Applicant Packet

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**FORENSIC SCIENCE M.S. DEGREE PROGRAM**

**About Our Program**

The FEPAC-accredited Forensic Science Program at Marshall University is a two-year academic program leading to a master of science in forensic science. Nationally one of a limited number of graduate-level programs that is FEPAC accredited (go to aafs.org for more details), MUFSP offers a unique opportunity for students to learn in and near accredited (ISO 17025) forensic testing and DNA databasing labs.

With the increasing introduction of scientific evidence into court testimony and the demand for standardized educational programs, Marshall University’s Forensic Science Program satisfies federal and state standards and guidelines to enable its graduates to enter this fascinating field well equipped to respond to future challenges.

The program includes a five-semester core curriculum with both thesis and non-thesis options. In addition to this strong, broad-based core curriculum, four areas of emphasis are offered to allow students to obtain additional in-depth education and training. Students may select any combination of the emphases, up to 4, in which can be completed in the standard five semester program. These areas of emphasis include Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensics, DNA Analysis, and Forensic Chemistry.

On-site research and service forensic laboratories at the Marshall University Forensic Science Center (MUFSC) provide students with opportunities to observe inner workings of a forensic laboratory. These include accredited laboratories providing CODIS databasing, parentage testing, and DNA casework, as well as forensic chemistry, digital forensics, microscopy/comparative sciences, and microbial forensics.

**Admission Policy**

Entrance into the Forensic Science Program is restricted to the fall semester only. Applicant materials should be submitted by March 1 to have the best chance for admission for the fall term. The program observes a rolling application policy so that individuals may apply at any time. Applicants are considered after the deadline if openings are available in the program. Students who apply by or before March 1 have a better chance of admission than those who apply after March 1; however, it is not uncommon for applicants to be notified throughout the year.

The program reserves the right to withdraw its offer should the applicant fail to successfully meet all requirements for fall enrollment.

**Admission Requirements**

The complete application process includes:
1. Submission of the Marshall University Graduate College Application available online at www.marshall.edu/graduate.
2. Completion of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible at www.fafsa.edu.gov.
3. Submission of formal transcript(s) documenting that the applicant has:
   - Completed a Bachelor’s degree in a forensic or natural science, computer science, computer electronic or electrical engineering, information systems or information technology (or its equivalent coursework in a relevant field) from an accredited institution of higher learning.
   - Achieved an overall Grade Point Average of 3.0 or better.
   - Completed 1 academic year of biology and its associated labs with no grade of less than a C.
   - Completed 1 academic year of general chemistry and its associated labs with no grade of less than C.
   - Completed 1 academic year of organic chemistry and its associated labs with no grade of less than C.
   - Completed 1 academic year of physics and its associated labs with no grade of less than C.
   - It should be noted that successful completion of an undergraduate course in biochemistry is recommended, but not required, prior to entry into this program.
4. Graduate Record Exam (GRE): Applicants should achieve a score of 150 or higher on the verbal and quantitative sections and a score of 3.5 or higher on the analytical writing section.
5. Formal Letters
   - Applicant’s Personal Statement providing reasons why he or she should be admitted to the Forensic Science Program.
   - 3 Letters of Recommendation on formal letterhead from individuals familiar with applicants’ moral character, academic acumen and aptitude, integrity, and work ethic.
   *Qualified applicants may be awarded a ‘Conditional Admission,’ for one semester to satisfactorily complete select admission requirements.

Full admission to the program, once an offer is made, is also contingent on receipt of final official transcripts, successful completion of a background check, documentation of hepatitis B vaccination/titer or formal declination of vaccination, and receipt of other documentation required for enrollment.

**Academic Common Market Information**

Academic Common Market (ACM) is a program through which students from states without a M.S. program in Forensic Science may qualify for the equivalent of in-state tuition. As of 2013, those states include: DE, GA, KY, LA, SC, and TN.

**Financial Aid Information**

There are several forms of financial support available to U.S. citizen graduate students who have completed their FAFSA including: loans, graduate and teaching assistantships, work studies, and scholarship waivers. Please contact Marshall’s Financial Assistance Office for more information, sfa@marshall.edu.
Areas of Emphasis

The FEPAC-accredited Forensic Science Program provides a broad-based graduate level curriculum in forensic science. In addition to the core curriculum, the Marshall University Forensic Science Program offers four areas of emphasis: Crime Scene Investigation, Digital Forensics, DNA Analysis, and Forensic Chemistry. While one area of emphasis is required, students may complete up to four areas of emphasis during their standard five-semester course of study. Completing multiple areas of emphasis is contingent on maintaining good academic standing while enrolled in the program. Our program is unique in that it encourages a variety of specializations.

### Core Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSC 604 Genetics and DNA Technologies</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 606 Crime Scene &amp; Death Investigation</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 612 Forensic Microscopy</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>FSC 618 Forensic Comparative Sciences</td>
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<td>FSC 619 Forensic Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 622 Forensic Analytical Chemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 623 Forensic Analytical Chemistry Lab</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 624 Biochemistry</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>FSC 630 Forensic Science Internship</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 632 Foundations and Fundamentals in Digital Evidence</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSC 665 Legal Issues in Forensic Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC 680 Seminar (Semesters 1, 2, 4, 5)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
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### Digital Forensics

Computers and other digital devices hold a wealth of information including text, digital images, audio and video, which can serve as key evidence for solving crimes. Forensic software programs can be used to image digital storage media and the images can be analyzed using a variety of investigative software programs. Mobile phone forensics is an area that is emphasized in the forensic science courses, as well as investigation of computers and gaming devices. The opportunity to participate in hands-on experiences with investigative tools allows students to participate in mock investigations in preparation for careers in this exciting discipline.

### DNA Analysis

The Marshall University Forensic Science Center is home to the academic program as well as a service-oriented DNA laboratory. The Combined DNA Indexing System (CODIS) for West Virginia is a secure facility that uses state-of-the-art technology. MU DNA Lab faculty and staff serve as instructors and supervisors for various DNA-based courses while providing select students with real-world experience, training, and exposure to the inner workings of a forensic DNA laboratory. The DNA emphasis exceeds the DNA Advisory Board standards by requiring a total of 12 graduate level credit hours addressing the DNA guidelines.

### Forensic Chemistry

Students pursuing careers in forensic drug analysis, toxicology, and trace evidence will benefit from the completion of the Forensic Chemistry emphasis. As some agencies may require 30 or more hours of chemistry coursework, the Forensic Chemistry emphasis provides additional education and hands-on training to meet these federal and state guidelines.

### Crime Scene Investigation

The Crime Scene Investigation emphasis provides students with the tools and hands-on experience to excel and become leaders in their field. The Forensic Science Program has its own Crime Scene House that allows students to obtain real-world experience and training through the completion of mock crime scene exercises.

Visit www.marshall.edu/forensics for more information or to download an Admissions Packet.
This worksheet outlines all items required for admission to the Marshall University Forensic Science graduate program. Each of the items below should be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office by March 1 for the best chance to be accepted, although applications will be considered each year through mid-August.

- **FULL NAME**
- **PERSONAL STATEMENT.** You may discuss any topic of your choice, but we encourage you to address why you want to study forensic science, your academic and work experience in the field, and the strengths of your application.
- **UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE.** A Baccalaureate degree in a natural science, forensic science, computer science, computer electronic or electrical engineering, information systems or information technology (or its equivalent coursework in a relevant field) from an accredited institution of higher education is required. This degree must be completed prior to entry into the M.S. Forensic Science Program. If you attended a university where you did not earn a degree, indicate it along with the GPA for coursework performed, and mark "none" for degree earned.
- **GRE SCORES.** The applicant may indicate scores from multiple sittings of the exam. An official score report must be sent to Marshall University Graduate College. Marshall’s DI Code: 5396.
- **CORE COURSES AND GRADES.** Prior to formal entry into the program, you must have completed all core course requirements. These include 2 semesters (or 3 quarters) each of Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry (each with their labs). Each course should be at a level appropriate for a natural science degree. Higher level courses may substitute for introductory courses. If it is unclear from your transcripts that you have taken a full year of each course and its associated lab (e.g., your lecture and lab courses are combined), please make note below and attach supporting documentation such as photocopies of course catalog description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Date of Graduation</th>
<th>Major or Field of Study</th>
<th>Minor or Area of Emphasis</th>
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<tr>
<th>VERBAL</th>
<th>QUANT</th>
<th>ANALYTICAL WRITING</th>
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<th>DATE TAKEN</th>
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- **THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.** Must be on formal letterhead from individuals familiar with your academic performance, moral character, and/or work ethic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference 1</th>
<th>Reference 2</th>
<th>Reference 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Relationship to Applicant</td>
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- **CERTIFICATION.** I certify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge.

All materials should be submitted to:
Marshall University Graduate Admissions Office
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive, South Charleston, WV 25303-1600
Telephone: 1-800-642-9842, services@marshall.edu
GRADUATE ADMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist outlines all items required for admission to the Marshall University Forensic Science graduate program. All items must be submitted and received by March 1, to be considered for fall enrollment. Entrance into the Forensic Science Program is restricted to the fall semester only, but you may apply at any time. All application, admission, and degree-granting requirements and regulations shall be applied equitably to individual applicants and students regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion, or national origin.

NAME

☐ BACHELOR’S DEGREE—Obtained from an accepted, regionally accredited college or university. Forensic Science requires a degree in a forensic or natural science, computer science, computer electronic or electrical engineering, information systems or information technology (or its equivalent coursework in a relevant field); overall 3.0 GPA.

☐ CORE SCIENCE COURSES—You must take a year of each of these courses and their associated labs: biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics. Biochemistry is also suggested. Higher-level courses may substitute for introductory courses.

☐ DETERMINE RESIDENCY—WV, Metro, Non-Resident, or Common Market.

☐ Metro Counties: In Ohio: Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike and Scioto
   In Kentucky: Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Floyd, Greenup, Johnson, Lawrence, Martin and Pike

☐ Common Market—Residents of states that do not have a certain degree program offer a Academic Common Market Tuition Waiver which will bring the cost of tuition down from Non-resident (or Metro) to resident. Check qualifying states and print application for Common Market at www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/studentresources.asp. Current Common Market states for the Forensic Science Program include as of September 2010 include: GA, KY, LA, NC, SC, and TN.

☐ GRADUATE ADMISSIONS APPLICATION—Complete and return all three pages of the form and submit with payment to the Graduate Admissions Office. (Online at www.marshall.edu/graduate)

☐ SEND OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS—Request the registrars at all colleges and universities previously attended send official transcripts directly to the Graduate Admissions Office (transcript from the institution that awarded your bachelor’s degree must contain the name of the degree earned and the date the degree was conferred.) Transcripts of all previous graduate work must be submitted. The Graduate Admissions Office cannot accept faxed transcripts and transcripts that are stamped “Issued to Student.”

☐ SUBMIT GRE SCORES—Take the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) and have the scores sent to the Graduate Admissions Office by the testing agency. You may indicate the highest sub-scores from separate sittings of the exam. Tested AFTER 8/1/11, Applicants should perform in the top 50% of test-takers in each of the three categories: verbal, quantitative, and writing. Tested BEFORE 8/1/11, applicants should have a combined score (Verbal + Quantitative) of ≥1000. Check www.gre.org for test time and locations.

☐ THREE LETTERS OF REFERENCE—The Forensic Science Program requires that 3 letters of reference/recommendation be submitted. These must be on formal letterhead from individuals familiar with the applicant’s academic performance, moral character and/or work ethic.

☐ APPLICANT PERSONAL STATEMENT—Providing justification for their admission to the Forensic Science Program.

☐ BACKGROUND CHECK—The Forensic Science Program requires that a background check be performed prior to being fully admitted to the program. Background checks similar to those required for law enforcement officers are likely to be a condition of employment (Reference: NIJ Report NCJ 203099 – “Qualifications for a Career in Forensic Science.” pp. 7-10). A MUFSP staff member will send you the documents necessary to perform the check.

☐ HEPATITIS B VACCINATION/TITER—Or formal declination of vaccination. Required prior to full-admission to the program.

☐ SUBMIT FAFSA—Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) via www.fafsa.ed.gov and indicate Marshall University’s Federal School Code:

All materials should be submitted to:
Marshall University
Graduate Admissions Office
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
South Charleston, WV 25303-1600
Telephone: 1-800-642-9842
services@marshall.edu
ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET PROCEDURES

The Academic Common Market Program enables students who come from states which do not offer a graduate-level Forensic Science Program to attend Marshall University at the in-state tuition rate.

Students who wish to obtain Academic Common Market benefits at Marshall University must follow these steps:

1. Provide to the Office of Academic Affairs, 110 Old Main, an original certification from the student’s residency state agency approving Academic Common Market to a specific program at Marshall University.

2. Provide proof of admission to Marshall University and to the specified program. This should be delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.

3. Provide proof of satisfactory progress within the specified program each semester. This can be done by completing the Academic Common Market Satisfactory Progress Report, available in the Registrar’s Office, 106 Old Main, online at [www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs](http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs) or within the forms section of this guide, prior to the due date for fee payments for any term of enrollment.

The deadline for submission of all materials is the last day of late registration for the semester for each term of enrollment.

Common Market States for Forensic Science (as of August 2013)

- Delaware
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- South Carolina
- Tennessee

**NOTE:** The Academic Common Market waiver (ACM waiver) **will not** change your student status from Non-resident to Resident. Your student status will remain Non-resident; therefore, your fees will always be assessed based on your student status. Once the Office of the Bursar has been notified by the office of Academic Affairs that a student is academically eligible for the ACM waiver, it is applied to an account. The waiver amount will bring the cost of tuition down from Non-resident (or Metro) to resident.
ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET CONTACTS

The first step in qualifying for Academic Common Market is to contact your state’s representative and get certification. Below is a list of the qualifying states for Marshall University Forensic Science Program and their contact information.

**DELAWARE**

*Chesiree Wise*
Data Analyst
Delaware Higher Education Office
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901
Phone: 302-735-4120
Fax: 302-739-5894
chesiree.wise@doe.k12.de.us

**LOUISIANA**

*Jeannine O Kahn*
Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Louisiana Board of Regents
1201 N. Third Street, Suite 6-200
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: (225) 342-4253
Fax: (225) 342-6926
Jeannine.Kahn@la.gov

*Kathy Hoyt*
Executive Assistant, Academic & Student Affairs
Louisiana Board of Regents
1201 N. Third Street, Suite 6-200
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone: (225) 342-1187
Fax: (225) 342-9318
Kathy.Hoyt@regents.la.gov

**GEORGIA**

*Deborah Sullivan*
Program Manager of Academic Common Market
Board of Regents of the University System Georgia
270 Washington Street S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450
Phone: 404-962-3079
Fax: 404-962-3095
deborah.sullivan@usg.edu

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

*Saundra E. Carr*
Program Coordinator
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1333 Main Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803-737-2274
Fax: 803-737-2297
scarr@che.sc.gov

**KENTUCKY**

*Kathy Matheson Garrett*
Academic Common Market State Coordinator
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Council on Postsecondary Education
Frankfort, KY 40601-8204
Phone: 502-573-1555
Fax: 502-573-1535
acmhelp@ky.gov

**TENNESSEE**

*Kimberly Martin*
ACM State Coordinator
Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Parkway Towers, Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: 615-532-6613
Fax: 615-741-6230
acm.coordinator@tn.gov

(As of 11/11/2013 - sreb.org)
Download the Admissions packet or International application packet by visit the Marshall Graduate Admissions page at http://muww-new.marshall.edu/graduate/