The Department of Forensic Science offers programs leading to bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

The Bachelor of Science is for students who plan a career or graduate study in the forensic sciences. The forensic science program provides students with fundamental learning in forensic laboratory analyses and crime scene investigation, with academic emphasis in biology, chemistry and criminal justice. The program offers three concentrations: forensic biology, forensic chemistry and physical evidence. Students will select one of the three concentrations prior to the second semester of their sophomore year. The B.S. in Forensic Science supplies students with the necessary skills for professional careers in forensic laboratories, public and private, basic research laboratories, clinical laboratories, and/or to pursue graduate studies. Students also will be prepared to pursue advanced degrees in the physical sciences, biological sciences, forensic science, law, allied health and medicine, to name a few.

The Master of Science in Forensic Science prepares students for careers as forensic scientists in government and private laboratories. Students receive in-depth exposure to specializations within the field, including drug analysis, DNA analysis, trace evidence, criminalistics and legal issues.

For more information visit the departmental website (http://forensicscience.vcu.edu/).

- Forensic Science, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) with a concentration in:
  - Forensic biology (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate[college-humanities-sciences/forensic-science/forensic-science-bs-concentration-forensic-biology/)
  - Forensic chemistry (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate[college-humanities-sciences/forensic-science/forensic-science-bs-concentration-forensic-chemistry/)
  - Physical evidence (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate[college-humanities-sciences/forensic-science/forensic-science-bs-concentration-physical-evidence/)
- Forensic science (FRSC) (p.  )
- Forensic science lab (FRSZ) (p.  )

Forensic science
FRSC 202. Crime and Science. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Introduces the scientific theory, concepts and practices used in any physical science by relating them to the analysis of physical evidence performed in forensic laboratories and the fundamentals of crime scene investigation, and their relationship to the criminal justice system and criminal investigations. Not applicable for credit toward B.S. in Forensic Science.

FRSC 300. Survey of Forensic Science. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: BIOL 151, BIOZ 151, CHEM 102, CHEZ 102 and UNIV 112, each with a minimum grade of C. Pre- or corequisites: CHEM 301 and CHEZ 301, and UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Enrollment is restricted to forensic science majors or by permission of instructor. Introduces the theory, concepts and practices used in the analysis of physical evidence performed in crime laboratories, and the fundamentals of crime scene investigation. Also introduces ethical and quality assurance issues of crucial importance in modern crime laboratories.

FRSC 309. Scientific Crime Scene Investigation. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture/laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 301 and either FRSC 300 or FRSC 350, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to forensic science majors or by permission of instructor. Provides scientific theory of crime scene investigation and crime scene reconstruction and basic knowledge of proper crime scene protocol and evidence processing techniques. Includes the processes for documentation, collecting and preserving physical evidence.

FRSC 310. Forensic Anthropology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: ANTH 210 or FRSC 300 with a minimum grade of C. A comprehensive overview of forensic anthropology including its development and the theory and methodology on which it is based. Crosslisted as: ANTH 310.

FRSC 325. Forensic Medicine. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: FRSC 300, CHEM 301 and CHEZ 301, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to forensic science majors or by permission of instructor. An investigation of topics in death scene investigations as well as autopsy findings associated with natural and unnatural deaths.

FRSC 351. Forensic Science Service-learning. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 4 credits. Prerequisites: FRSC 300 and at least one additional FRSC/Z course, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to forensic science majors or by permission of instructor. Provides an opportunity to learn about the community's schools and how to teach forensic science concepts to school-aged students. Each week, VCU students will provide hands-on lab activities in community-based programs to reinforce lessons learned through their school curricula. Reflective writing, partner assignments and a final presentation are required, in addition to 20 community partner hours. VCU students will improve their ability to explain forensic concepts to those with differing scientific backgrounds, have increased confidence when addressing audiences and deepen their understanding of civic responsibility.

FRSC 365. Forensic Microscopy. 4 Hours.
Semester course; 4 lecture/laboratory hours. 4 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 301 and either FRSC 300 or FRSC 350, each with a minimum grade of C. An in-depth course in the theory and practical application of microscopy to the examination, identification and individualization of physical evidence submitted to forensic laboratories.
FRSC 375. Forensic Evidence, Law and Criminal Procedure. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Pre- or co-requisites:
FRSC 300 or FRSC 350. Open only to forensic science majors or by
permission of instructor. The law of criminal procedure and rules of
evidence as applied to forensic science. Topics will include scientific
versus legal burdens of proof, legal terminology and trial procedure.

FRSC 385. Forensic Serology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits.
Prerequisites: CHEM 301 and either FRSC 300 or FRSC 350, each with
a minimum grade of C. Examines the application of basic chemical,
biological, immunological and microscopic laboratory techniques to
the examination and identification of body-fluid stains, including both
presumptive and/or confirmatory identification of blood, semen, saliva,
urine and feces. Applies methods that are used in forensic laboratories
to identify the species of origin and includes a review of advanced
methods for automated serological analysis. Laboratory exercises
will supplement lectures to give students practical knowledge of the
laboratory procedures.

FRSC 391. Topics in Forensic Science. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits. Maximum total of 6
credits for all forensic science topics courses may be applied to the
major. Prerequisites: CHEM 301 and either FRSC 300 or FRSC 350,
each with a minimum grade of C. A study in selected topics in forensic
science. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered
each semester and additional prerequisites.

FRSC 400. Forensic Chemistry. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 409
and CHEZ 409, each with a minimum grade of C. Provides an understanding
of presumptive and confirmatory chemical analyses used in a forensic
laboratory for the characterization and identification of physical evidence,
such as accelerants and explosives, paints and polymers, suspected drug
substances, and toxicology. Chemical analyses as pertaining to firearms,
toolmarks and glass will also be explored.

FRSC 410. Forensic Pattern Evidence. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture/laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite:
FRSC 309 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to
forensic science majors or by permission of instructor. Covers topics
in pattern evidence analysis including analysis of latent prints and
impression evidence of footwear and tire treads as applied to forensic
casework. Covers both the theoretical and practical aspects using lectures and laboratory exercises focusing on the visualization, examination and interpretation of pattern evidence.

FRSC 412. Forensic Analysis of Firearms and Toolmarks. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture/laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite:
FRSC 365 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to forensic
science majors or by permission of instructor. An investigation of topics
in firearms and toolmark examination for forensic applications. Covers
both theoretical and practical aspects using lectures and laboratory exercises.

FRSC 438. Forensic Molecular Biology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 302,
CHEZ 302, and BIOL 310 or equivalent, each with a minimum grade of C.
Provides an understanding of molecular biology testing methodologies
as applied to analysis of forensic samples. Current topics in forensic DNA
analysis will include quality assurance, DNA databanking, contemporary
research and population genetics. Crosslisted as: BIOL 438.

FRSC 445. Forensic Toxicology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 301,
CHEM 302 and CHEZ 301, each with a minimum grade of C. Provides a
comprehensive overview of the basic principles of toxicology and the
practical aspects of forensic toxicology. Students will learn to define
the toxic agents most commonly resulting in legal problems in U.S.
society and also the process by which the U.S. judicial system is aided by
scientific investigation. Crosslisted as: PATH 445.

FRSC 490. Professional Practices in Forensic Science. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 301;
FRSC 300 or FRSC 350; and one additional forensic science course, each
with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment restricted to seniors in forensic
science with at least 85 credit hours toward the degree. An examination
and evaluation of historical and current issues in the scientific analysis
of physical evidence in criminal investigations. Individual and group
activities relating to professional practices (ethics, quality control and
testimony) of forensic scientists.

FRSC 492. Forensic Science Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 independent study hours. 1-3 credits. May be
repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisites: CHEM 301; and
FRSC 300 or FRSC 350, each with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment
restricted to forensic science majors with at least sophomore standing
and a minimum GPA of 2.5. A determination of the amount of credit and
the written permission of both the instructor and the program director
must be procured prior to registration for the course.

FRSC 493. Forensic Science Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 field experience hours. 1-3 credits. Prerequisite:
FRSC 300 with a minimum grade of C. Enrollment is restricted to
forensic science majors with a minimum GPA of 2.75. An application
is required in advance of admission with permission of the internship
coordinator. Through placement in an approved organization, the student
will obtain a broader, more practical knowledge of forensic science and
its applications. Written progress and final reports are required. Graded as
pass/fail.

Forensic science lab
FRSZ 391. Topics in Forensic Science Laboratory. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable laboratory hours. 1-3 credits. Maximum total
of 6 credits for all forensic science topics courses may be applied to the
major. Prerequisite: FRSC 300 or 350. Laboratory investigations in
a selected topic in forensic science. See the Schedule of Classes for
specific topics to be offered each semester and additional prerequisites.

FRSZ 400. Forensic Chemistry Laboratory. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 4 laboratory hours. 2 credits. Pre- or corequisite:
FRSZ 400. Practical laboratory application with instrumentation used
in a forensic laboratory for the chemical analysis of various types of
physical evidence, including accelerants, explosives, paints, fibers, glass,
suspected drug substances and other evidence.

FRSZ 438. Forensic Molecular Biology Laboratory. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 4 laboratory hours. 2 credits. Pre- or corequisite: BIOL/
FRSZ 438. Provides comprehensive coverage of the various types of DNA
testing currently used in forensic science laboratories. Students will have
hands-on experience with the analytical equipment employed in forensic
science laboratories and the techniques for human identification in
forensic casework. Students will also explore and practice both scientific
writing and writing of DNA case reports. Crosslisted as: BIOZ 438.