



Policy Title:	FEPAC Glossary
Approved By:	FEPAC Commission
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Related Commission Document:	
References:	
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Academic Calendar

The annual period designated by the educational institution that defines the beginning and ending of terms or semesters and includes all significant dates, deadlines, exam periods, or other calendar information related to the educational program.

Academic Forensic Scientists

Forensic scientists employed in an academic setting such as a College or University, generally in an instructional or research role.

Academic Year

The 12-month cycle that for most institutions begins with the Fall term and ends after the Summer term of the following year.

Accreditation

A recognition signifying that the program meets all FEPAC standards. This status may be attained by programs seeking either initial or renewal of accreditation. Accreditation (initial or re-accreditation) is for a five-year period.

Accreditation cycle

The annual timeline of phases involved in the FEPAC accreditation process. The period of time between the date that application for accreditation is received and the date of the FEPAC commission's final action.

Accredited

Having received formal recognition and acknowledgment of adherence to quality standards of an accrediting body. A program which has received accreditation.

Adequate support

Demonstrated academic, administrative, and financial support of the educational program sufficient for the program to achieve the defined mission, goals, and objectives.

Adjunct Faculty

Faculty employed as part-time instructors at colleges and universities because they possess practical real-world experience that benefits the educational program.

Adverse Action

A decision by the Commission to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate accreditation, or any other comparable accrediting action FEPAC may take against a program.

Annual Reports

A yearly report by which the college or university evaluates the achievement and progress towards ensuring continuous compliance with FEPAC Standards.

Appeal

An application or other formal request by a program to FEPAC to consider reversal of any adverse decision made by FEPAC related to its desired accreditation status.

Appropriate doctoral degree

A Ph.D., J.D., M.D., or other Doctoral Degree in a course of study specific to the knowledge, skills, and education required for the professional practice in the fields of forensic science in the programs accredited by FEPAC.

Capstone

A final project or experience designed to help demonstrate that the graduating student has the knowledge and skills commensurate with the degree awarded.

Coherent Curriculum

A curriculum that is relevant, orderly, and consistent within the structure of the educational program and appropriately addresses the program's missions, goals, and objectives.

Commission Representative (of FEPAC)

A FEPAC employee, Commissioner, volunteer, consultant, or person acting in any capacity as the FEPAC's designated representative.

Complaint

A formal expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body or accreditation body relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected. An expression of concern or dissatisfaction from a student, faculty, or staff member to the Faculty, Program, Department, or University where a response is expected.

Conflict of Interest

A situation in which professional judgment or behavior concerning the integrity of the Commission and its duties as an accreditor have been improperly influenced by a different interest (such as for financial gain).

Constituencies

Individuals or groups, such as students, faculty, alumni, personnel, and the community that are served by or have an interest in the institution.

Co-requisite

A specific course, often a laboratory, that must be taken at the *same time* (concurrently) as the main course, often paired to provide essential support, like a biology lecture with its required lab, or a college math course with a developmental support class.

Corrective action

An action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation.

Credit Hours

A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 or 60 minutes) of lecture instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other award. Credit hours for instruction other than lecture (such as lab, recitation, practicum, etc.) may require different numbers of hours per week as defined by each institution.

Curriculum

An educational program consisting of a set of required and elective courses with credits that can be applied to an associate's, bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree; a set of courses constituting an area of specialization.

Digital Forensic Science Courses

Computer Forensics, Network Forensics, and other related subjects and such courses that include identification, acquisition, authentication, examination, and analysis, of digital or multimedia evidence.

Digital Forensics

Forensic examination of digital and multi-media evidence.

Discipline

In the forensic science context, a major area of casework for which specialized knowledge and/or training is required.

Distance learning

An educational course or program in which a majority of the instruction occurs with the

instructor and student in separate locations. This may include web-based methods, video conferencing, teleconferencing, correspondence, or other forms of delivery methods.

Documented Research Experience

A written record of an individual's research activities that resulted in an appropriate combination of publication in relevant peer reviewed scientific journals, formal scientific presentations at relevant scientific meetings, regular contributions to in-house forensic science laboratory research, routine oversight of student research projects, or successful completion of grant funded research.

Ethics

The rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession: for example, medical ethics.

Evaluator

A person assigned by an accreditation body to perform, alone or as part of an assessment team, an assessment of a program.

Evidence

Physical or digital material gathered for the purpose of gleaning information relevant to a criminal investigation.

Faculty

The instructional staff of a college or university. This includes all personnel, full-time or part-time, participating in the instructional portion of an educational program.

Forensic science

1) The application of science to matters of law. 2) The application of scientific knowledge and methodology to legal problems and criminal investigations.

Forensic science concentration

A forensic science concentration refers to a specialization within a degree program, such as chemistry or biology, that has defined curricular requirements. Institutions define the number of credit hours of coursework that constitute a concentration. In some institutions, a concentration may be described as an "emphasis" or "track" - all three terms convey the same meaning.

Forensic Science Education Programs

Programs that lead to a bachelor's degree or higher in Forensic Science or a Natural Science with a Forensic Science Concentration, or a Bachelor's Degree or higher with a Digital Forensic Science concentration.

Forensic science faculty

Forensic science faculty includes any faculty or instructional staff member who teaches a forensic science course, or a support course designed specifically for the program. It does not include faculty or instructional staff members who teach only non-forensic courses required for the degree, such as general biology, chemistry, or math courses.

Forensic science laboratory

An operational government or private laboratory that provides scientific analyses for use in civil or criminal investigations and resulting court proceedings. A forensic science laboratory could include standalone units such as crime scene services or latent print units.

Full-time faculty

Members of the instructional/research faculty or instructional staff who have full-time appointments at their institution.

Goals

The educational purpose which the institution or program strives to achieve.

Good Cause

A mechanism available to a program to justify to the Commission the need to extend a deadline. Good Cause could be invoked and demonstrated when a program is in partial compliance with a FEPAC standard and has demonstrated significant progress toward areas of non-compliance but needs more time to come into full compliance with one or more FEPAC standards. (See *Commission Actions Policy*).

Institutional support

Sufficient support from the institution's administration and financial resources to allow the program to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. Examples include sufficient staffing (i.e. faculty teaching and other responsibilities balance to allow for regular interaction with students), laboratory facilities, equipment (i.e. instruments and technology current for the discipline specializations offered, sufficient for number of students performing laboratory work, and in working condition), and supplies (i.e. sufficient inventory of necessary consumables, reagents, and samples - dedicated for use by forensic science program).

Instructional Hour

A unit of measure that represents a 50-min or 60-min class period of scheduled instruction given to students.

Internships

Internships are experiences for students in real-world settings for specified periods of time. In the FEPAC context, internships refer to workplace or research experiences relevant to the student's program of study.

Laboratory (in a coursework context)

Knowledge gained through hands-on experience in a laboratory setting for which an academic institution, through a formalized process, may award related academic credit to a student. A laboratory experience could be a standalone laboratory course or integrated as a semester-long experience within a course that includes a lecture component.

Management Experience

Supervisory experience in a laboratory or academic position that includes setting and maintaining policy and procedures and operational and personnel decision making.

Measures of performance

Assessment measures designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program. Examples include graduate rate studies, job placement surveys, Forensic Science Assessment Test, etc.

Mentoring (Advising)

Serving as a counselor or teacher, in academic or occupational settings.

Mission

The institution's and/or program's stated purpose and philosophy, which is reflected in daily academic and business practices and interactions with constituents.

Multiple class meetings

Instruction on a topic that takes place in more than one lecture, laboratory, or class meeting.

Multiple learning modalities

Differing methods of delivering instructional material. These methods may include, but are not limited to, instruction, laboratory experience, and demonstrations.

Objectives

Specific, measurable steps that are established to aid an organization in reaching its desired long-term goals. Objectives are consistent with a commitment to continuous improvement.

Part-time Faculty

Those members of the instructional/research staff who are employed part-time or have less than a full-time appointment.

Pattern evidence

Evidence which lends itself to pattern analysis and interpretation through the interaction of one object with another. Examples include fingerprints, toolmarks, handwriting, footwear impressions, and tire impressions.

Policy

A guiding principle, operating practice, or plan of action governing decisions made on behalf of an organization.

Post-graduate assessment

A quantitative measure of documented student performance used to assess progress and achievement, such as job placement and employer surveys.

Practitioners

A person actively employed in the forensic science profession with primary experience gained through employment by a forensic science service provider.

Professional Degree

An academic degree that prepares the holder for a particular profession by emphasizing skills and knowledge of recording, analyzing and presenting evidence along with theory, analysis and application of the scientific method to investigations.

Professional Forensic Science Organization

A multidisciplinary organization of experts in the various disciplines of forensic science that is external to the institution. The core functions of these organizations focus on advancing practice through education, setting standards, promoting ethics, research, and collaboration, ensuring accuracy and integrity, and providing leadership for the forensic science community.

Professional standards

Established standards, ethics, and competencies that define expected conduct, knowledge, and performance for individuals within a specific profession.

Program

A course of academic study or a curriculum that leads to a specific degree.

Program director

Full-time faculty member at the academic institution ultimately responsible for the leadership and implementation of the academic program qualified by academic experience, research qualifications and background in administration.

Public Forum

An event open to the public and peers.

Publishable Quality

Refers to the degree to which scholarly or scientific work demonstrates appropriate rigor, originality, methodological soundness, and clarity such that it would be suitable for submission to a relevant peer-reviewed professional or scientific venue, even if publication is not ultimately pursued or achieved.

Qualified Instructor

An instructor with education, knowledge and/or experience that meets or exceeds the criteria necessary to achieve the educational objectives of the program, usually within a particular subject matter area.

Quality assurance

Those planned and systematic actions necessary to ensure reliable and accurate results.

Quality control

Internal activities or activities conducted according to externally established standards, used to monitor the reliability of analytical data and to ensure that it satisfies specified criteria.

Quality Measures

Assessment tools used to evaluate the quality and reliability of an educational program.

Requirement

Need or expectation that is stated, or obligatory, to meet a standard.

Research

Original laboratory or field-based scientific work of publishable quality in the natural, formal (or computer), or forensic sciences which must include original data analysis, interpretation, and falsifiable hypothesis testing. This does not include a social science project or exclusively a literature review or validation study.

Research initiatives

An act or strategy intended to address specific research questions usually between two organizations, such as an academic institution and a public or private laboratory.

Review

Critical evaluation of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of activities, and the results of these activities in a program, with regard to fulfillment of specified requirements by members of the FEPAC Commission.

Self-evaluation

An assessment of an organization's own conformity against a set of specified requirements or criteria. An organization's self-assessment is a comprehensive and systematic review of the organization's activities referenced against a set of expected and desired outcomes aligned with an industry model of excellence. The result of the self-assessment provides an overall view of the performance of the organization, effectiveness of the management system, and identifies areas requiring improvement.

Self-study

In the context of FEPAC, an assessment of a program's own conformity against the specified requirements or criteria stated in the FEPAC accreditation standards (see FEPAC official documents: *FEPAC Self-Study Undergraduate Form* and *FEPAC Self-Study Graduate Form*).

Specialized Knowledge

Knowledge of a certain field or discipline that an individual possesses from personal experience, education, or skills beyond that of a lay person.

Student support services

Services whose primary purpose is to contribute to students' emotional and physical well-being and to their intellectual, cultural, and social development outside the context of the formal instructional

program. These support services may include mentoring, academic advising, and career and placement services.

Survey of Forensic Science

A course that includes a broad overview of topics relevant to the field of Forensic Science.

Terminal degree

The highest degree in a given field of study; typically, a doctoral level (e.g., Ph.D., J.D., M.D.) or similar degree.

Withdrawal

Revocation or cancellation of the FEPAC application or termination of Accreditation Cycle.

Working experience in a forensic laboratory

Experience gained from employment in a public or private forensic science laboratory outside of the confines of the academic institution’s teaching and research program, and directly related to the analysis of evidence in criminal or civil matters.

Revision History

Date Revised	Summary of Revisions	Approved By