



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Department of
Environmental Toxicology™

MASTERS OF FORENSIC SCIENCE PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

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1. Introduction & Overview

The Masters of Forensic Science program, housed in the College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Environmental Toxicology, Institute for Forensic Science, at Texas Tech University offers applied training in the multiple fields of forensic science.

This Master's program is firmly committed to the concept of balanced professional training. Based on a scientist-practitioner model of training, the Master's program strives to provide students with skills in the following areas: professional ethics, law and forensic science, statistical analysis of data, investigative skill, and the sciences specific to traditional fields of forensic work.

The forensic science graduate program is committed to fostering knowledge and an appreciation of the sciences specific to professional forensic activities. The program recognizes the importance of both personal and professional development as integral aspects of training forensic students. The program is generalist in nature; i.e., while remaining anchored in the basic values of the discipline, enough breadth and flexibility is available for students to tailor training experiences to match their interests as well as the demands of a complex job-market.

The program seeks to establish a training environment that is conducive to promoting a positive learning experience and that follows the ethical principles and guidelines of the profession in all areas of their scholarly, teaching, and applied activities. Students will experience a graduate training environment that is supportive of them and their work, which fosters collaboration among students and between students and faculty, and that teaches and models ethical behavior. Students in this training program are urged to obtain applied experience in a variety of settings and to seek out opportunities for collaboration.

1.1 Program Faculty

Jan Halamek, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Masaryk University, 2003. Development of different bioanalytical systems for forensic, biometric, and security applications.

Dr. Halamek is the **Director** of the Institute for Forensic Science. He can be contacted by email at jhalamek@ttu.edu, or by phone at (806) 834-6288.

Faculty webpage: <http://www.entx.ttu.edu/jhalamek/>

Paola A. Tiedemann, Ph.D.

Research Associate Professor. Florida International University, 2010. Forensic Analytical Chemistry, Chemical odor analysis and canine detection applications.

Dr. Tiedemann serves as the **Graduate Program Director**. She also serves as the program's **Internship Coordinator** and will oversee all needed arrangements for internships and will advise on issues directly related to internships. Dr. Tiedemann also serves as the **Director of the undergraduate Forensic science minor**. She can be contacted by email at paola.tiedemann@ttu.edu, or by phone at (806) 834-0983.

Faculty webpage: <http://www.tieh.ttu.edu/dr.-paola-a.-prada.html>

1.2 Advising

1.2.1 Academic Advisor

Each student in the forensic science program will be assigned an academic advisor from within Forensic Science. This faculty member will monitor academic progress and complete all necessary Graduate School paperwork for successful and timely completion of the program. The academic advisor submits the student's formal degree plan, discusses and approves semester course selections, and evaluates student's annual progress. It is the responsibility of each student to meet with his or her academic advisor every semester to monitor degree progress.

1.2.2 Thesis/Internship Advisor

Each student in the forensic sciences program has access to a thesis/internship advisor. Advisors **must** be selected by completing the Thesis/Internship Advisor Selection form **by the 8th week of the first semester** of beginning the program. This form is to be signed by the chosen faculty member and submitted to the Graduate Program Director by the deadline to maintain satisfactory progress in the program. You are urged to consider all factors carefully before making this important choice. It is recommended that you interview with various professors to acquaint yourself with the research activities of the faculty. It is often helpful to talk to experienced graduate students, especially those working with professors being interviewed, in order to get their opinions. Remember, also, that many professors have research in areas outside the area of their normal teaching duties. The thesis/internship advisor should be chosen by the student from faculty in their primary area of emphasis.

The thesis/internship advisor will work in conjunction with the academic advisor to guide the student on his or her curricular plans during the student's graduate career. This thesis/internship advisor also will direct the student in participating in research activities related to the thesis. Students in the Forensic Investigation Concentration who choose the internship option will coordinate their comprehensive written exam through their thesis/internship advisor.

In some situations, a student may request to have their thesis or internship committee chairperson be from outside the Forensic Science program. The student will need to have this request approved in writing by the Forensic Science faculty prior to their submission of the Thesis/Internship Advisor Selection form.

1.3 Overview of Program Requirements

The forensic science program is a 45-credit hour, Master of Science program.

Students have the option to choose from two concentrations:

The **Forensic Investigation** Concentration is designed for students who have a social science background and who intend to work in a non-laboratory setting.

- If the Thesis option is elected, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Thesis hours are required for graduation (this must include all required core courses).
- If the Internship option is elected, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Internship are required for graduation (this must include all required core courses), along with the required comprehensive examination.

The **Forensic Chemistry** Concentration is designed for students who have a natural science (i.e., chemistry, biology, biochemistry, forensic science, etc.) background who wish to work in a traditional laboratory setting. For this track, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Thesis hours are required for graduation (this must include all required core courses).

For **both** concentrations, students must achieve a grade of B or above in all required courses. If the student fails to do so, he/she must retake the course; the student must pass the class the second time or they may be recommended for program dismissal. Students who fail to meet the policy and deadlines for the thesis defense and internship paper defense will be delayed in the graduation process.

NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to make the concentration (or option within the concentration, i.e. thesis or internship) selection **by the end of the first semester**. Students need to be aware this is a final decision within the program and students will not be able to change concentration options thereafter.

2. Basic Plan for the Master's Degree

Planning the Official Degree Program. During the first semester of enrollment, the student will work with their academic advisor in the planning of their degree plan. The academic advisor will file a formal degree plan with the Graduate School on the student's behalf during the student's second semester of the program.

When the students' degree plan is approved by the Graduate School, the student is expected to follow it as the basis of all subsequent enrollments. Substitution of courses can be made under the guidance of the academic advisor. Submission of the students' degree plan merely signifies that the proposed program will be acceptable if the student satisfies all Graduate School regulations and all the requirements connected with the degree program.

Annual Review. Annual reviews for the forensic science program will take place in April. Every student will receive an annual review letter drafted by their academic advisor summarizing the overall progress report discussed by the forensic science faculty. Any student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree may be placed on probation and given conditions to remain in the program. Continued unsatisfactory progress in any area of graduate work will be cause for dismissal. In addition, each student will be required to prepare an annual progress report to be submitted to the Department for program assessment purposes. This report will be typed following the format provided prior to the deadline.

Transferred Work. There is no automatic transfer of credit toward the master's degree, but, in general, work completed in residence at another accredited graduate school may, on the recommendation of the departments concerned, be accepted for as much as 6 semester hours toward a master's degree. Work completed at another graduate school with a grade less than B will not be accepted. Transfer credit will not alter a student's grade point average at Texas Tech.

Grade Requirement for Graduation. For the master's degree in forensic science, the minimum requirement for graduation is an average of 3.0 in the major subject and an overall average of 3.0 on all courses, exclusive of the thesis, comprising the official program for the degree.

Time Limit. **The Forensic Science program is designed and expected to be completed within two years.** Students whose graduate study at Texas Tech is interrupted by military service will be granted an extension of time for the period of their military duty, not exceeding five years.

2.1 Forensic Science Program Registration & Enrollment Requirements

All students are required to complete a series of laboratory safety requirements for the Institute of Forensic Sciences by the second week following their beginning the program. Access to areas that will be used for some of the required courses require this training. For questions related to these requirements, contact the IFS Laboratory Supervisor.

2.1.1. Course Requirements for the Forensic Chemistry Concentration

Students in the Forensic Chemistry Concentration must take 24 hours from the core curriculum. Students will take a total of 12 hours of the specialized courses for this concentration, including forensic drug chemistry, analytical & forensic toxicology, and an explosives and arson course. The remaining coursework requirements are satisfied by selection of one elective course (3 hours) from a broad list of approved electives. For this concentration, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Thesis hours are required for graduation (this must include all required core courses).

Core Curriculum

Course Prefix	Course Name	Credit Hours
Forensic Core Courses (ALL required)		
FSCI 5101	Seminar in Forensic Science	1
FSCI 5260	Report Writing and Expert Testimony	2
FSCI 5308	Fundamentals of Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5331	Forensic Science and the Law	3
FSCI 5350	Crime Scene Investigation	3
FSCI 5352	Ethics in Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5353	Research Methods in Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5355	Instrumental Methods for Trace Evidence analysis	3
BTEC 5301	Introduction to Biotechnology	3
Specialized Concentration Courses (ALL required)		
ENTX 6351/6352	Analytical Toxicology Lecture and Laboratory	6
FSCI 5254	Introduction to Forensic Drug Chemistry	2
FSCI 5256	Forensic Toxicology	2
FSCI 5257	Explosives and Arson Investigation	2

Elective (minimum of 3 credits)

The student's selections for elective courses should be based on their desired area of focus such as toxicology, chemistry, biology, etc. Selection of the elective should be confirmed with their academic advisor.

2.1.2 Course Requirements for the Forensic Investigation Concentration

Students in the Forensic Investigation Concentration must take 24 hours from the core curriculum. Similar to the Forensic Chemistry Concentration, students will take specialized courses targeted for the forensic investigation area of study, including serial crime, victimology, and profiling and investigative science. The remaining coursework requirements are satisfied by selections from a broad list of approved electives for a total of 9 credit hours. If the Thesis option is elected, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Thesis hours are required for graduation. If the Internship option is elected, 39 course work hours plus 6 hours of Internship hours are required for graduation. The first 3 credit hours of internship need to be registered under the internship coordinator section, while the remaining 3 credit hours of internship will be registered under the internship committee chair during the semester in which the student orally presents and defends the internship paper.

Core Curriculum

Course Prefix	Course Name	Credit Hours
Forensic Core Courses (ALL required)		
FSCI 5101	Seminar in Forensic Science	1
FSCI 5260	Report Writing and Expert Testimony	2
FSCI 5308	Fundamentals of Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5331	Forensic Science and the Law	3
FSCI 5350	Crime Scene Investigation	3
FSCI 5352	Ethics in Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5353	Research Methods in Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5355	Instrumental Methods for Trace Evidence analysis	3
BTEC 5301	Introduction to Biotechnology	3
Specialized Concentration Courses (ALL required)		
FSCI 5251	Serial Crime	2
FSCI 5252	The Foundations of Homeland Defense and Security	2
FSCI 5258	Profiling and Investigative Science	2

Electives (minimum of 9 credits for thesis option; minimum of 9 credits for internship option)

The student's selections for elective courses should be based on their desired area of focus such as psychology, sociology, etc. Selection of the elective should be confirmed with their academic advisor.

2.2 Thesis Requirements

2.2.1. General Information

For students in the Forensic Chemistry Concentration, completion of a Thesis is required. For students in the Forensic Investigation Concentration, they may choose to complete a Thesis **OR** complete an internship and comprehensive examination. It is important to note students in the Forensic Investigation concentration may not pursue both options during their tenure in the program.

The Thesis is a “capstone” experience designed for graduate students in forensic science as their terminal project. We hope it will be an interesting, challenging, and educational experience for all students. This project is intended to demonstrate the students’ knowledge of forensic science in their area of specialization. Students will develop a research project based on sound methodologies and practices.

The Thesis serves three purposes:

1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the essential issues in forensic science as they relate to the student’s area of specialization.
2. Demonstrate the integration of knowledge and skills through analytical and critical thinking.
3. To demonstrate independent and in-depth research into an area of specialization. This includes the application of scientific knowledge as it relates to the student’s field of specialization.

2.2.2. Policies and Procedures

Students who enroll in FSCI 6000 must be majors in the Forensic Science Master’s program and demonstrate a high degree of interest in forensic science in various settings, as well as exhibit a professional attitude toward forensic science. The semester of graduation, thesis-option students **must** be enrolled in at least 3 credits of FSCI 6000 (if a student has already defended his or her thesis in a previous semester **and** earned at least 6 credits of FSCI 6000 in previous semesters, the semester of graduation the student must be enrolled in at least 1 credit of FSCI 7000).

Students intending to graduate in May are required to have their thesis data collected by the preceding December. This will allow for adequate time for writing the thesis with committee input. It is important to note that even though there are no classes during summer terms, graduate students pursuing a thesis option are expected to work on research and data collection during their summer term in order to complete all research and data collection for thesis preparation. The thesis defense and the completion of the final thesis draft must follow the university timeline for a May graduation. It is the student’s responsibility to meet the Graduate School graduation deadlines. Please understand that **most faculty are on a 9 month appointment**, so your thesis advisor and committee members may not be available

for thesis defense and committee work during the summer.

Procedures:

The student must select a committee of three faculty for the presentation of the thesis research; two of which must be Ph.D. professors, and at least one of these must be a full-time forensic science faculty member. A committee member chosen from outside TTU must be approved by Forensic Science program faculty. At least one member of the committee must be external to the Department. Once the committee has been selected, the student must complete the Thesis/Internship Committee Selection departmental form. This form **must** be completed **by the 8th week of the student's second semester in the program.**

Initial development of the thesis topic must be done in conjunction with the thesis advisor. Follow up meetings will proceed with the objective of developing a concrete thesis topic. The student must finalize the thesis topic in consultation with his or her thesis committee the semester prior to enrolling in thesis hours.

Additionally, prior to the start of the thesis, the student must submit a research prospectus (15 pages maximum) to the thesis committee outlining:

- The significance of the thesis and how it relates to forensic science
- A brief background literature review
- Discussion of the research question or hypothesis
- Discussion of the intended methodology

The thesis advisor will inform the student of the necessary completion of any environmental, health and safety certifications. Completion of all necessary certifications, and/or training must be done prior to the start of the research project. Copies of the certifications and proof of training must be given to the thesis advisor. Any approval needed to be obtained through the university, such as with the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP/IRB), will be completed in conjunction with the thesis advisor. A copy of the approved protocol will be given to the thesis advisor.

Upon finalizing the research prospectus under the guidance of the thesis committee chair, the student will then send the finalized version to the thesis committee. An oral, public forum defense of this prospectus is required, and it is the student's responsibility to coordinate with his or her committee the scheduling of this defense. The student will confirm the approval of their prospectus with the completion of the Thesis Prospectus Approval Form following the oral defense. The oral defense should be completed **by the end of the student's second semester of enrollment.**

The thesis project should be written in the publishing style specific to the field of research and follow the citation and reference style of major journals in the field. The length of the thesis is subject to the topic and what is required to show completion of the research.

The student must file a "**STATEMENT OF INTENTION TO GRADUATE**" form, including the official title of the thesis. The student must submit this form to the Graduate School office the semester he or she intends to graduate by the deadline specified by the Graduate School. The academic calendar can be found at <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/calendar>. Submission of this form is the responsibility of the student.

The student must submit the thesis paper to all committee members at least three weeks prior to the date he or she plans to give their oral defense. Please note that the thesis paper does NOT go to the committee members without prior approval and review from the thesis committee chair. Hence, it is the student's responsibility to submit the thesis paper to their thesis advisor with plenty of time to allow for review before distribution to the rest of the committee. Students should discuss with their corresponding thesis advisor appropriate timelines and expectations for this final thesis review process. **Students who fail to meet the policy and deadlines for thesis defense and internship paper presentation will be delayed in the graduation process.** Students also are required to present their research findings to their committee. This presentation is open to all university faculty, staff, and students. Presentations must be scheduled within the guidelines as set forth by the TTU academic calendar to fulfill requirements for graduation during the intended semester. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate with departmental staff classroom availability for the presentation of the thesis defense.

As the thesis presentation is open to all, an announcement must be posted within the Department and emailed to all students and faculty at least three weeks prior to the presentation. Each student is responsible of sending their thesis announcement to the Graduate Program Director for proper announcement dissemination. This presentation should be 30 to 45 minutes in length. See the "ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESIS DEFENSE AND INTERNSHIP PAPER FORMAT" in section 14 of this handbook.

After the thesis defense, the student, in conjunction with the thesis advisor, must obtain committee signatures on the **ORAL DEFENSE** and **THESIS DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM**. The thesis advisor will submit the form to the Graduate School prior to the deadline set by the academic calendar during the semester of graduation. It is the student's responsibility to make sure these deadlines are followed.

Additional changes suggested by committee members must be completed and resubmitted to the committee for approval. After receiving final approval from the committee of the changes, the student must submit a .pdf file of the thesis to the ETD

site for official review by the Graduate School Thesis Coordinator prior to the deadline set by the academic calendar during the semester of graduation.

The student must pay the Thesis-Dissertation fee, if applicable, which must be submitted to Student Business Services prior to the deadline set by the academic calendar during the semester of graduation.

Final grade for thesis hours (A or B) will be initiated through the thesis advisor of the student's committee and submitted to the Registrar's final grade roll at the end of the semester. **Grades for thesis credits will be "CR" until the final semester.**

2.3. Non-thesis Option: Internship and Comprehensive Examination

Students not electing to complete a thesis must complete an internship (with an internship paper and oral/public presentation of that paper) and a comprehensive written exam prepared by the comprehensive exam faculty committee based on selected readings and forensic science internship foundation courses listed below.

The internship is a "capstone" experience for graduate students in the forensic sciences. We hope it will be an interesting, challenging, and educational experience for all students. The internship allows the student to work and learn outside of the classroom at an approved site selected by the faculty and student. The internship also will extend a service to the host site/facility by providing a new source of practical experiences, leadership, and potential candidates for employment.

The internship serves three purposes:

- To offer students the opportunity to learn new information and skills outside of the classroom.
- To teach students how to apply the knowledge and skills learned through the forensic science curriculum courses to "real life" situations.
- To understand the student's level of preparation to enter professional practice in the forensic science arena.

2.3.1. Internship Site

The chosen site must be involved in the areas of crime laboratory work, criminal justice, crime scene investigation, or other areas related to the forensic sciences. The student needs to be supervised on a day-to-day basis by an experienced, qualified professional employed by the facility. The students should be interacting with real, not simulated, situations.

The student may choose to apply for an internship in Lubbock or elsewhere. Students may pursue internships at any approved location of a United States agency. Most internship locations, unfortunately, do not pay a stipend. However, there are locations that will pay a stipend and/or may offer other benefits such as housing. It is permissible to accept an internship that is paid or includes benefits.

2.3.2. Enrollment

Each student must enroll in FSCI 6031 (6 credit hours; 3 the semester of the internship itself and 3 the semester of the paper presentation). Students must have completed the series of courses specified below prior to beginning an internship at an approved site. The required internship credits can be completed during one long semester or two summer sessions and must be completed before the semester of intended graduation. A minimum of 160 clock hours must be completed for the internship. Approximately 10% of the total hours can be used to prepare the written report. Students registering for internship credit must have completed and passed with a grade of B or better the series of courses as listed in the table below **prior to their start of internship**

Forensic Science Internship Foundation Courses

FSCI 5308	Fundamentals of Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5331	Forensic Science and the Law	3
FSCI 5350	Crime Scene Investigation	3
FSCI 5352	Ethics in Forensic Science	3
FSCI 5353	Research Methods in Forensic Science	3
Specialized Concentration Courses (At least 1)		
FSCI 5251	Serial Crime	2
FSCI 5252	The Foundations of Homeland Defense and Security	2
FSCI 5258	Profiling and Investigative Science	2

Students intending to graduate in May are required to have their internship completed by the preceding December. This will allow for adequate time for writing the internship paper. The presentation of the internship paper to the committee and the completion of the comprehensive exam must follow within the university timeline for a May graduation. It is the student's responsibility to meet these deadlines. Please understand that **most faculty are on a 9 month appointment**, so your internship advisor and committee members may not be available for committee work during the summer.

2.3.3. Internship Site Procedures

It is the responsibility of the student and Internship Coordinator to locate an internship site. Students are required to meet with the Internship Coordinator to discuss the internship, and the type and location of the internship; this meeting should take place no later than the 8th week of the student's second semester of enrollment. It is strongly advised meeting with the Internship Coordinator much further in advance to explore internship possibilities.

Students may be requested to interview for an internship position either in person or by phone. Criminal history **may** be checked by the internship site. The intern must be supervised by an employee at the approved site who has the training, licensure, and/or certifications to adequately supervise and work with the student.

All communication with prospective internship sites must come from the Internship Coordinator. All arrangements for internships must be made with the program Internship Coordinator **BEFORE** beginning any internship hours. This includes written confirmation being received by the Internship Coordinator from the intended internship site. Failure to comply may result in some hours not counting towards the internship requirements.

For instructions regarding the internship paper, see 2.4 Internship Paper Requirements.

2.3.4. Student, Site and Advisor Responsibilities

The following list describes the responsibilities and expectations of all parties involved in the internship process.

2.3.4.1 Student Intern Responsibilities

- Set up a schedule with the Site Supervisor who will be supervising him or her at the site/facility.
- Dress neatly, professionally, and appropriately according to the Site Supervisor's instructions.
- Complete and keep track of all hours; these will be submitted to the Internship Coordinator at the completion of the internship.
- Arrive on time for the entire duration of the internship hours. Students must not leave scheduled hours early or without approval from the Site Supervisor.

- If, for a legitimate reason, the student cannot attend that day, he or she must call in before the scheduled time of arrival to let the Site Supervisor know.
- Keep all information concerning legal matters confidential. Interns may be asked to sign a “confidentiality” statement.
- Accomplish tasks and assignments as outlined for the intern by the Site Supervisor of the facility.
- Complete all Forensic Science program requirements for the internship experience.
- Talk to the Site Supervisor in advance concerning closures for holidays... Just because TTU may have a holiday, the internship facility may follow another calendar.
- Students should contact the Internship Coordinator immediately if they are experiencing any difficulties with the internship or in completing the internship requirements.
- Every student enrolled in an internship needs to have a functioning TTU e-mail address which should be checked daily. Students must maintain bi-weekly communication with the Internship Coordinator throughout the duration of the internship.
- Students who receive an unsatisfactory performance evaluation from their Internship Coordinator or the on-site supervisor of the internship experience may, upon review by the faculty, be dismissed from the program for failure to meet the program’s minimum level of competency in practical forensic work. A student may also be dismissed for an ongoing failure to accept supervision at the internship site.

2.3.4.2. Site Supervisor Responsibilities

- Act in the capacity of a Supervisor responsible for teaching, guiding, and evaluating the performance of the intern.
- Collaborate with the intern in helping to select an internship paper topic, as part of the internship requirements.
- Make contact with the Internship Coordinator immediately if there is a problem or concern with the intern.
- Complete the Evaluation Form (a copy is provided in Section 9 of this handbook) for the student intern at the end of the internship and return it directly to the Internship Coordinator either by email to the Internship Coordinator or mail to the Institute for Forensic Science:

TTU Department of Environmental Toxicology
 Institute for Forensic Science
 Attn: Internship Coordinator
 1207 S. Gilbert Drive
 Lubbock, TX 79416

2.3.4.3. Internship Coordinator Responsibilities

- Meet with the student at least once in the semester prior to the beginning of the internship to discuss all aspects of the internship; this meeting will occur no later than the 8th week of the second semester of the student's enrollment.
- Contact the Site Supervisor concerning the progress of the intern.
- Be available for consultation to the intern in case of a problem or concern at the internship site.
- Provide the Site Supervisor the Evaluation Form to complete.
- Review internship evaluations received for each student.
- Assign the final grade for the semester of internship.

2.4 Internship Paper and Presentation Requirements

The student must select a committee of three faculty for the review of the internship paper; two of which must be Ph.D. professors, one of which must be full-time Forensic Science faculty. At least one member of the committee must be external to the department. A committee member chosen from outside TTU must be approved by program faculty. Once the committee has been selected, the student must complete the Thesis/Internship Committee Selection departmental form by the 8th week of the student's second semester in the program.

Initial development of the internship paper topic must be done in conjunction with the internship committee chair. Follow up meetings will proceed with the objective of developing a concrete internship paper topic. The student will develop their internship topic along with their committee chair and committee, and submit the Internship Paper Topic Approval program form **by the end of the term in which the internship is formally completed.**

The internship paper must be research oriented or an extensive literature review. The internship paper is a thorough combination of a forensic science topic and the internship experience. The paper should demonstrate knowledge of the topic being presented along with relevant data/evidence supporting the hypotheses presented. If it is a comparative analysis, it should be clearly stated, with results and significance of the comparison to the field of forensic science. A literature review should also have the same basic format; the purpose, the identifications of a problem or problems, and potential solutions. The internship paper must be written in the style specific to the field of research and follow the citation and reference style of major journals in the field. The length of the internship paper is subject to the topic and what is required

to show completion of the project, and should be no less than 30 pages of body text and include at a minimum 20 scholarly references.

The internship paper must be submitted to the committee at least three weeks prior to the date he or she plans to give their oral paper presentation the semester of graduation. Please note that the internship paper does NOT go to the committee members without prior approval and review from the internship paper committee chair. Hence, it is the student's responsibility to submit the paper to their internship advisor with plenty of time to allow for review before distribution to the rest of the committee. Students should discuss with their corresponding internship advisor appropriate timelines and expectations for this final review process. **Students who fail to meet the policy and deadlines for thesis defense and internship paper presentation will be delayed in the graduation process.** Students also are required to present their research findings to their committee. This presentation is open to all university faculty, staff, and students. Presentations must be scheduled within the guidelines as set forth by the TTU academic calendar to fulfill requirements for graduation during the intended semester. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate with departmental staff classroom availability for the presentation of the thesis defense.

As the internship paper presentation is open to all, an announcement must be posted within the Department and emailed to all students and faculty at least three weeks prior to the presentation. Each student is responsible of sending their thesis announcement to the Graduate Program Director for proper announcement dissemination. This presentation should be 30 to 45 minutes in length. See the "ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESIS DEFENSE AND INTERNSHIP PAPER FORMAT" in section 14 of this handbook.

After the paper presentation, the student, in conjunction with the internship advisor, must obtain committee signatures on the **INTERNSHIP PAPER AND ORAL PRESENTATION APPROVAL FORM**. Additional changes suggested by committee members must be completed and resubmitted to the committee for approval. After receiving final approval from the committee of the changes, the student must submit a final copy of the paper must be submitted the Graduate Program Director for the Institute's archives.

The final grade for internship (3 credits of FSCI 6031, the semester of the paper presentation) will be submitted by the internship advisor to the Registrar's final grade roll at the end of the semester.

2.5 *Comprehensive Examination*

If the student has completed an internship as part of the requirement for graduation, then the student is also required to pass a comprehensive exam.

The comprehensive examination must take place during the 3rd semester in the program. It cannot occur during the same semester of the Internship paper presentation. (See 2.4 Internship Paper and Presentation Requirements.)

The format of the exam will be written and will consist of questions taken from the course work and area of focus specific to the student's education and career path. These questions will be drafted by various Forensic Science faculty (hereby called comprehensive examination committee). Students are required to notify the Internship Coordinator and the comprehensive examination faculty committee by the 8th week of their second semester in the program of their intended comprehensive exam date to ensure the student has adequate time to prepare from the reading list. The student will complete their examination at the Institute for Forensic Science. Students are required to attend the comprehensive exam semester meeting where details of exam format and content will be discussed. This meeting will take place approximately the 10th week of the 2nd semester in the program.

The exam will be scheduled for 6 hours total, broken up into two three-hour sections over the course of one day. For the examination, no outside materials will be allowed.

To pass the written comprehensive exam, students must obtain at least 52% on **every** tested section. Students who fail any section(s) of the written comprehensive exam will need to put in a written request to the Forensic Science faculty to be allowed to retake that section(s) of the exam after a minimum of 4 months have passed in accordance with TTU Graduate School policy. If a student fails their retake of the comprehensive examination they will be dismissed from the graduate program without a degree.

3. Financial Assistance

Note: All material in this section is subject to changes as our administration implements recent legislation and directives from the State of Texas. Check and double-check before acting on any information about financial assistance.

3.1. Office of Student Financial Aid

Students interested in applying for financial aid should get a copy of the current Student Financial Aid Handbook and should obtain appropriate forms from the Office of Financial Aid (310 West Hall, 742-3681). Often such materials must be filed by April 15th of the year proceeding the period for which financial aid is being sought. Usually this includes completing TTU's institutional application form. An American College Testing Family Financial Statement may be required from your parents or guardian to establish eligibility for the broadest possible range of scholarship, grant, and loan programs. Work study eligibility is established in a similar manner. Consequently, such prospects should be pursued at the earliest possible time. The same office also maintains current listing of employment opportunities to which you may be referred.

3.2. Scholarships and Awards

Each year the Graduate School at Texas Tech grants numerous scholarship and fellowship awards. Applications are due in February. Visit <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/financial/FellowshipsScholarships.php> for detailed information on application requirements.

On occasion, other scholarships and other awards may be available through the Institute of Forensic Sciences and the Department (i.e., the Hillcrest Foundation Scholarship in Forensic Science, travel awards for presenting research at conferences, and awards for funding thesis research). Please be attentive to relevant notifications of scholarship and award availability sent via email to your TTU account.

4. Probation, Remediation and Dismissal Policy

The forensic science faculty wants students to successfully complete the Master's program and become active professionals in the field of forensic science. To that end, faculty members routinely monitor the progress of students and prepare a formal evaluation of students' progress at the end of each academic year. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to facilitate academic, professional, and personal growth to provide feedback in a timely manner. The faculty has a duty to recognize and respond to problematic, inadequate, or impaired student performance. Additionally, the faculty must ensure that due process is accorded to all parties during the evaluative process as well as when concerns regarding student performance and progress arise that result in a need for corrective action(s).

It is rare that students are dismissed from the Master's program. Moreover, dismissal of a student from the Forensic Science program is a serious and significant event for both the student and the faculty. Dismissal from the program is likely when faculty concludes that a student has failed to demonstrate a minimum level of competency in either academic or practical skills, or in other critical areas of ethical or professional conduct. That said, in most instances a student would first be subject to a probationary period with a remediation plan. The student's academic advisor will meet with the student to discuss the remediation plan and to communicate conditions for remaining enrolled in the master's program. The ultimate decision to dismiss a student, who fails to remediate, is a decision that rests with the faculty of the Forensic Science program. In some cases, other units of the University may be involved in this decision such as the Office of Student Conduct or Graduate School. Also see: Academic Probation or Suspension, Operating Policy and Procedure 64.04: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP64.04.pdf>

4.1 Inadequate Academic Performance

The Graduate Catalog specifies the circumstance under which students may be put on probation, suspended or dismissed for academic reasons (see <https://catalog.ttu.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=188#enrollment>). Students are placed on academic probation by the Graduate School whenever their cumulative graduate GPA drops below 3.0. Students on academic probation have two consecutive semesters to raise the graduate GPA to 3.0 or above and thus return to good standing. Failure to do so may result in the student being dismissed by the Graduate School.

In addition, program faculty may recommend placing a student on probation when he or she fails to fulfill the program's academic requirements, or whose work over a period of time shows a demonstrable lack of progress towards the degree. Usually this action would be initiated by the student's academic advisor and communicated in writing to the student by the Graduate Program Director. Continual failure to maintain good academic standing may result in dismissal from the program.

4.2 *Behavior Unbefitting a Scholar or Researcher*

Probation, suspension or dismissal from a program also may result for violation of accepted norms of scholarly and/or professional behavior. In this regard students are required to become familiar with:

- TTU Student Handbook and Code of Conduct
https://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/2020_2021_Handbook.pdf
- Office of Student Conduct's policy on academic integrity
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentconduct/academicinteg.php>
- American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Ethics Code
<http://aafs.org/about/aafs-bylaws/article-ii-code-ethics-and-conduct>
- TTU Human Research Protection Program
<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/research/irb/index.php>

For concerns regarding misconduct in research or scholarly activity, consult TTU Operating Policy and Procedure 74.08
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP74.08.pdf>.

Violations of the rules, regulations, and principles in these documents are considered to be very serious matters. When a faculty member has evidence of cheating, plagiarism, faking data, sexual harassment, mistreatment of research subjects or students, or any other similar or related violation, he/she will report the matter to the Graduate Program Director. As needed, this information will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct.

If needed, the Graduate Program Director will convene a committee of at least three faculty members, ordinarily including at least one from the student's program, to investigate the matter. The committee chair will provide a copy of the faculty member's report to the student and instruct the student that he or she may submit a written response to the report, if desired, that will be forwarded to the review committee. If the committee finds that the evidence of a violation is insufficient to bring to the attention of the full faculty, no report will be made unless the complaining faculty member still wishes to pursue the matter.

If the committee (or the faculty member acting on his or her own) finds sufficient evidence of a violation, a report on the matter and a recommendation regarding probation, suspension or dismissal will be issued in writing to the full faculty and the student concerned. The student may at that point, file a statement which will be issued to the full faculty. The report to the full faculty and the action taken by the faculty with respect to the student's status in the program or department are in addition to any sanctions imposed by the faculty member (e.g., a grade of F in a

course). If a student is not satisfied with the action of the faculty, he or she may appeal the decision (see section 10.4 below).

Students who are placed on probation or found to have engaged in behavior deemed “unbefitting a scholar or researcher” are at risk of losing University funding.

4.3 Criminal History

Students should be aware that practice in the field of forensic science often includes criminal background checks. A prior criminal conviction may limit internship and/or career possibilities.

A student who does not pass a background check review may be denied placement at a professional training site and/or dismissed from the academic program (see TTU OP 34.25).

5. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students in the Master's of Forensic Science Program have the right to be treated with respect. Program faculty members aim to work together with a sense of collaboration and mutual consideration. However, despite the best efforts of both students and faculty, occasionally circumstances may occur in which the imbalance of power or other factors negatively affect student welfare or put students at risk. An example of such circumstances includes cases of scientific misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, employment-related concerns, and academic matters. It is the responsibility of all program members to establish and maintain a professional climate within which a student problem or complaint can be promptly identified, presented and discussed and given fair, timely consideration without fear or recrimination or retribution.

5.1 The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

[\(2020 2021 Handbook.pdf \(ttu.edu\)\)](#) outlines university policies and guidelines pertaining to academic integrity, student conduct, disciplinary sanctions and procedures, grievances, discrimination, sexual harassment, and drug and alcohol policies. The Master's of Forensic Science Program abides by the guidelines and sanctions set forth in this handbook.

5.2 Informal Resolutions

When a student experiences difficulty with another student, a faculty member, a staff member, or a supervisor, the student should first discuss the problem with the person involved when this is possible. If the student prefers, he or she can talk with his or her academic advisor, or Graduate Program Director, about the problem the student is having with someone else. It is important to recognize however, that situations cannot be addressed sufficiently if the student is unwilling to disclose who the source of the complaint is. Procedures for handling specific problems have been established to expedite the filing and hearing of student concerns. Questions involving academic matters should first be directed to the appropriate academic college or department office. Grievance procedures are described in the Student Handbook. Students may also contact the Office of the Dean of Students located in 201 of the Student Union Building, 806-742-2984. The Office of the Dean of Students leads efforts to focus on student success, student learning, and general student needs. See www.depts.ttu.edu/dos

5.3 *Grade appeals*

A student who wishes to appeal a final course grade should first consult with the course instructor, then with the department chairperson/director, and then, if the matter remains unresolved, with the dean of the college in which the course is offered. A grade appeal must be filed in the office of the dean of the college in which the course is offered within 45 days of the start of the next long semester after the term in which the disputed grade was received. Copies of the grade appeals policy can be obtained from any academic dean's office or from the Center for Campus Life. Also see Student Grade Appeal, Operating Policy and Procedure 34.03: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.03.pdf>

5.4 *Student Grievance Procedures*

If a graduate student believes that he or she has been the subject of improper or irregular demands or procedures, there are several avenues of redress. The TTU Student Handbook defines a grievance as "a formal complaint pertaining to adverse actions taken on the basis of the student's protected status or other violation of law or TTU policy..." Student grievances are applicable to situations such as unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, unresolved employment disputes, and evidence of prejudicial or capricious assignment of grades by an instructor. Grievance investigations are non-adversarial in nature. See Part III and Part VI of the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct for information regarding TTU grievance policies and procedures for reporting a grievance. For information concerning Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action issues students should consult TTU Operating Policy and Procedure 40.01 <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP40.01.pdf>. For issues other than admission to the Graduate School and academic dishonesty refer to Graduate Student Appeals, Operating Policy and Procedure 64.07 <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP64.07.pdf>.

6. Professional Issues and Student Conduct

6.1 Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and meetings with faculty. Class attendance is similar to job attendance and is not optional. You may not be allowed to register for a course if you plan to miss more than 10% of class time for reasons other than emergencies. Such emergencies must be documented and presented to the course instructor as soon as possible. Should a situation arise such as a prolonged illness, you may be required by the instructor to withdraw from the course. It is ultimately up to the instructor to determine whether you will be allowed to register for the course, or be required to withdraw from the course. It is the responsibility of each student to consult the TTU Academic Calendar (<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/calendar/>) to be aware of important semester details such as term start/end dates, as well as examination periods.

6.2 Professional Decorum

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner. This includes respectful professional communication via email, use of electronic devices during class or meetings, etc. It also incorporates respecting faculty office hours, being on time with meeting appointments, responding to faculty emails in a timely manner, and otherwise open lines of communication with program faculty. It is the student's responsibility to maintain constant communication with thesis/internship/academic advisors and going through appropriate channels when issues arise (order of communication lines: thesis/internship advisor -> academic advisor -> program director -> Dept. Chair). The University has policies regarding student conduct on and off campus. Likewise, the university can enforce its own judicial policies and sanctions "when a student's conduct directly, seriously or adversely impairs, interferes with or disrupts the overall mission, programs or other functions of the university." Students should familiarize themselves with these policies which are found in the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/>).

6.3 Membership and Participation in Professional Organizations

Students are encouraged to become student affiliates with relevant professional organizations such as the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), Society of Forensic Toxicology, International Association of Identification, etc. as well as other organizations relevant to students' interests. Affiliation with national organizations affords exposure to trends at the national level and contemporary issues of major import to the profession. Membership in professional organizations also affords students the opportunity to present their research to the larger scientific community. Membership is reviewed by the AAFS committee October 1 of each year; any application that come after that date will have to wait until October 1 of the following year to be reviewed. Students should consult with their thesis/internship advisors as to possible organizations of benefit to their area of emphasis.

Students are encouraged to join the Forensic Science Society (FSS), the program-affiliated student organization.

7. Additional Student Resources

Graduate School

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/>

328 Administration Building

Phone: 806-742-2787

E-mail: info.gradschool@ttu.edu

Graduate School info on formatting theses and needed Graduate School forms:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/academic/TDforms.php>

Academic Calendar: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/calendar/>

Student Disability Services

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/sds/>

335 West Hall

Phone: 806-742-2405

E-mail: sds@ttu.edu

Graduate Center

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradcenter/>

West Basement of the Administration Building

The facility is open to all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows 24/7 and 365 days a year with using your Texas Tech ID. Space includes the Graduate Commons, computer labs, meeting room, coffee and relaxation area, and a dining area.

Graduate Student Writing Center

<http://uwc.ttu.edu/GSWC/>

43 Administration Building (in the Graduate Center)

Phone: 806-742-2476

Texas Tech University Student Health Center

<http://www.ttuhsc.edu/studenthealth/>

Appointment Line: 806-743-2848

Administrative Line: 806-743-2860

Pharmacy: 806-743-2636

Address: Student Wellness Center, 1003 Flint Ave

University Career Center

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/careercenter/>

Wiggins Complex

Phone: 806-742-2210

8. *Statement on Revised Policies*

University, Graduate School, Department and Program requirements evolve and change, and are incorporated into periodic revisions of this handbook. Thus, it is possible that there will be important changes that occur before a complete revision of this handbook. Should this occur the Graduate Program Director will make every effort to inform you of these changes, but in no case will the department or any of its programs be bound to follow an erroneous statement or policy, and students are required to bring their program of studies in line with correct requirements as quickly as possible. Please be attentive to relevant mailings and notifications. It is your responsibility to check your TTU email regularly for this information and to respond in a timely manner to all correspondence as needed.

9. Required Safety Guidelines and Program Forms

In an effort to be in compliance with TTU's Environmental Health and Safety, all faculty, staff and students need to understand the safety policies and procedures delineated by the University.

To be able to work in the classroom/research laboratory space at the Institute, certain safety trainings need to be completed ***prior*** to the start of any research or class activities. The student will be informed of these safety trainings by the Department's QA/Safety Manager, Mr. Gary Reid. Any questions students have regarding the completion of these trainings can be directed to Mr. Reid at gary.reid@ttu.edu.

The following Program Departmental forms are used throughout the student's tenure in the program. It is the student's responsibility to submit these forms as required. The forms provided are examples, students need to tailor the templates to reflect their particular information. All forms are available at the program's website at: <http://www.tiehh.ttu.edu/current-student-forms.html>

STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT & UNDERSTANDING

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the Masters of Forensic Science Program Student Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook contains information regarding the program's requirements, policies, and student rights/responsibilities, which affect me as a student.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Student Handbook contents in its entirety.

I also understand that the Program may revise, supplement or rescind policies, procedures or requirements described in the Handbook, and it is my responsibility to check my TTU email to be aware of such changes as they occur.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

THESIS/INTERNSHIP ADVISOR SELECTION
Departmental Form

The deadline to submit this form is by the 8th week of the first semester of beginning the program.

A. For Student

Concentration – Circle ONE: Forensic Chemistry / Forensic Investigation

I choose the following faculty as my- Circle one: INTERNSHIP / THESIS advisor

Faculty Name: _____

Student Name: _____ R Number: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

B. For Internship / Thesis Advisor*

Signature

Internship/Thesis Advisor's name

Date

*In accepting this student you will take on the responsibilities of being the student's internship/thesis advisor. As the student's internship/thesis advisor you are also expected to direct and monitor their internship/thesis progress through periodic meetings, progress reports, and/or by meeting with their corresponding committee.

C. Graduate Program Director's Approval

Graduate Program Director's Name _____ Date _____

Graduate Program Director's Signature _____

THESIS/INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE SELECTION
Departmental Form

The deadline to submit this form is by the 8th week of the second semester of the program.

A. For Student

Program Starting Date (Month/Year): _____

Student's Name: _____ R Number: _____

Student's Email: _____

Circle One: Master's Thesis / Internship Committee: **(3 members)**

B. For Committee Members

1. Advisor (Chair): _____ Signature: _____

2. Member: _____ Signature: _____

3. Member: _____ Signature: _____

By signing the above form, each member agrees to take active part in the progress of the thesis/internship project and work alongside chair of the committee into overseeing progress of the mentioned student.

C. Graduate Program Director's Approval

Graduate Program Director's Name _____ Date _____

Graduate Program Director's Signature _____

THESIS PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM

THESIS TITLE

by

Name, degree

A Thesis Proposal

In

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Approved

Name, Ph.D. (Chair)

Name, Ph.D.

Name, Ph.D.

Date

INTERNSHIP TOPIC APPROVAL FORM

TOPIC TITLE

by

Name, degree

An Internship Topic

In

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Approved

Name, Ph.D. (Chair)

Name, Ph.D.

Name, Ph.D.

Date

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESIS DEFENSE/INTERNSHIP PAPER FORMAT
(To be emailed to Graduate Program Director 3 weeks prior to defense/presentation)**

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESIS DEFENSE/INTERNSHIP PAPER PRESENTATION

Name, degree.

Paper Title

Thesis/Internship Committee

Name, Ph.D. (Chair)

Name, Ph.D.

Name, Ph.D.

Location

Date

Time

Insert abstract here.

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF INTERN FORM

Intern Name: _____

Name of Internship site: _____

Name of Supervisor/Title: _____

Address of site: _____

To the supervisor: Please evaluate the performance of the intern by circling the appropriate response under each of the areas below. Your personal comments concerning the intern or the program are encouraged.

Evaluation Ratings

N/A 1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Average 4 Good 5 Excellent

Personal Qualities						
Dresses appropriately & neatly	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Acted professional	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Shows Initiative	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Accepts Criticism	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates enthusiasm	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Is punctual & dependable	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Work with individual						
Demonstrates knowledge of forensic principles	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Gives corrective feedback	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Establishes rapport	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Works well with other outside professionals	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Qualities						
Establishes rapport with personnel & supervisor	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates adequate knowledge	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Communicates well	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Seeks new knowledge	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Management						
Manages time efficiently	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Care in use of equipment and facilities	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Promptness, neatness, and adequacy of records and reports	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Uses good judgment in making decisions	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments: _____
