

Faculty of Science

The five teaching and research departments in the Faculty of Science, plus its two units dedicated to research, provide a balanced representation of exact, physical, molecular and biological sciences.

The Faculty has a high research profile, which is essential to maintaining and enhancing its national and international reputation. Cutting-edge research, pure and applied, is undertaken in every Science department, ranging from drug research and forensics to internet technologies, lasers and photonics. The Faculty of Science is a key player in the several 'research pooling' initiatives being promoted by the Scottish Funding Council to harness the very best research being undertaken in the country.

The Faculty has the largest population of research students in the University and is responsible for a very significant proportion of the University's total research income. It is anticipated that the results of the nationwide 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (not available at the time of writing) will confirm the Faculty's pre-eminent position in Strathclyde's research portfolio.

There are numerous opportunities for multidisciplinary study across traditional departmental and disciplinary boundaries, both within the Faculty and with Departments in other Faculties and external institutions. All Departments and research units have widespread contact with industry.

The University of Strathclyde received the highest rating for its teaching quality in 2005 by the Scottish Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. This built on earlier subject-based reviews which saw all of the Science Faculty's teaching rated well above average. Research activity feeds into the Faculty's postgraduate and undergraduate teaching, making it up-to-date and relevant.



FACULTY OF Science

MSc/PgDip/PgCert

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Fees

For information on current fee levels, see:
www.strath.ac.uk/registry/students/finance

How to Apply

Apply online via the postgraduate course page:
www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate

The nature and reputation of the courses are such that they are oversubscribed. Entry to the course is competitive and selection is based on academic ability with previous experience being taken into consideration.

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The Centre for Forensic Science

The University of Strathclyde has been teaching forensic science for over 40 years and has the longest established programme in the UK. The course is accredited by the Forensic Science Society.

The Centre for Forensic Science offers a unique learning experience in forensic science combining 'case-based learning' with material at the forefront of current research and development. The courses maintain their current relevance by being taught by academic staff who have a wealth of professional knowledge and experience.

Forensic Science alumni from Strathclyde are internationally recognised and have been employed in all laboratories throughout the British Isles and around 60 countries worldwide.



About the Courses

These are one-year intensive courses, normally starting at the end of September, designed to equip graduates with relevant practical skills combined with analytical and investigative thinking. The emphasis is on the fundamental principles of forensic science as applied in the investigation of crime, reconstruction of crime scenes and the evaluation of complex multimodal evidence.

Typically, participants enter the courses with scientific knowledge from a relevant science undergraduate degree, normally from the biological or chemical sciences, and through the duration of the year gain skills pertinent to current forensic science practice.

Students are trained to form reasoned judgments on the basis of evidence presented to them and will become proficient scientists with court-going skills. Academic staff have a wide range of experience in forensic science who research their subjects and take on high-profile external casework which provides the course with an unrivalled body of experience in the professional practice of forensic science.

Careers

Graduates develop the key skills and knowledge required of court-going forensic scientists and expert witnesses, as well as broader skills, such as analytical problem-solving that are relevant to a wide range of other roles.

Strong written and verbal communication skills acquired develop presentation skills for giving evidence as expert witnesses.

Course Content

The MSc course takes place over three semesters. The first covers the core material that all forensic science students should know, the second specialises in either biological or chemical aspects of forensic science and the third involves a laboratory placement or research project.

Those undertaking the PgDip and PgCert complete the first two semesters only. Subject to satisfactory performance, Diploma students may transfer to the Master's course at the end of the first semester.

Semester 1

This includes:

- investigative skills
- the role of the expert witness
- search techniques
- crime scene management
- crime scene exercise:
 - evaluation
 - fibres, marks, microscopy

Semester 2

Students specialise in either biological or chemical aspects of forensic science.

The biology stream covers:

- body fluids
- blood pattern
- DNA typing and human identification
- forensic natural history
- biological trace evidence
- sexual assaults
- fibre analysis and comparison

The chemistry stream covers:

- drugs of abuse
- toxicology
- fires
- explosions
- chemical criminalistics (glass and paint)
- chemical analysis of fibres
- drug profiling
- document examination
- alcohol

Semester 3

A project, typically three months in duration usually based at a forensic science laboratory, is the culmination of the MSc course.

Assessment

In-course assessment consists of written submissions, practical work assessments and oral presentations.

The award of the MSc is based on two theory exams held in January and May and also a project dissertation; an oral examination may be required. The project work leading to the dissertation is carried out from early June to the end of August. The work is normally carried out while on placement at an operational forensic science laboratory.

The assessment of practical work is based on continuous assessment and counts towards the award of the degree.

The award of the PgDip is based on two theory exams and continuous assessment of laboratory work.

Start Date and Duration

The course is full-time, starting at the end of September. PgDip completion is early June, with MSc completion in late September.

Entry Requirements

MSc: First- or upper second-class Honours degree, or equivalent, in a relevant science subject, such as chemistry, biology, biochemistry, pharmacy, zoology or botany.

Candidates with various combined degrees in terms of experience, and/or degrees of another country, are also welcome to apply.

PgDip/PgCert: These are ideal for potential applicants with experience in forensic science but are lacking the academic background.

English language: IELTS 7.0 is required for all non-English speakers.

