



# New Mexico State Personnel Office

2600 Cerrillos Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-0127

## Classification Description

### FORENSIC SCIENCE

Class Title	Class Code	Pay Band	Alt Pay Band
Forensic Technician	F4092B	50	
Forensic Scientist 1	F4092O	55	75
Forensic Scientist 2	F4092A	60	80

*\*In accordance with SPB Rule 1.7.4.10 NMAC, the assignment to alternative pay bands shall be reviewed annually to determine their appropriateness.*

#### Occupation Description

Forensic Science staff collect, classify, identify and analyze physical evidence related to criminal investigations. They perform tests on weapons or substances such as powders, plant materials, and body fluids to determine their significance to the investigation and testify as expert witnesses regarding evidence, results, and crime laboratory techniques. They serve as specialists in an area of expertise such as firearms examination, fingerprinting, chemistry, or biochemistry.

#### Nature of Work

Forensic Science staff provide support to law enforcement in the investigation of crimes by receiving, storing and maintaining physical evidence custody, security, and control. Proper collection and storage methods are important to protect the evidence. Forensic Scientists in the Law Enforcement Records Bureau provide quality assurance of criminal fingerprint card submissions taken from Law Enforcement Agencies and perform analysis on fingerprint comparisons with prints and identity theft victims.

Forensic Science workers specialize in areas such as DNA analysis or firearm examination and perform tests on weapons or on substances such as hair, tissue, and body fluids to determine their significance to the investigation. Forensic Scientists also prepare reports to document their findings, quality controls and the laboratory techniques used, and provide information and expert opinions to investigators. When criminal cases come to trial, Forensic Science employees give testimony as expert witnesses on laboratory findings regarding identifying individuals, weapons or substances from evidence collected at the scene of a crime. Forensic Science workers often work closely with other experts.

#### Distinguishing Characteristics of Levels

*Examples of Work are intended to be cumulative for each progressively higher level of work. The omission of specific statements does not preclude management from assigning other duties which are reasonably within the scope of the duties.*

#### Forensics Technician

- Employees in the Forensic Laboratory - gather data, make use of evidence handling procedures, chain of custody protocols, and manage files and evidence storage rooms.

- Employees in the Forensic Laboratory - may be involved in situations requiring the use or implementation of courtroom protocol; employ knowledge regarding rules of evidence and hazardous materials; and provide instruction in preservation and storage of physical evidence.
- Employees in the Law Enforcement Records Bureau (LERB) – provide quality assurance of criminal fingerprint card submissions taken from Law Enforcement Agencies, and perform analysis on fingerprint comparisons with prints and identity theft victims.
- Employees in the Law Enforcement Records Bureau (LERB) – conduct training for Law Enforcement Agencies, Detention Centers, and Civil Applicant Providers on how to take identifiable fingerprints and perform quality control of fingerprints taken.

### **Recommended Education and Experience for Full Performance**

High school diploma or Equivalency.

For positions in the Forensic Laboratory, two (2) years experience in general clerical work and computer operations, and knowledge of the criminal justice system, and two (2) years experience working in a forensic laboratory setting.

For positions in the Law Enforcement Records Bureau, two (2) years experience in analyzing and quality control of fingerprint records in an automated fingerprint information system, and two (2) years experience in general clerical work and computer operations.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

High school diploma or Equivalency. For positions in the Forensic Laboratory, one (1) year experience in general clerical work and computer operations.

For positions in the Law Enforcement Records Bureau, one (1) year experience in general clerical work and computer operations.

## **Forensic Scientist 1**

- Employees in this Role use scientific principles and procedures, chemical analysis methods and procedures, crime scene protocols, and photographic and laser equipment to analyze data and evidence.
- Employees may apply knowledge in areas of criminal evidence gathering and forensic laboratory procedures/practices; maintain and recommend techniques and procedures; use infrared equipment, microscopic techniques, laser instruments, and chemical identification techniques; operate instruments specific to forensic analyses and examinations; prepare reports and present evidence in a court of law.

### **Recommended Education and Experience for Full Performance**

For DNA Analysts, a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Chemistry, Forensic Science, Biochemistry, Genetics or Molecular Biology from an accredited college or university and completion of nine (9) credit hours of coursework in any combination of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, to include any course work in statistics or population genetics. For Chemists, a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry or in Biology or Forensic Science which must include a minimum of 20 credit hours of chemistry coursework. For Latent Print and Firearm Forensic Scientists, a Bachelor's degree in any discipline will be accepted, or an Associates' degree plus two (2) years of additional laboratory experience or four (4) years of additional laboratory experience can substitute for a Bachelor's degree. Four (4) years of experience working in a forensics

laboratory performing scientific analysis of forensic evidence, plus one (1) year independent case work analysis.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

For DNA Analysts, a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Chemistry, Forensic Science, Biochemistry, Genetics or Molecular Biology from an accredited college or university and completion of nine (9) credit hours of coursework in any combination of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, to include any course work in statistics or population genetics. For Chemists, a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry or in Biology or Forensic Science which must include a minimum of 20 credit hours of chemistry coursework. For Latent Print and Firearm Forensic Scientists, a Bachelor's degree in any discipline will be accepted, or an Associates' degree plus two (2) years of additional laboratory experience or four (4) years of additional laboratory experience can substitute for a Bachelor's degree.

### **Forensic Scientist 2**

- Employees in this Role use scientific research principles and procedures, chemical analysis methods and procedures, crime scene protocols, and photographic and laser equipment to analyze data and evidence.
- Employees may apply knowledge in areas of criminal evidence gathering and forensic laboratory procedures/practices; design, validate, maintain and recommend techniques and procedures; use infrared equipment, microscopic techniques, laser instruments, and chemical identification techniques; operate instruments specific to forensic analyses and examinations; provide instruction in forensic analyses and crime scene evidence identification, collection and preservation, prepare reports and present evidence in a court of law.
- Employees may require the application of state and federal acts, statutes, rules, and regulations applicable to area of specialization; train other employees at the operational level; prepare instructional material in forensic firearms/tool mark, serology/DNA, latent print, and/or drug examination/analysis.

### **Recommended Education and Experience for Full Performance**

For DNA Analysts, a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Chemistry, Forensic Science, Biochemistry, Genetics or Molecular Biology from an accredited college or university and completion of nine (9) credit hours of coursework in any combination of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, to include any course work in statistics or population genetics. For Chemists, a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry or in Biology or Forensic Science which must include a minimum of 20 credit hours of chemistry coursework. For Latent Print and Firearm Forensic Scientists, a Bachelor's degree in any discipline will be accepted, or an Associates' degree plus two (2) years of additional laboratory experience or four (4) years of additional laboratory experience can substitute for a Bachelor's degree. Four (4) years of experience working in a forensics laboratory performing scientific analysis of forensic evidence, including one (1) year independent casework analysis. Six (6) years of experience working in a forensics laboratory performing independent scientific analysis of forensic evidence, and one (1) year forensic expert witness testimony experience.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

For DNA Analysts, a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Chemistry, Forensic Science, Biochemistry, Genetics or Molecular Biology from an accredited college or university and completion of nine (9) credit hours of coursework in any combination of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, to include any course work in statistics or population genetics. For Chemists, a Bachelor's

Degree in Chemistry or in Biology or Forensic Science which must include a minimum of 20 credit hours of chemistry coursework. For Latent Print and Firearm Forensic Scientists, a Bachelor's degree in any discipline will be accepted, or an Associates' degree plus two (2) years of additional laboratory experience or four (4) years of additional laboratory experience can substitute for a Bachelor's degree. Four (4) years of experience working in a forensics laboratory performing scientific analysis of forensic evidence, including one (1) year independent casework analysis.

## Knowledge and Skills

*Note: This information has been produced by compiling information and documentation provided by O\*NET. O\*NET is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment, and Training Administration.*

### Knowledge

**English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

**Law and Government** — Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.

**Customer and Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

**Public Safety and Security** — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.

**Chemistry** — Knowledge of the chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.

**Clerical** — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.

**Computers and Electronics** — Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.

**Education and Training** — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

**Mathematics** — Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.

**Biology** — Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.

### Skills

**Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.

**Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

**Writing** — Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.

**Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

**Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.

**Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

**Active Learning** — Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

**Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

**Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

**Science** — Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.

**Statutory Requirements:** N/A

**Conditions of Employment:** Working Conditions for individual positions in this classification will vary based on each *agency's utilization, essential functions, and the recruitment needs* at the time a vacancy is posted. All requirements are subject to possible modification to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities.

**Default FLSA Status:** Non-Exempt at the basic and operational level. Exempt at the advanced level. FLSA status may be determined to be different at the agency level based on the agency's utilization of the position.

**Bargaining Unit:** This position may be covered by a collective bargaining agreement and all terms/conditions of that agreement apply and must be adhered to.

**Established:** 07/07/2001      **Revised:** 10/28/2013, 3/7/2016 (Min Quals), 11/27/2018 (min quals on FS1 and FS2)

*\*Adapted from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and are intended to illustrate the typical education and experience required for this occupation and are not to be construed as minimum qualifications.*

*Note: Classification description subject to change. Please refer to the SPO website [www.spo.state.nm.us](http://www.spo.state.nm.us) to ensure this represents the most current copy of the description.*