

Forensic Science Minor

Alignment with Industry Standards

Goal Description:

The Department of Forensic Science will work to ensure that the online minor is in alignment with industry standards and the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination.

Providing Department: Forensic Science Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Student Preparation for Licensing Examination

Performance Objective Description:

Ensure that the minor aligns with the latest industry standards and the seven domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination Coverage

KPI Description:

The department Online Program Director will regularly review, and mandate course content to be updated based on industry standards and the seven domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination.

Target Description:

All domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination will be covered within the online minor courses.

Results Description:

All seven domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination were covered within the online minor curriculum during this assessment cycle.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination Coverage

Action Description:

The Online Program Director will continue to regularly review and mandate course content updates based on industry standards and the domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination. This includes the development of the new premium distance learning courses, which will incorporate and cover the relevant licensing material.

Integration of Knowledge

Goal Description:

Students completing the online Forensic Science minor will integrate knowledge gained over the course of the semester.

Providing Department: Forensic Science Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Competency and Course Material Retention

Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the online Forensic Science minor will demonstrate competency and course material retention.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Student Success

Indicator Description:

The grading rubric provided within the syllabus for each course in the online minor curriculum will explain the calculation of the final course grade.

Criterion Description:

At least 90% of students will earn a B or higher for their final grade.

Findings Description:

During AY 23-24, the FORS 4380 course was used as a benchmark for the online Forensic Science minor. There were 223 students who completed the FORS 4380 course with 94.6% earning a B or higher. The criterion for this objective was met.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Student Success

Action Description:

The department will continue to monitor student competency and course retention through assessment of the percentage of students who earn a B or higher for their final grade for the online minor. The FORS 4380 course will continue to be used as a benchmark for the online minor.

Minor Enrollment Growth

Goal Description:

The Department of Forensic Science will work to ensure the continued growth of the online minor.

Providing Department: Forensic Science Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Recruiting Strategies

Performance Objective Description:

Enhance the online minor enrollment through recruitment of undergraduates from the College of Criminal Justice and College of Science, Engineering, and Technology.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Minor Enrollment

KPI Description:

The enrollment of the online Forensic Science minor will be monitored using COGNOS to assess the overall enrollment each academic year.

Target Description:

The online Forensic Science minor will maintain or increase enrollment by 5% within the next academic year.

Results Description:

Our minor enrollment in AY 23-24 was 2007 students compared to 1617 in AY 22-24 (~24% increase). In addition, we just had our largest graduating class with 225 graduates from Summer 2023-Spring 2024. The criterion for this objective was met.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Minor Enrollment

Action Description:

The department will continue to recruit students for the online Forensic Science minor, with a focus on outreach through the College of Criminal Justice and the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology. Additionally, the department will actively participate in recruitment efforts at CJ Preview Days and CJ Bearkat Kickoff. To further support student success, the department will collaborate with the SAM Center and Career Success Center to enhance the quality of undergraduate advising and career guidance provided through these resources.

Student Satisfaction

Goal Description:

Students who have completed courses within online Forensic Science minor will be satisfied with their educational experience.

Providing Department: Forensic Science Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Student Experience

Performance Objective Description:

Students will experience satisfaction with their education through the online Forensic Science minor.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

IDEA Evaluations

KPI Description:

IDEA scores will be used to evaluate student satisfaction with the online Forensic Science minor curriculum.

Target Description:

Maintain an average satisfaction rating of 4 or higher on IDEA evaluations.

Results Description:

The average IDEA score across all minor courses was 4.3, with scores ranging from 3.0 to 4.9. These courses were taught by both Doctoral Teaching Fellows (DTFs) and full-time faculty. Three courses (FORS 4317, FORS 4320, FORS 4330) had sections that scored below 4.0. However, the overall average IDEA score for all sections of FORS 4320 was above 4.0. FORS 4330 is a new course and will continue to improve its delivery and assessment methods moving forward. FORS 4317, a statistics course, has shown a trend of improving IDEA scores, achieving a 4.2 in the summer I offering, though its success appears to be dependent on the instructor.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

IDEA Evaluations

Action Description:

The department will continue to monitor IDEA scores for courses taught by DTFs, adjuncts, and full-time faculty, emphasizing continuous course improvement, particularly for any courses with an average student satisfaction score below 4 on the IDEA evaluations. In Spring 2025, four previously offered courses will be revamped and introduced as new premium distance learning courses in both 5-week and 15-week formats. IDEA evaluations for these revamped courses will be compared to historical IDEA data to assess their effectiveness.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

To continue the growth of the minor and extend the reach of the program, we aim to implement more targeted marketing to increase awareness of our minor. For example, the FORS 3366 Introduction to Forensic Science course will be used to market the other courses offered through the minor, as well as to highlight the benefits of a more well-rounded education offered through the forensic science minor. We are also going to establish stronger relationships with the undergraduate academic advisors through the Career Success and SAM Centers to increase awareness about our minor.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The online forensic science minor continues to attract a high number of students, with the majority majoring in Criminal Justice or Forensic Chemistry. Efforts to enhance the program's accessibility and reach are well underway, with one premium distance learning (PDL) course already delivered and four more set to be offered in Spring 2025. Adjunct faculty are being hired to support the expansion of these courses. Additionally, the prerequisites and restrictions for minor courses have been optimized to align with the two informal tracks within the minor—investigative and laboratory—ensuring a more tailored experience for students. Importantly, all courses covering the seven domains of the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination have been updated to reflect the latest licensing changes.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

To enhance the quality and reach of our online Forensic Science program, we will focus on several key initiatives. First, we will revamp and relaunch four courses as premium distance learning options in Spring 2025, with both 5-week and 15-week formats. These courses will be closely monitored through IDEA evaluations to ensure improved student satisfaction. We will also intensify recruitment efforts for the online Forensic Science minor by collaborating with the College of Criminal Justice and the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology, and by participating in CJ Preview Days and CJ Bearkat Kickoff.

To support student success, we will strengthen partnerships with the SAM Center and Career Success Center to enhance undergraduate advising. The FORS 4380 course will continue to serve as a benchmark for assessing student competency within the minor. Additionally, the Online Program Director will ensure all courses are updated to align with industry standards and the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Examination. Adjunct faculty will be hired to support the expansion of these courses, with optimized prerequisites to better align with the program's investigative and laboratory tracks.