

California Forensic Science Institute

Program Overview

Provides specialist training in crime scene investigation & friction ridge examination

Two cohorts per year.

Program courses combine two tracks:

Crime Scene Investigation

Friction Ridge Examination

Admission Requirements

Forensic Specialist Certificate Program applicants must hold an associate degree

Applicants currently enrolled in an Associate degree program will also be considered







Program Schedule

January 2027 Cohort:
Jan 15 - June 20, 2027

June 2027 Cohort:
June 18 - Dec 5, 2027

Fingerprint Track scheduled for Friday-Sunday

CSI Track scheduled for Saturday-Sunday

Program Cost

The program includes nine courses, for a total of 300 hours. All lecture, laboratory and crime scene fieldwork supplies are included in the cost.

Total program cost = $4750





Course Instructors

All course instructors are forensic specialists affiliated with a law enforcement agency in southern CA.

The instructors are court-qualified in friction ridge examination and crime scene investigation

California State University, Los Angeles FAQ Sheet



Forensic Specialist Certificate Program

What is the cost of attendance?

$4600 for 300 hours (includes all required lecture, laboratory and fieldwork supplies).

Payment options include check or credit cards via an online payment link provided on acceptance to the program. A late fee ($25) is charged for any payment received after the due date.

When are the program cohort fees due?

Jan Cohort: Nov 2 '26 ($1000 non-refund deposit), Dec 4 '26 ($1250), Feb 1 '27 ($1250), Mar 5 '27 ($1250)
June Cohort: Feb 5 '27 ($1000 non-refund deposit); Mar 5 '27 ($1250); Apr 2 '27 ($1250); May 3 '27 ($1250)

Does the program course schedule accommodate working professionals?

Yes, courses in the Fingerprint Track are offered Friday (evening), Saturday, Sunday. The courses in the CSI Track are offered Saturday and Sunday.

What degree is acceptable in order to be eligible for admission to the program?

Applicants must hold an associate degree or must be currently enrolled in an associate degree program in any discipline. This is the minimum requirement (applicants who are enrolled in or hold a BS/BA degree also qualify).

What is the average class size for the courses?

All courses are all in-person and a typical cohort consists of no more than 24 students.

Who are the course instructors?

Court-qualified Forensic Specialist practitioners employed by a large law enforcement agency based in southern California. Each course (other than the basic photography course) will include two instructors.

What certificate is earned after completing the program?

Students earn a Forensic Specialist certificate. Both tracks must be completed. An official transcript and certificate is issued to the student after the completion of each track.

What employment opportunities are related to the program?

There are several entry-level positions offered by law enforcement agencies. Job titles vary by agency and include: Forensic Specialist, Forensic Identification Specialist, Crime Scene Specialist, Photographer, Forensic Print Specialist, Crime Scene Investigator.

Program Course Overview

I. Crime Scene Investigation Track

1. Basic Photography (40 hrs)
2. General Crime Scene Photography and Procedure (40 hrs)
3. Fingerprint Processing and Development (20 hrs)
4. Specialized Impression Photography and Recovery (20 hrs)
5. Sketching, Measuring, and Collecting Crime Scene Evidence (20 hrs)
6. Mock Crime Scene Practicums and Courtroom Testimony (40 hrs)

II. Friction Ridge Examination Track

7. Introduction to Friction Ridge Analysis (40 hrs)
8. Friction Ridge Examination Process (40 hrs)
9. Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing for Friction Ridge Examination (40 hrs)

Location of program courses
The program is administered by the California Forensic Science Institute. All courses are held in university classrooms and laboratories within the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles. Student daily parking is available in the adjacent lot (Parking Lot A). Parking is included in the program fee.

California Forensic Science Institute, California State University, Los Angeles
Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center, 1800 Paseo Rancho Castilla, Los Angeles, CA 90032
Ready to Enroll?

Please direct any further questions to Dr. Katherine A. Roberts, CRLTSTAFF@calstatela.edu
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