



LONDON SOUTH BANK
UNIVERSITY

Unit guide

INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC
SCIENCE

SFQ_1_150

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING,
SCIENCE & THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED
CHEMICAL SCIENCES

Year 2008/9

become what you want to be

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1. UNIT DETAILS

Unit Title:	Introduction to Forensic Science
Unit Level:	1
Unit Reference Number:	SFQ_1_150
Credit Value:	1
Student Study Hours:	102
Contact Hours:	48
Private Study Hours:	54
Pre-requisite Learning (If applicable):	None
Co-requisite Units (If applicable):	
Course(s):	Forensic Science
Year and Semester	Year 1, Semester 1
Unit Coordinator:	Hannah Willson
UC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	Tel: 020 7815 7946 Email: willsonh@lsbu.ac.uk Room: E234
Teaching Team & Contact Details (If applicable):	Sophie Park Tel: 020 7815 7979 Email: parks4@lsbu.ac.uk Room: M307
Subject Area:	External Lecturers Applied Science
Summary of Assessment Method:	In-class test, crime scene scenario and scientific report

2. SHORT DESCRIPTION

This unit is designed to introduce students to the scope and nature of forensic science. One of the main themes through this introductory unit is to emphasise the close relationship between the forensic scientist, the various forensic providers, the police force and the judicial system and various government agencies involved in accident investigation. Students begin the lecture course by appreciating the relevance and application of the role of forensic science in producing and validating evidence for consideration in a court of law or by a public inquiry. Students are introduced to forensic science in both criminal and accident context. The role of the Coroners Court and the forensic pathologist is also introduced by a visiting Home Office pathologist, accompanied by a graphic slide show (so be warned!).

3. AIMS OF THE UNIT

1. To introduce the student to the nature of the academic discipline
2. To develop the investigative and analytical ability of the student
3. To introduce and develop the relevant skills required for the degree course

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

- Understand the true nature of forensic science by appreciating its role in relation to the Criminal Justice System
- Identify the different areas encompassed by the term 'forensic science'
- Be aware of the skills required for appropriate note-taking and report-writing

4.2 Intellectual Skills

- Critically and scientifically analyse a particular topic or case history in the light of current procedures, legislation and design methodology
- Develop the skills required for scientific writing

4.3 Practical Skills

- Explain how to prepare forensic documentation for a court of law following standard procedures.
- Develop the ability to identify relevant information and present it in a clear concise report
- Use resources effectively

4.4 Transferable Skills

- Organise and prioritise tasks in order to meet deadlines
- Develop communication and team-working skills
- Develop scientific writing skills

4.5 Personal Development

- This unit shows you how to write a scientific report, how to use the available resources as information sources and how you can apply your IT skills to good effect. It tells you what the field of forensic science is in terms of its scope and the types of experts it draws on. Most importantly, it tells you the most basic concepts of forensic science and what forensic science actually is. Students will need to manage their work and meet submission deadlines. They will need to communicate their ideas verbally and in written form.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

This unit is assessed by coursework only. Students have to complete **2** pieces of coursework and an in-class test. The weighting of these pieces is as follows:

Element	Description	Weighting
In-Class Test	A test to demonstrate the importance of time management in a forensic scientists' day	15%
Crime Scene Scenario	A crime scene scenario to test your ability to identify relevant evidence	15%
Scientific Report	3000 word report	70%

In-Class Test

Students will be asked to prioritise the tasks that a forensic scientist has to carry out in a day. The test will be carried out during a lecture under normal examination conditions and will be handed in to the lecturers on completion. This assignment is designed to test your skills at prioritising and organising your time, and to introduce you to a typical working day for a forensic scientist.

The date for the test will be given in the lectures.

Crime Scene Scenario

Students will be provided with information about a crime that has taken place. Students must extract the relevant information about the crime from the information provided and then must identify the useful pieces of evidence and provide a report on how the evidence would be analysed at the laboratory. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure that students can identify relevant pieces of evidence and to test the skills required for gathering information from sources.

Scientific Report

Students will be provided with a choice of titles for this report. Each student will be required to carry out their own individual report. Reports must be approximately 3000 words in length and must be fully referenced, using the Harvard referencing system. All coursework must be typed and printed, preferably using Microsoft Word. An electronic copy must also be submitted, which will be passed through the TurnitinUK software.

Coursework Deadlines

All coursework must be submitted to the Faculty Office (T313) using the correct submission form. Ensure the form is date stamped and retain the white receipt as proof that you have handed in the work.

Submission date for:

Crime Scene Scenario: Before **4pm on Friday 21st November 2008**

Scientific Report: Before **4pm on Tuesday 6th January 2009**

University rules on submission of coursework apply – these entail strict penalties for unauthorised late submissions, unless mitigating circumstances are present.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback will normally be given to students 15 working days after the submission of an assignment.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

The unit will be delivered by a combination of lectures by both South Bank academic staff, by members of the national forensic community and members of various sections of the police force. Students are required to make every effort to attend guest lectures planned for the unit. Details of time and locations are given in the published class timetables.

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

Lectures - Most of the information will be presented through lectures on Tuesday mornings. Lectures will be delivered by in-house academic staff, but will also be complimented by the attendance of forensic professionals. Students will be encouraged to use the internet to provide information relating to specific incidents for discussion in lectures. Web site suggestions will be given out during the course of lectures together with lecture notes.

Where necessary, directed study will be tailored to meet individual needs.

Meetings with tutors, tutorial assistance and answers to other questions relating to work may be obtained through e-mail to: willsonh@lsbu.ac.uk or parks4@lsbu.ac.uk

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

Students are expected to read on the topics covered during the semester. The booklist at the end of this unit guide can be used as a guide.

Discussion among students and between students and lecturers will promote continuity and development of students learning. Students will be encouraged to organise their learning activities. Tutor awareness of individual student's progress will be promoted through discussions and feedback from assignments.

7.4 Employability

This unit will provide an insight into the variety of skills required for use in the forensic field, ranging from specific skills for a particular area to organisational, team-working, communication and report-writing skills.

8. THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The programme of classes below is intended **only as a guide** and is **subject to modification** according to rate of progress, unforeseen factors, and availability of guest lecturers.

Week 1:	Introduction to the semester and the course; Introduction to the library.
Week 2:	Basic introduction to forensic science – what is it? Introduction to the main forensic providers
Week 3:	Introduction to the scientific report. Introduction to note-taking and report writing in a forensic context
Week 4:	Introduction to physical evidence
Week 5:	Introduction to trace evidence
Week 6:	Crime scene investigation (P. Whent)
Week 7:	Clive Steele
Week 8:	Home Office forensic pathologist and the Coroners court (F. Patel)
Week 9:	Home Office forensic pathologist and the Coroners court (F. Patel)
Week 10:	A scientific investigation – Kings cross (C. Steele) Introduction to UK police force and the judicial system
Week 11:	Fingerprints (R. Cook)
Week 12:	In class test

Attendance

Students are required to attend ALL lectures and repeated non-attendance may result in academic disciplinary procedures. All announcements pertaining to the lectures / coursework will be made in the lectures.

Students that do not attend the in-class test will NOT be given a second opportunity to complete the task.

9. LEARNING RESOURCES

9.1 Core Materials

- Jackson, ARW & Jackson, JM. (2008) **Forensic Science**. Pearson Prentice Hall
- Langford, A *et al.* (2005) **Practical Skills in Forensic Science**. Pearson Prentice Hall
- Saferstein, R. (2004) **Criminalistics: An introduction to Forensic Science**. 8th ed. Prentice Hall
- White P. (2004). **Crime Scene to Court; The Essentials of Forensic Science**. Royal Society of Chemistry.

9.2 Optional Materials

- Houck, M & Siegel, J. (2006) **Fundamentals of Forensic Science**. Elsevier Academic Press
- James, SH & Nordby JJ. (2005) **Forensic science: an introduction to scientific and investigative techniques**. CRC Press

9.3 Online Materials

As directed by lecturers during the progress of the course