



Forensic Biology FAQs

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1. General minimum educational requirements for your section:

- Bachelor of Science degree in a Life Science related field: Biology, Chemistry, etc.
- Specific coursework, including Genetics, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, and Statistics

2. What advice would you offer someone considering this career path?

- Take any opportunities available to do research projects, internships, and/or shadowing to see if it is truly something that you find interesting.
- Complete an undergraduate degree in a Life Science field rather than a Criminal Justice degree.

3. Besides a degree(s), what other things does HFSC look for in future analysts in this section?

- Master of Science degree is not required, but preferred.
- Experience in research and internships are not required, but preferred.

4. What is a typical day/week like for a forensic analyst in this section?

- The FBIO section is flexible with work hours, as long as 40 hours per week are worked. Some work 4 ten-hour days a week, some work nine-hour days for 2 weeks with one day off during that time period, and some work a traditional eight-hour workday. The start and end times are also flexible, so long as you are keeping within normal business hours.

5. Is it typical to work overtime? How often?

- No, we do not typically work overtime as a salaried employee.

6. How often do analysts in this section appear in court to testify?

- This could fluctuate depending on your job duties. Report writers probably testify most often for our section, and this would be dependent on how many cases you write. Some people go monthly while others may go once a year.

7. How important is communication in the daily function of your job?

- Communication is very important. Our cases are worked through an “assembly line,” passing from one person to another to reach the end product. We also have several peer-review or verification steps for each of our processes, so we must constantly communicate with our co-workers in a respectful manner.

8. In your opinion, what do you think is the most challenging part of your occupation?

- The severity of the impact that this occupation has on people’s lives. It is crucial for every step in every case to be carried out with the utmost integrity and attentiveness because the end results have direct effects on the people involved in the cases.

9. What advancement opportunities are available in your line of work?

- Typically, when someone is hired with no experience, they will begin at the Screening phase. As experience is gained, they can move up to the Technician phase of processing, and then eventually, become a report writer, if they wish. There are various other support positions within our section, so there is a potential opportunity for those positions should they become available.

10. What is a common misconception people have about your job?

- Definitely the CSI Effect. People think it is the same as it looks on TV, but it is very different.
 - a. Mostly the timing is different. While TV shows have a crime solved within the hour, the timeframe of a case going through our lab would typically be about a week or two, and that would be if it was the only case being worked at the time.
 - b. TV shows portray one person doing the job of all the sections that we have at HFSC. We have seven different casework sections, and no one staff member can perform the duties of an analyst in another section. It is highly specialized with educational background and training.
 - c. We do not do any of the following:
 - I. Carry guns at work
 - II. Go to the crime scene
 - III. Drive a hummer to the crime scene
 - IV. Interrogate suspects
 - d. Some TV shows portray forensic analysts as police officers as well. This is not true of HFSC analysts.

11. How is the work-life balance for an analyst in this section?

- This all depends on how you make it for yourself. There are times when something has to be finished, so you may have to put in extra hours. However, if you are working 40-hour work weeks, you should be able to handle the workload that is expected of you for the most part.
- Seeing and reading disturbing things are often a part of this job. Most people can overcome and realize that it comes with the territory. It may not always be pleasant, but it is worth it to be able to be a part of obtaining justice at the end of the day.