



Forensic Scientist

Forensic scientists apply science to the law. They use various methods to identify and examine traces of physical evidence and prepare them for use in court by the prosecution or the defence. They may establish a link between the accused and the scene of the crime, or they may help settle disputes, for example find the cause of a fire. Although evidence is typically presented as a report, you may have to attend court to give evidence in person.

What does the job involve?

- In this role you could:
- perform blood grouping and DNA profiling
- analyse fluid and tissue samples for traces of drugs and poisons
- examine splash patterns and the distribution of particles
- analyse handwriting, signatures, ink and paper
- provide expert advice on explosives, firearms and ballistics
- research and develop new technologies
- recover data from computers, mobile phones and other electronic equipment
- attend crime scenes, like a murder or fire
- give impartial, scientific evidence in court

Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, maths and science. Other relevant subjects include Chemistry, biological science, physics or medical sciences and Law.



Skills You'll need:

- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- the ability to think clearly using logic and reasoning
- knowledge of public safety and security
- excellent written communication skills
- the ability to work on your own
- legal knowledge including court procedures and government regulations
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course
- an apprenticeship
- applying directly

Apprenticeship

- The following science degree apprenticeships may be relevant to this role:
- research scientist degree apprenticeship
- laboratory scientist degree apprenticeship
- It will help if you do your apprenticeship 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 higher or degree

Direct Application

You can apply directly to forensic services providers if you've got a lot of lab experience, and qualifications in science, especially chemistry.

Further information

Career tips

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.



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.

Rates of Pay

Starting salaries for forensic scientists are around £20,000 a year. With experience this can rise to between £25,000 and £35,000. Senior staff can earn up to £45,000 a year or more.