



TEXAS TECH  

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UNIVERSITY.

**MASTERS OF FORENSIC SCIENCES PROGRAM  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2016-2017**

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## ***1. Introduction***

The Masters of Forensic Sciences program, housed in the College of Arts & Sciences, Institute of Forensic Sciences at Texas Tech University offers applied training in the multiple fields of forensic sciences.

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 sciences, statistical analysis of data, investigative skill, and the sciences specific to traditional fields of forensic work.

The forensic sciences program is committed to fostering both knowledge of and appreciation for diversity in ourselves and our professional 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 teaching and research collaboration.

## ***2. Overview of Requirements***

The Forensic Science Program is a 39-hour Master of Science Program

- If the Thesis option is elected, only 24 course work hours plus 6 hours of Thesis hours are required for graduation (this must include all required core courses)
- Students must achieve a grade of B or above in all courses. If the student fails to do so, he/she must retake the course

Students have the option to choose from two tracks. The Investigative Track is designed for students who have a social science background and who intend to work in a non-laboratory setting. The Scientist Track is designed for students who have a strict science (i.e., chemistry, biology, etc.) background who wish to work in a traditional laboratory setting.

### ***3. Academic, Research, and Internship Advisors***

Each student in the forensic sciences program has access to both an academic and a research advisor. Dr. Robert Paine will serve as Academic Advisor for all graduate forensic sciences students. He will advise the student on his or her curricular plans during the student's graduate career.

The Research Advisor is chosen by the student from faculty in their primary area of emphasis (for example a student wishing to learn more about forensic toxicology might pick a research advisor from the environmental toxicology department). That advisor will aid the student in participating in research activities. Students choosing to complete a thesis will coordinate that through their Research Advisor; students who choose the non-thesis option will coordinate their comprehensive written exam through their Research Advisor.

Dr. Kathy Sperry will serve as Internship Advisor for all students electing to complete an internship.

## **4. Basic Plan for the Master's Degree\***

There are two basic plans for master's degree work:

- A minimum of 24 hours of graduate coursework plus 6 hours of thesis (6000). The courses for the master's degree with a thesis should be approved by the research advisor and not the graduate advisor.
- A minimum of 39 hours of graduate coursework without a thesis. A comprehensive written exam specific to the student's core area of study is required in lieu of the thesis.

**Filing the Official Degree Program.** During the first semester of enrollment, the student should submit to the dean of the Graduate School a "Program for the Master's Degree and Application for Admission to Candidacy" as prepared by an official representative of the proposed major department and of other departments as indicated under "Minor" in the preceding section. Delay in submission of a degree program may result in postponement of admission to candidacy and graduation. Forms for the "Program for the Master's Degree and Application for Admission to Candidacy" are available at the Graduate Office or [www.gradschool.ttu.edu](http://www.gradschool.ttu.edu).

When students receive an approved copy of the "Program" from the Graduate Office, they are expected to follow it as the basis of all subsequent enrollments. Substitution of courses can be made only on the written recommendation of the department or departments concerned and approval of the graduate dean.

Approval of a "Program for the Master's Degree" does not, however, constitute admission to candidacy for a master's degree. It merely signifies that the proposed program will be acceptable if the student satisfies all Graduate School regulations and all of the requirements connected with the degree program.

**Admission to Candidacy.** Every applicant for a master's degree is required to make formal application for admission to candidacy for the master's degree as soon as 9 to 12 semester hours of the master's degree work, excluding leveling courses, have been completed. This application is submitted to the dean of the Graduate School on the form entitled "Program for the Master's Degree and Application for Admission to Candidacy." Admission to candidacy will be granted at such time as all of the following requirements have been met:

- All conditions relating to admission to the program have been met.
- At least 9 semester hours of the graduate work required for the master's degree have been completed (exclusive of transfer and extension courses).
- All required leveling work has been completed with B or better grades.
- An average grade of 3.0 or better has been maintained in all courses comprising the official program exclusive of leveling work.
- The general field of the thesis has been stated and approved, if applicable.

- Work to date is acceptable to the departments concerned, as attested by their approval of the application for admission to candidacy.
- The entire program conforms with the general requirements of the Graduate School and the requirements of the particular degree.

**Annual Review.** Annual reviews for the forensic sciences program will take place in April. Any student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree may be placed on probation and given conditions to stay in the program. Continued unsatisfactory progress in any area of graduate work will be cause for dismissal.

**Transferred Work.** There is no automatic transfer of credit toward a 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 sciences, 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.** With the exception of certain specially approved programs, work credited toward a master's degree must be completed within six 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.

\*As stated on the Texas Tech University Graduate School website

## **5. Program Registration and Course Requirements**

### **5.1 Course Requirements for the Program Core**

#### **5.1a Scientist Track**

Students in the Scientist track must take at least 21 hours from the core curriculum, including a statistics, research methods, and a law course. The remaining coursework requirements are satisfied by selections from a broad list of approved electives.

##### *Core Curriculum*

##### *Forensic Courses (All required)*

FSCI 7000 – Research: Intro to Forensic Sciences

FSCI 5352 – Ethics in Forensic Sciences

FSCI 5353 – Research Methods in Forensic Science

FSCI 5350 – Crime Scene Investigation

ENTX 6351 – Analytical Toxicology

##### *Statistics Courses (Only one required)*

BIOL 6309 – Advanced Topics in Quantitative Biology

STAT 5302 – Applied Statistics I

##### *Law Course (Required)*

FSCI 5331 – Advanced Topics in Forensic Science: Forensic Science and the Law

##### *Elective classes*

BTEC 5338 – Techniques in Biotechnology

The student's selections for elective courses should be based on their desired area of focus such as toxicology, chemistry, biology, etc. Students should refer to the list of possible elective courses provided by the program prior to the beginning of each semester for suggestions.

#### **5.1b Investigative Track**



Students in the Investigative track must take at least 15 hours from the core curriculum, including a statistics, research methods, and law course. Similar to the Scientist track, the remaining coursework requirements are satisfied by selections from a broad list of approved electives.

#### *Core Curriculum*

##### *Forensic Courses (All required)*

FSCI 7000 – Research: Intro to Forensic Sciences

FSCI 5352 – Ethics in Forensic Sciences

FSCI 5353 – Research Methods in Forensic Science

FSCI 5350 – Crime Scene Investigation

FSCI 5351 – Serial Crimes

##### *Statistics Courses (Only one required)*

PSY 5480 – Experimental Design

SOC 5331 – Quantitative Methods in Sociology

STAT 5302 – Applied Statistics I

##### *Law Course (Required)*

FSCI 5331 – Advanced Topics in Forensic Science: Forensic Science and the Law

##### *Elective classes*

BTEC 5338 – Techniques in Biotechnology

The student's selections for elective courses should be based on their desired area of focus such as psychology, sociology, etc. Students should refer to the list of possible elective courses provided by the program prior to the beginning of each semester for suggestions.

### *5.2 Course Recommendations for Core Area of Interest*

Traditionally, students choose to focus their interest in one of the following areas: biology, chemistry, toxicology, anthropology, sociology, or computer sciences. Other TTU programs may also offer relevant course work and areas of interest. Dr. Robert Paine will advise students in regard to acceptable programs and courses for their area of interest. Prior to the start of each semester, a listing of offered classes for developing the student's core will be provided by the program.

## ***6. 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.

### ***6.1 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.

### ***6.2 Texas Tech University Graduate School Scholarships***

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

## 7. Thesis Option

### 7.1 General Information

The Thesis is a "capstone" experience designed for the 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:

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

### 7.2 Policies and Procedures

The student must be enrolled in FSCI 6000 (6 credit hours) and have completed the series of courses for each track as listed below **prior** to beginning their Thesis. 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.

Scientist Track: Statistics course, FSCI 7000 (Intro to Forensic Science), FSCI 5353 (Research Methods), ENTX 6351 (with lab), FSCI 5350 (Crime Science Investigation), and FSCI 5352 (Ethics)

Investigative Track: Statistics course, FSCI 7000 (Intro to Forensic Science), FSCI 5353 (Research Methods), FSCI 5351 (Serial Crimes), FSCI 5350 (Crime Science Investigation), and FSCI 5352 (Ethics)

In some cases, students may seek approval from the Academic Advisor to waive the completion requirement for some courses.

The graduation process requires attention to university deadlines. We suggest students keep a 24 month calendar for critical dates specific to degree accomplishments. Hence the following request, **students intending to graduate in May are required to have their thesis data collected by December**. This will allow for adequate time for writing the thesis with committee input. 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 these deadlines. Please understand that **most faculty are on a 9 month appointment**, so your 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. A committee member chosen from outside TTU must be approved by Dr. Robert Paine.

Initial development of the thesis topic must be done in conjunction with the Research Advisor. Follow up meetings will proceed with the objective of developing a concrete thesis topic. The student must finalize the thesis topic the semester prior to enrolling in thesis hours and prior to beginning the thesis.

Prior to the start of the thesis, the student must submit a research prospectus (5 pages maximum) to the Research Advisor outlining:

- The significance of the thesis and how it relates to forensic science,
- Provide a brief background literature review,
- Provide and discuss the research question or hypothesis and;
- Discuss methodology.

The Research Advisor will inform the student of the necessary completion of any environmental, health and safety certifications. The Research Advisor will also provide the student with the proper resources in order to obtain all the necessary 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 Research 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 Research Advisor and/or the Principal Investigator. A copy of the protocol will be given to the Research Advisor.

Upon finalizing the research prospectus, the student will then send the finalized version to the designated Principal Investigator of the project (chosen by the student) for approval. A Principal Investigator is only needed if the research project requires any form of approval or a submission of protocol to Texas Tech University. *Final approval must be obtained from the thesis committee.*

The thesis project should be written in the publishing style of 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 official title of thesis, if applicable. The student must submit this form to the Graduate School office the semester they intend to graduate. This is the responsibility of the student.

Students are also required to present their research findings to their committee. This presentation is open to all university faculty and students. Presentations must be scheduled within the guidelines as set forth by the academic calendar to fulfill requirements for graduation during the intended semester.

After their defense, the student, in conjunction with the Academic Advisor, must obtain committee signatures on the **ORAL DEFENSE** and **THESIS DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM** and submit the form to the Graduate School 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 chair of the student's committee and submitted to Registrar's final grade roll at the end of the semester. **Grades for thesis will be "CR" until the final semester.**

After incorporating committee changes, the student must submit a .pdf file of the thesis to the ETD site for official review and to the Graduate School Thesis Coordinator the Semester of graduation (usually 5 weeks before graduation date).

The student must submit the final paper to all committee members prior to or on the deadline date as set by the academic calendar. Additional changes suggested by committee members must be completed and resubmitted to the committee prior to the final deadline date as stated by the academic calendar.

## ***8. Non-thesis Option: Internship and Comprehensive Exam***

Students opting out of completing a thesis must complete an internship (with an internship paper) and a comprehensive written exam in their primary area of emphasis.

The internship is a “capstone” experience for the graduate students in forensic science. 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 will also 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.

### ***8.1 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 forensic science. 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 in the United States. Arrangements can be made for internships to be done outside of the U.S. These situations are treated on an individual basis. 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.

### ***8.2 Enrollment***

Each student must enroll in FSCI 6031 (6 credit hours) and have completed the series of courses for their track prior to beginning an internship at an approved site. This opportunity is available during one long semester or two summer sessions and must be completed within the final semester in which the student is enrolled in the internship. Ideally, the internship should be completed in the students' final semester before graduation, as the students will then be in a position to consider any job offers that may result from the internship experience. A minimum of 118 clock hours must be completed for the internship. Approximately 10% of the total hours can be used to prepare the written report.

The graduation process requires attention to university deadlines. We suggest students keep a 24 month calendar for critical dates specific to degree accomplishments. Hence the following request, **students intending to graduate in May are required to have their internship done by 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 advisor and committee members may not be available for thesis defense and committee work during the summer.

### 8.2a Prerequisites and Requirements for Enrollment

Students who enroll in FSCI 6031 must be majors in 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. Students registering for internship credits must have completed the series of courses for their track as listed below **prior** to their start of internship.

Scientist Track: Statistics course, FSCI 7000 (Intro to Forensic Science), FSCI 5353 (Research Methods), ENTX 6351 (with lab), FSCI 5350 (Crime Science Investigation), and FSCI 5352 (Ethics)

Investigative Track: Statistics course, FSCI 7000 (Intro to Forensic Science), FSCI 5353 (Research Methods), FSCI 5351 (Serial Crimes), FSCI 5350 (Crime Science Investigation), and FSCI 5352 (Ethics)

In some cases, students may seek approval from the Academic Advisor to waive the completion requirement for some courses.

### *8.3 Procedures*

It is the responsibility of the student and Internship Advisor, Dr. Kathy Sperry, to locate an internship site. Students should set up a meeting with Dr. Sperry at least one semester prior to the semester in which the internship is to be completed. The intern must be supervised by an employee at the approved site who has the degree, licensure, and/or certifications to adequately supervise and work with the student.

The student must select a committee of three faculty prior to the beginning of the internship process; two of which must be Ph.D. professors. A committee member chosen from outside TTU must be approved by Dr. Paine.

At least four weeks prior the beginning of the semester and prior to the internship, the student must meet with their Internship Advisor to discuss the internship, a decision must be made on the location of the internship, and the student must begin contacting potential committee members (three unless otherwise approved).

The student will need to submit a curriculum vitae and cover letter stating their internship/career objectives to the internship facility and a copy must be submitted to the Internship Advisor. 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.

If the internship is to be done at a site outside of Lubbock, arrangements must be made with the student's Internship Advisor **BEFORE** beginning any internship hours. Failure to comply may result in some hours not counting towards the internship requirements.

Before the internship takes place, the following needs to be submitted to the internship facility:

- The names of the three persons on the student's committee and their contact information
- Topic of the Internship Paper

The internship paper must be submitted by a date designated by the Internship Advisor at the beginning of each semester. The student is responsible for contacting the committee members and notifying them of the date they will receive the first draft of the document.

## *8.4 Student, Site and Advisor Responsibilities*

### 8.4a Student Intern Responsibilities

- Student will set up a schedule with the Site Supervisor who will be supervising them at the site/facility.
- Dress neatly, professionally, and appropriately according to the Site Supervisor's instructions.
- Complete and keep track of all hours.
- Arrive on time for the entire duration of the internship hours. Students must not leave scheduled hours early or without approval from Site Supervisor.
- If, for a legitimate reason, the student cannot attend that day, they must call in before the scheduled time of arrival to let the Site Supervisor know.
- Keep all information concerning legal matters completely confidential. Interns may be asked to sign a "confidentiality" statement.
- Accomplish tasks and assignments as outlined for intern by the Site Supervisor of the facility.
- Complete all TTU requirements for the internship experience.
- Talk to Site Supervisor in advance concerning school breaks...just because TTU has a break, it doesn't necessarily mean that the facility will allow you to take off.
- Students should contact the Internship Faculty immediately if the student is experiencing any difficulties with the internship or in completing the internship requirements.



- Every student enrolled in an internship needs to have a functioning e-mail address. Students must check their e-mail on a daily basis for communication from the Internship Graduate Advisor or Staff and respond according to instructions.

#### 8.4b 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, which is part of the internship requirements.
- Make contact with the Internship Advisor immediately if there is a problem or concern with the intern.
- Complete the Evaluation Form for the student intern at the end of the internship and return directly to the Internship Advisor either by email or mail:

*Dr. Kathy Sperry, Internship Advisor*  
 TTU Institute for Forensic Science  
 4434 South Loop 289  
 Lubbock, TX 79414  
[kathy.sperry@ttu.edu](mailto:kathy.sperry@ttu.edu)

#### 8.4c Internship Advisor Responsibilities

- Meet with or email the student prior to the first week of classes to discuss all aspects of the internship.
- Contact Site Supervisor concerning the progress of intern.
- Internship Advisor must give their Site Supervisor the Evaluation Form to complete.
- Communicate regularly with intern via e-mail.
- Evaluate written assignments and review internship evaluations received for each student
- Assign the grade for the internship course as CR for semesters prior to the presentation of the internship paper

#### *8.5 Internship Paper Requirements*

This document must be research oriented or an extensive literature review. The research portion should contain a purpose statement, observations or the problem, and potential solutions. 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; purpose, identifications of problem or problems, and potential solutions. A small portion of your paper should be an overview of your experience, the relationship to forensic science, and how you expect the internship to assist you in the future.

The research document must be submitted to the committee 6 weeks prior to the last day for submitting intent to graduate for the semester. You are responsible for determining this date from the academic calendar, “last day to submit final draft” <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/calendar/>. The committee will need time to review the document and the student will need time to respond to suggestions and corrections. First drafts of the internship paper will not be accepted during this time.

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.

In cases that require the Internship Faculty to submit a “change of grade” form (i.e., the student has an "I"), internship paper documents are due 3 weeks prior to the change of grade deadline as mandated by Texas Tech University.

If the student is completing the internship outside of Lubbock, the internship paper must be emailed to the student’s committee and received on the appropriate due date. If emailed, be sure to confirm receipt of the email. Final copies of the paper must be submitted to both Dr. Sperry and to Dr. Paine for the student’s file. Students should use the below addresses:

*Dr. Kathy Sperry*  
TTU Institute for Forensic Science  
4434 South Loop 289  
Lubbock, TX 79414  
[kathy.sperry@ttu.edu](mailto:kathy.sperry@ttu.edu)

Dr. Robert Paine  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work  
Texas Tech University  
Box 41012  
Lubbock, TX 74909  
[robert.paine@ttu.edu](mailto:robert.paine@ttu.edu)

## ***8.6 Comprehensive Examination***

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

**The comprehensive examination must take place before the internship presentation has occurred.** The internship paper presentation should take place no sooner than 14 days after the comprehensive exam has occurred.

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. It may also include questions specific to the internship experience. These questions will be drafted by the student's internship committee.

Students should prepare for the exam by: discussing the exam format and question areas with each committee member, and will choose reading lists for each area in consultation with each committee member. Note, committee members are not required to give the student their questions in advance, nor must they require a reading list.

The committee members are charged with administering the exam and grading the answers to the questions. The focus of the exam will in part test the students' knowledge on how forensic sciences are applied to subject areas (for example, chemistry, biology, DNA, anthropology, criminology, toxicology, psychology, etc.).

Questions will cover two general areas, the applied nature of the work and theoretical issues. No more than 5 questions per section should be required. The exam will be scheduled for 6 hours total, broken up into two three-hour sections. Students can choose if they wish to complete the exam in one day or two. Answers should be typed on a laptop provided by the committee for the sole purpose of the exam. Internet will not be allowed but textbooks and class notes can be used by the student. References and citations should be used, appropriately.

A student cannot retake more than one area of the written test, if they do not pass 51% of the exam on the first try they may not retake the exam. If a student fails the comprehensive examination they will be released from the graduate program without a degree.

## **9. Probation, Remediation and Dismissal Policy**

The forensic sciences faculty wants students to successfully complete the Master's program and become active professionals in the field of forensic sciences. 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 Sciences 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 advisor and program director 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 Sciences Program along with consultation from the department chair. 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>

### **9.1 Inadequate Academic Performance**

The Graduate Catalog specifies the circumstance under which students may be put on probation, suspended or dismissed for academic reasons (see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/catalog/GradEnrollment.php>). 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 will result in the student being placed on academic probation 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 advisor and communicated in writing to the student by the Program Director. Continual failure to maintain good academic standing may result in dismissal from the program.

## *9.2 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 the TTU Student Handbook and Code of Conduct [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire\\_student\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire_student_handbook.pdf), the Office of Student Conduct's policy on academic integrity <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentconduct/academicinteg.php>, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Ethics Code <http://aafs.org/about/aafs-bylaws/article-ii-code-ethics-and-conduct>, and the TTU Human Research Protection Program <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/vpr/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 fully in writing to the Program Director who will bring the matter to the attention of the department chair.

The 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/she may submit a written response to the report, if she/he desires, 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/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/she may appeal the decision (see section 10.4 below).

Students who are placed on probation or deemed to engage in behavior deemed "unbefitting a scholar or researcher" are at risk of losing departmental funding for a specified period of time to be determined by the Program Director.

### ***9.3 Continued Unsatisfactory Performance in Internship***

Students who continue to receive an unsatisfactory performance evaluation from their Internship supervisor or the faculty member assigned to the internship experience may, upon review by the faculty, be dismissed from the program for failure to meet the program's minimal level of competency in practical forensic work. A student may also be dismissed for an ongoing failure to accept supervision.

### ***9.4 Criminal Behavior***

Students whose conduct in or outside the program has resulted in a felony conviction that would prevent work as a forensic scientist will be dismissed from the program (TTU OP 34.25).

## ***10. Student Rights and Responsibilities***

Students in the Master's of Forensic Sciences 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.

### ***10.1 The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct***

The Student Handbook and Code of Conduct [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire\\_student\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire_student_handbook.pdf) 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 Sciences Program abides by the guidelines and sanctions set forth in this handbook.

### ***10.2 Informal Resolutions***

When a student experiences difficulties 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 advisor or 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. Students may also contact the Student Resolution Center located in 232E of the Student Union Building, 742-SAFE. The center can help students address issues pertaining to policies and procedures, grading issues, interpersonal disputes and unfair treatment. The center does not participate in formal grievance processes and does not levy sanctions to involved parties. See <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentresolutioncenter/>

### ***10.3 Grade appeals***

A student who wishes to appeal a final course grade should first consult with the course instructor, then with the department chairperson, 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>

#### *10.4 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> .



## ***11. Professional Issues and Student Conduct***

### ***11.1 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.

### ***11.2 Professional Decorum***

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner. 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 Part X of the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct [http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire\\_student\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/docs/entire_student_handbook.pdf).

### ***11.3 Membership and Participation in Professional Organizations***

Students are encouraged to become student affiliates with relevant professional organizations such as the AAFS, 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.

## ***12. Additional Student Resources***

Student Disability Services

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

335 West Hall

Phone: 806-742-2405

E-mail: [sds@ttu.edu](mailto:sds@ttu.edu)

University Writing Center

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

Phone: 806.742.2476

Texas Tech University Student Health Center

<http://www.ttuhsu.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

### ***13. Forensic Sciences Program Faculty***

**Robert D. Morgan, Ph.D.**

Skelton Endowed Professor of Psychology. Oklahoma State University, 1999. Forensic psychology; diagnostic decision making; and new professional's issues.

**Robert R. Paine, Ph.D.**

Professor of Anthropology. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 1994. Forensic anthropology; skeletal histology.

**Paola Prada, Ph.D.**

Research Assistant Professor. Florida International University, 2010. Chemical odor analysis and detection.

**Kathy Sperry, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Practice. Texas Tech University, 1993.

**Megan A. Thoen, Ph.D.**

Research Assistant Professor. Texas Tech University, 2013. Forensic psychology; mental health and well-being of offenders and law enforcement.

## ***14. 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 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.