Careers in Forensic Science
This guide will outline some of the key career options with forensic science. It also covers some other popular career areas requiring any science degree discipline. It contains useful websites and signposts you to relevant resources.

**Career Paths within Forensic Science**

**Forensic Lab Work**

Your main role would be to look for evidence to link a suspect with a crime scene but your degree content will influence the duties you may undertake. For example, with forensic biology, you may be involved in blood grouping and DNA profiling or with analysing fluid and tissue samples for traces of drugs and poisons. With forensic chemistry, your key duties could be to examine splash patterns and the distribution of particles or to provide expert advice on explosives, firearms and ballistics.

There is an excellent job profile housed on prospects [prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-scientist](prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-scientist).

**Finding Forensic Work Experience**

It helps to have at least six months’ relevant work experience but it can be difficult to obtain this in a forensic setting due to the confidentiality of court-based evidence. Instead, try getting experience in other settings such as a medical lab technician or school lab technician. These roles enable you to gain transferable skills for future job applications, such as attention to detail and accuracy. As these jobs are not widely advertised, you will need to make speculative applications by sending your CV and cover letter directly to schools and hospitals. Read the careers guide on speculative applications for more help: [mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides)

Both Career Hub and New Scientist Jobs On-line occasionally have this type of vacancy. Join the LinkedIn group ‘Forensic Science at Manchester Metropolitan University’ where you will be notified of any relevant vacancies posted on these job boards: [linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=8153741&trk=anet_ug_hm](linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=8153741&trk=anet_ug_hm)

**Analytical Chemist**

This covers a diverse range of work such as chemical or forensic analysis, process development, product validation, quality control, drug formulation and development. In job applications, you will need to highlight the chemistry modules from your Forensic Science degree. For help look at the jobs section on Royal Society of Chemistry [rsc.org](rsc.org). They also produce the monthly Chemistry in Britain magazine. For detailed job information on job roles go to: [prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/analytical-chemist](prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/analytical-chemist)

**Forensic Medicine**

This includes Histopathology/Forensic Pathology and Clinical Forensic Medicine ("police surgeon"). To enter you must first qualify as a doctor and there are some fast-track 4 year courses for science graduates available at:

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- King’s College London
Toxicology and Pharmacology
Forensic toxicologists deal mainly with medico-legal aspects of drugs and poisons, their prime responsibilities are to establish and explain the circumstances of legal cases where drugs or other chemicals are implicated.

Pharmacology is related to toxicology and involves the study of the effects of drugs and chemical compounds on humans and animals.
For more information visit: prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/toxicologist

Forensic work within the Police

Lab work
Some police forces like the Metropolitan Police have an in-house forensic team but the majority in England and Wales use independent forensic service providers (FSPs). In Scotland, police have their own forensic labs. There are over 43 forces in the UK including non-geographic services like the British Transport Police and Civil Nuclear Constabulary. For further information see the links at the end of this guide.

Forensic Careers Outside of the Lab

Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCOs)
SOCOs (sometimes-called crime scene investigators -CSIs) work alongside police officers in the investigation of serious crime and are among the first to arrive at a crime scene. Their job is to retrieve, examine and investigate physical evidence that may help to trace and convict criminals.

To become a SOCO, you will need to be methodical, pay attention to detail, and able to work in a team. In addition, you also need the ability to remain calm in unpleasant and distressing situations and have a good level of physical fitness.

Competition for vacancies is strong, previous employment involving dealing with the public and with sensitive situations is an advantage. Working as a special constable would be one way to gain an insight into police work. Most jobs are with police services and security companies. Each force employs up to 80 SOCOs and most tend to be civilian but in some forces, SOCOs may be police officers.

Forensic Photographer
The key responsibility of this role is to take photographs at scenes of crime and hospitals for use as evidence in court. The job requires tact to deal with distressed victims and the work may be disturbing at times. This is a type of scientific photography so skills of using a range of specialised equipment is needed plus an understanding of anatomy. A BTEC or similar course in photography will equip you with these skills. Most of the training is on the job. The
first step into this role would be to contact police forces to ask if you could talk to a working forensic photographer about their job.

Other Science Careers

Some ideas are: patent work, food science, medical sales, information science, scientific publishing and many others. See targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/science-and-research

Want to Step Outside of Science?

Many graduate employers will be keen to recruit students from a Forensic Science background as you have so many transferrable skills, for example you can:

- Communicate with others in a clear and articulate manner
- Present ideas and arguments verbally in presentations, seminars and informal discussions
- Work with others in the preparation and presentation of group work
- Identify and propose solutions to problems
- Work independently
- Use computing skills to store, retrieve and produce material for coursework
- Gather and analyse relevant information from a wide variety of sources

With these skills, you can consider a broad range of careers. Here are a few ideas:

Teaching
A Postgraduate Certificate of Education Course (PGCE) lasts one year and you can train either in a school or in university. There is a shortage of science teachers, and enhanced bursaries are available for training. You will need to show an interest in teaching so a couple of weeks of school based work experience is recommended. Premier Plus can help you arrange your school experience and will support you when preparing and applying for teacher training: getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/get-help-and-support/premier-plus

You can also teach science in Colleges of Further Education, private schools and the Armed Forces. For more information read our teaching guides: mmu.ac.uk/careersguides

Law
Forensic science degrees include some study of the law and it is possible for a forensic scientist to become a solicitor or barrister, although this requires at least one-year further full-time study. Conversion courses are available such as the Graduate Diploma in Law available at Manchester Met. For more information read our law careers guides: mmu.ac.uk/careersguides.

Computing
Manchester is home to one of the most vibrant digital and technology communities in Europe. There is currently a skills shortage in digital forensics and security, with skills such as programming being especially in demand. There are conversion courses available, such as the MSc Computing at Manchester Met aimed at graduates from a non-computing discipline.
Engineering
Demand for graduates in engineering, data science, cybersecurity, and software engineering is growing in the economy and conversion courses are now available starting in the 2016-17 academic year. For example, the three available at Manchester Met are MSc Rail Engineering, MSc Automotive Engineering and MSc Nuclear Engineering. Check with each institution for their entry requirements and for details of all courses available go to hefce.ac.uk/ke/engineer/projects

Finance, Banking, Insurance and Accountancy
Employers are attracted to Forensic Science graduates due to the range of transferable skills outlined above that you have acquired in your academic studies. There are many traineeships available for new graduates irrespective of degree subject. Some of the key places where these vacancies are advertised include:

- Prospects - prospects.ac.uk
- Milkround - milkround.com
- Target Jobs - targetjobs.co.uk
- My Career Hub - mmu.ac.uk/findajob

Local Government
Covers many specialist areas including environmental health and trading standards. Degree discipline is less important than personal qualities and skills. Relevant work experience in a council is an advantage, many gain entry by temping. The additional benefit of this approach is that you can access internal job bulletins.

The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) is a two year Graduate scheme: ngdp.org.uk

Many Local Authorities run their own in-house graduate training schemes For vacancies look at Local Government Jobs lgjobs.com

Central Government
The Civil Service is made up of a large number of different departments, which implement government policies and deliver services to the public. Some examples include:

- Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
- Department for Exiting the European Union
- Home office (includes Forensic Science Regulator and Immigration)
- Ministry of Justice (includes the prison service)
- HM Revenue & Customs

The Civil Service is a significant employer nationally and almost three-quarters of civil servants work outside London and the South East.

Job roles in each department vary widely and you could work in occupations, such as training, social research, marketing and international development etc. For vacancies go to civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi

The Civil Service Fast Stream is an accelerated leadership development programme where you gain a variety of experience through different placements or postings faststream.gov.uk
Researching your career options

Whether you’re starting your first year of study or you’re about to graduate, researching your career options is the first step to finding your graduate role. Visit our website for information and resources to help you explore your options: mmu.ac.uk/careers/students/how-we-can-help-you/explore-your-career-options

Finding opportunities

It is always best when job hunting to use a variety of methods and resources, just as you would for finding work experience. Advertised vacancies form only a part of those available as not all organisations advertise their opportunities. This means that sending your CV and a professional cover letter speculatively to key employers that are of interest can be a great way to find out about further opportunities that are open to you.

Further ways of finding opportunities include:

Scientific Recruitment Agencies

There are a wide number of agencies available and the following ones form a starting point as they have had vacancies for forensic scientists in the past.

- Cranleigh - cranleighscientific.co.uk
- Reed Scientific - reedglobal.com/disciplines/scientific
- Sci-temps - onrec.com
- Network Scientific Ltd - networkscientificrecruitment.com
- Interaction Recruitment - interactionrecruitment.co.uk
- Scintillant Life Sciences - scint.co.uk

Government Laboratories

- LGC (Laboratory of the Government Chemist) - has a wide range of forensic work lgc.co.uk
- DSTL (Defence Science & Technology Laboratory) - specialises in forensic work around explosives: gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-science-and-technology-laboratory
- CAST (Centre for Applied Science and Technology) - carries out research and development on equipment and systems used for the police and fire services. homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/cast
- HM Revenue and Customs - involved in the forensic examination of vehicles for drugs etc. hmrc.gov.uk

Fire Service

Institution of Fire Engineers - ife.org.uk
Commercial Companies

Companies who provide forensic services to the police and other agencies include:

- **Forensic Access** - UK based company operating internationally, providing lawyers and investigators with forensic science services [forensic-access.co.uk](http://forensic-access.co.uk)
- **Forensic Equity** - provide services to defence, prosecution and government agencies [forensicequity.com](http://forensicequity.com)
- **IntaForensics** - digital forensic company including computer forensics, mobile phone forensics and forensic data recovery [intaforensics.com](http://intaforensics.com)
- **The Transport Research Laboratory** - test and research vehicle and road users safety. Have a graduate entry scheme [trl.co.uk](http://trl.co.uk)
- **Cellmark Forensic Services** - specialist in genotyping and DNA analysis, paternity testing and agricultural genotyping. Have graduate entry scheme [cellmarkforensics.co.uk](http://cellmarkforensics.co.uk)
- **Burgoynes** - conduct scientific investigations into fires, explosions, chemical and hazardous marine cargoes etc. [burgoynes.com](http://burgoynes.com)
- **LGC Group** - test athletes and racing animals as part of forensic doping control processes and provide research and testing services on behalf of pharmaceutical, food, consumer products and healthcare clients [lgcgroup.com](http://lgcgroup.com)
- **Foster and Freeman** - manufacture equipment used in police and forensic science labs worldwide for forensic analysis of documents, paint, glass and fibres [fosterfreeman.co.uk](http://fosterfreeman.co.uk)
- **Environmental Scientifics Group** - offer forensic analysis, environmental monitoring, product and materials testing, and contaminated land analysis [esg.co.uk](http://esg.co.uk)
- **CYFOR Criminal Forensics** - specialist in digital forensic services and disclosure. Regularly recruit graduates [cyfor.co.uk](http://cyfor.co.uk)
- **Advanced Simtech** - engineering consultancy specialising in the application of forensic 3D laser scanning. Offer placements and have a graduate intake. Main bulk of work is for the police [advancedsimtech.com](http://advancedsimtech.com)

Opportunities within the Police

- **Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences** - Student membership is available with reduced fees. It gives you access to a wide range of support such as discounted training courses, job alerts etc. Moreover, including membership on your CV shows commitment and interest in the profession, which makes an application stand out [csofs.org](http://csofs.org)
- **Explore Forensics** - [exploreforensics.co.uk/TypesofForensicsCategory.html](http://exploreforensics.co.uk/TypesofForensicsCategory.html)
- **Police Professional** - policing journal with on line vacancies [policeprofessional.com](http://policeprofessional.com)
- **Investigative Practice Journal** - part of Police Professional. Aimed at forensic officers, analysts, scenes of crime officers. See link above
- **Individual police forces** - advertise their own vacancies so check with each for details of vacancies and entry requirements [police.uk](http://police.uk)
- **Police-jobs** - Greater Manchester Police recruitment: [gmp.police.uk/recruitment](http://gmp.police.uk/recruitment)
- **G4S Policing Solutions** - advertise permanent and temporary vacancies mainly in security but also in policing support and health [g4s.uk.com](http://g4s.uk.com)
- **British Transport Police** - [btp.police.uk](http://btp.police.uk)
- **Skills for Justice** - a not-for-profit organisation committed to the development of an improved and sustainable Justice and Community Safety sector workforce across the UK [sfjuk.com](http://sfjuk.com)
- **Police Oracle Jobs Recruitment** - advertising service for police professionals and all job seekers [jobs.policeoracle.com](http://jobs.policeoracle.com)
Educational Institutions
These include medical schools, university research departments and public health labs. Look for job vacancies at The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences csofs.org and in New Scientist jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb

Press
Newspapers, journals and professional bodies to aid your search for opportunities:
- The Times and The Guardian
- New Scientist - jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb
- Association of Forensic Science Providers - Look for member companies that you can approach with a speculative application afsp.org.uk
- The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences - csofs.org

Postgraduate Study
Many science graduates from Manchester Met opt to do postgraduate study for a PhD or Master’s degree. Research for a PhD will require dedication and determination to conduct self-motivated study for a period of three or more years. See the Postgraduate Study section on the Prospects website prospects.ac.uk
Here are some of the courses past students have gone on to study:
- MSc in Forensic Ballistics - Cranfield University
- MSc Business Analytics - Manchester Met
- MSc Conservation genetics – Manchester Met
- MSc Analytical Toxicology – Kings College, London
- MSc Cognitive Brain Imaging – Manchester University
- MSc in Forensic Explosive and Explosion Investigation- Cranfield University
- MSc in Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology - Cranfield University
- MSc DNA Profiling UCLAN
- MSc Document Analysis UCLAN
- MSc Fire Investigation UCLAN
- MSc Anatomy and Advanced Forensic Anthropology University of Dundee
- MSc Forensic Anthropology - University of Dundee
- MSc Forensic Art and Facial Identification - University of Dundee
- MSc Countering Organised Crime and Terrorism – University College London
- MSc Forensic Entomology – University of Huddersfield

Careers & Employability Support
The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates:
- Find Opportunities: We advertise hundreds of part time, graduate and internship roles through My Career Hub.
- Careers Consultant Appointments: Book a 30 minute appointment and get expert advice from our specialist Careers Consultants.
- Careers Events: Meet employers and enhance your employability by attending our workshops, employer events and careers fairs.

For more information visit: mmu.ac.uk/careers