

What Is Forensic Science?

Forensic science (or forensics) is the use or application of a broad spectrum of sciences in court or during legal proceedings. Forensic science is not a discipline or branch of science, but is a catch-all for many distinct disciplines that may be used to help in the determination of a court case, either civil or criminal.

While forensic science is often seen as focusing exclusively on law enforcement, forensic science can be applied in many areas of the community and industry where the skills of a scientist need to be applied to a problem and the outcome may be presented in a court of law.



*Crime Scene Officers,
Australian
Federal Police*



*Crime Scene Unit,
Victoria Police*

ANZPAA

Australia New Zealand
Policing Advisory Agency



A Career in Forensic Science

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*field sciences
laboratory sciences
forensic medicine*



Forensic Science In Australia And New Zealand

Forensic science in Australia and New Zealand can be divided into three broad groups: field sciences, laboratory sciences and forensic medicine, although there is a great deal of overlap between these.

Field Science

Field sciences include crime scene investigation which incorporates not only investigation of crimes against the person, such as murder and assaults, but other crimes such as fires and explosions, house burglary and motor vehicle theft. Field sciences have traditionally been the role of the police, however in some jurisdictions civilians are employed.

Laboratory Science

Laboratory sciences include chemistry, biology, toxicology, firearm examination, fingerprint examination, questioned document examination, the examination of marks and impressions, audio/voice analysis and computer crime. The role of the forensic scientist can vary enormously. Activities include the detection and identification of:

- illicit drugs and their manufacture
- accelerants used in arson cases
- explosive and gunshot residues
- trace evidence, including paint, glass, polymers and fibres.



*Fingerprinting,
Australian
Federal Police*

Forensic Medicine

Forensic medicine includes pathology, psychiatry, psychology, forensic medicine, anthropology, mortuary science and odontology (dentistry). Those involved in forensic medicine examine victims of crime and suspects who may have sustained an injury while allegedly committing a crime. They give interpretations of their findings such as possible causes and timing of wounds. Other activities include identification of cause of death, aging of skeletal remains and identification of victims of mass fatality incidents.

Why Get A Career In Forensic Science

Forensic science is a fascinating and rewarding career where the love of science can be applied to the good of society, public health, and public safety. The majority of forensic scientists in Australia and New Zealand are employed by government laboratories and police services, however forensic or investigative scientists are also used by private laboratories and insurance companies.

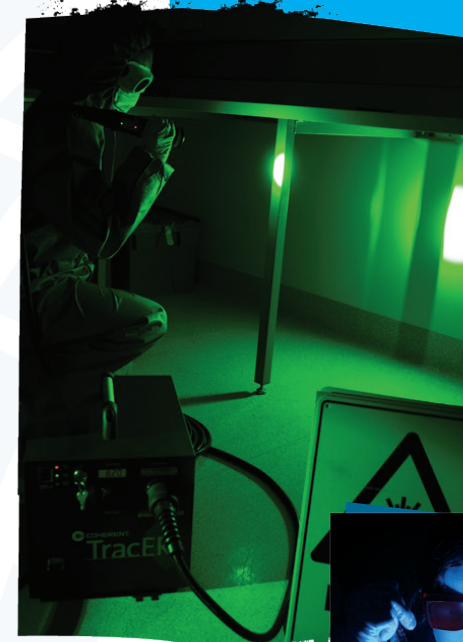
How Can You Become A Forensic Scientist?

A good quality relevant degree (such as science or medicine) is essential. There are a number of specific undergraduate and post-graduate programs in forensic science available in Australia and New Zealand. Information about these programs can be obtained from www.anzppa.org.au

*Forensic science is a rewarding career
where the love of science can be applied
to the good of society*

"Forensic science is a fantastic career! I am part of a small team that responds to complex major crime scenes (primarily murders). There is no better job challenge than knowing your hard work has assisted in solving a serious crime."

*Jennifer Raymond,
Specialist Location
& Recovery Unit,
Forensic Science
Services Branch,
NSW Police Force*



*Forensic scientist,
Victoria Police*

