

QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHY IT MATTERS

Prepare yourself for the world of work

If you have a placement or work experience with a forensic unit you'll need to work with the team to maintain or gain accreditation.

Land a job offer

You'll probably get asked about quality standards when applying for a job. Whether it's on the application form, the job description, or during an interview.

Feel confident

Whether in court or answering a specific defence query, accreditation and standard operating procedures should give you confidence that the results you have obtained are accurate and reliable.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

To begin with, the FSR didn't have statutory powers so the FSR Code of Practice wasn't enforceable. In October 2023, a Statutory Code was published as required by the FSR Act. Today, anyone undertaking certain Forensic Science Activities needs to demonstrate they are compliant with the Code.

WHO'S WHO?



The **Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)** ensures that the provision of forensic science services across the criminal justice system is subject to an appropriate regime of scientific quality standards. FSR works with the Home Office.



Accreditation is provided by **UKAS**, the national accreditation body for the United Kingdom. UKAS is appointed by the government to assess and accredit organisations. UKAS will visit your organisation to gather evidence of your compliance.

WHAT WILL MY ROLE INVOLVE?

You'll have to work under what's called a Quality Management System. You'll have to work in quite a structured way to make sure new processes are validated and tested, and you'll follow standardised ways of working – something called Standard Operating Procedures (or SOPs).

ABOUT US: FORENSIC CAPABILITY NETWORK

The Forensic Capability Network (FCN) is funded by the National Police Chiefs' Council operating budget. Following investment by the Home Office, FCN is operated by the policing community on behalf of police forces and law enforcement organisations in England and Wales. Amongst other things, the FCN provides a knowledge base, development programmes and support to forensics practitioners.

To find out more, just visit the **FCN** and **FSR** websites.

4 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO GIVE YOU THE EDGE

Get involved

Try developing written SOPs for practical activities in your course... photography, fingerprint or DNA recovery, for example.

Get curious

Use your degree to get stuck into some experimental design for validating or testing a process. Could you create a test for a new fingerprint powder on multiple surfaces, perhaps?

Get talking

Having good communication skills will prepare you for interviews and audits.

Get practising

Competency assessments will be a pretty regular feature of your role, even during placements, so it's a good idea to get used to being tested. Mock scenes, observed exercises or in-lab assessments during your course will be a great way to do that!



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION?

- Helping the public and victims of crime trust in what we do
- Giving forensic practitioners confidence in processes and results
- Increasing confidence when presenting evidence in court
- Promoting training
- Driving innovation

WHAT ARE ISO STANDARDS?

As well as following the FSR code, you will also have to follow associated standards. ISO standards are essentially an internationally recognised way of doing something. These are the ISO standards you'll need to be familiar with.

BS EN ISO/IEC 17025

This applies to forensic laboratories.

BS EN ISO/IEC 17020

This applies to Crime Scene Investigators.

HOW TO ACCESS ISO STANDARDS

The ISO standards need to be purchased in order to be downloaded so we encourage all universities to ensure the relevant standards have been added to the university libraries.

ILAC

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) is the international organisation for accreditation bodies operating in accordance with the ISO standards above.

Learn more about ILEC on the **UKAS website** or **download G19:06/2022** 'Modules in a Forensic Science Process'.

