science include toxicology, DNA, firearms and trace evidence.
medical examiner Forensic science also encompasses tech-focused roles in digital forensic examiners, fraud examiners and forensic scientists work in multiple settings, including laboratories, medical
facilities and law enforcement agencies. They also work in the field, visiting crime scenes to collect evidence. In addition, forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court. How To Become a Forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court. How To Become a Forensic scientists may consult, teach or testify in court.
In addition to formal education, forensic scientists complete on-the-job training, gain experience and pursue optional professional certifications. Earn a Bachelor's degree in forensic scientists complete on-the-job training, gain experience and pursue optional professional certifications.
natural sciences. Forensic scientists can also pursue master's degrees to advance their education and move into specialties that require additional training. Choose a Specialty The forensic anthropology, forensic chemistry or
criminalistics. Most forensic scientists begin their specialized training during college, where they choose electives or a concentration based on their career goals. Forensic scientists also specialize while in the workforce. Some specialize while in the workforce. Some specialize while in the workforce academy and
meet the requirements to become a police officer. Gain Work Experience Early-career forensic scientists complete on-the-job training under experience can also help forensic scientists gain specialized skills. As forensic scientists
continues to evolve due to technological advances, forensic scientists must invest in professional development and continuing education to stay current. Consider Professional Certifications require a mix of education and career experience, with many
requiring 1-3 years of full-time experience in the certification area. Generally, these credentials are voluntary for forensic science roles. Though some employers may prefer to hire candidates with professional certifications, most forensic science roles. Though some employers may prefer to hire candidates with professional certifications, most forensic science roles.
average salaries and faster-than-average growth projections. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), forensic scientists earned a median annual wage of $63,740 as of 2022, and the top 10% of earners made over $104,330. Earning potential varies by industry. For instance, forensic scientists who work for state and local government
agencies made an average salary of $64,500 in 2022, while their counterparts in medical and diagnostic laboratories earned only an average of $42,600. Experience earned average salaries $16,000 higher than their counterparts
with less than one year of experience. The BLS projects careers in this field will grow 13% from 2022 to 2032, a faster-than-average rate. This demand reflects the need for skilled professionals—the criminal justice system relies on forensic scientists' expertise to process evidence, testify in trials and provide forensic information to law enforcement
agencies. As caseloads grow and technological advances continue, demand for forensic scientists will likely remain high. Certifications for Forensic scientists Forensic scientists can pursue professional certifications for Forensic scientists will likely remain high.
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American Board of Criminalistics Certifications: Forensic scientists can pursue certifications in biological evidence screening, drug analysis and forensic between one
and two years of full-time employment. Application and examination fees. American Board of Forensic Toxicology Certifications: ABFT offers certifications for forensic toxicology Certification for forensic toxicolo
need at least a bachelor's degree and fellows need a doctorate. Both fellows and diplomates need three years of work experience. The certifications cost $300. Professional organizations for Forensic Scientists Joining professional organizations for Forensic Scientists and keep their knowledge
current. Many of these organizations offer a membership discount for students or early career professionals. American Academy of Forensic Sciences: AAFS advocates for forensic science education and research. The academy of Forensic Sciences appears a peer-reviewed journal,
educational resources and a job board. American Society of Trace Evidence Examiners: Trace evidence specialists can join ASTEE. The association welcomes students, academics and professionals. In addition to publishing a journal, the society offers annual awards. Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners: Founded in 1969, AFTE is a
professional organization for forensic scientists specializing in firearm and toolmark identification. The association of Forensic DNA Analysts and Administrators: DNA experts can join AFDAA to stay current on forensic
methods, share research and network at conferences. Members can also participate in training and continuous education programs, attend presentations and engage in professional development. International Association, IAFS represents forensic scientists, forensic pathologists and professionals in
related fields. The association hosts international meetings where professionals connect and share knowledge. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Becoming a Forensic scientists collect and analyze evidence of crimes. Common specialties include crime scene investigation, DNA analysis and toxicology. Forensic scientists
work in law enforcement to identify and prosecute suspects. Forensic scientists analysis and handwriting analysis. Most forensic scientists hold a bachelor's degree in forensic science or natural sciences. Some roles
require additional education, such as a master's in forensic science. Many forensic science generally takes four years of full-time study. Becoming a forensic scientist can be challenging. Forensic scientists need a bachelor's degree and specialized training in areas like DNA analysis,
toxicology and fingerprint analysis. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills help prospective forensic science can prepare you for a career in forensic science. You also need on-the-job training to build specialized skills. How can financial
brands set themselves apart through visual storytelling? Our experts explain how.Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images CollectionCurated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks. Browse Editors' FavoritesHow can financial brands
set themselves apart through visual storytelling? Our experts explain how. Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images Collections captures events from 1895 to today's most recent coverage. Discover The Collection Curated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks. Browse Editors' Favorites How can financial brands set
themselves apart through visual storytelling? Our experts explain how.Learn MoreThe Motorsport Images CollectionCurated, compelling, and worth your time. Explore our latest gallery of Editors' Picks. Browse Editors' Favorites
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