

Forensic scientist

Forensic scientists prepare traces of physical evidence for use in courts of law.



Skills You'll need:

- a logical and analytical approach
- patience and concentration
- highly developed observation and scientific skills
- a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail
- strong written and spoken communication skills

Working hours, patterns and environment

You'll usually work 37 hours a week, Monday to Friday. Your employer may use a shift or on-call system for dealing with high priority work.

You'll be based mainly in a laboratory, but may also visit crime scenes, which could be distressing.

You'll wear special clothing to prevent contamination and protect you from hazardous substances.

Your day-to-day tasks may include:

- blood grouping and DNA profiling
- analysing fluid and tissue samples for traces of drugs and poisons
- examining splash patterns and the distribution of particles
- providing expert advice on explosives, firearms and ballistics
- recovering data from computers, mobile phones and other electronic equipment
- attending crime scenes, such as a murder or fire
- giving impartial scientific evidence in court

Career path and progression

With experience, you could move into management and direct other forensics staff as a forensics manager or casework examiner.

You could also work as a reporting scientist, acting as an expert witness in court.

East Midlands growth: +13.2% from 2014 to 2024, creating 15,460 jobs

East Midlands median earnings: £36,292

This university subject relates to this career:

Biology and Biological sciences



You may also be interested in:

- Fingerprint officer
- Biologist
- Chemist

You'll usually need:

A degree or postgraduate award in forensic science. You may also be able to get into this career with a science-based degree like chemistry, biology, life sciences, applied sciences or medical sciences.

To start as a forensics lab support assistant, you'll need A levels, a BTEC or an HND in science.