



The
Chartered
Society of
Forensic
Sciences

Endorsement Scheme Criteria

1 | Introduction

The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS) has been assessing and accrediting the forensic content of full degree courses (undergraduate and postgraduate) in forensic science since 2006.

The Accreditation Scheme now covers a range of “forensic” qualifications which are less than full degrees. Typically foundation degrees and diplomas at undergraduate and diplomas at postgraduate level. These are covered by Recognition. However, the Society acknowledges that there are stand-alone Level three (L3) courses incorporating forensic science (such as BTEC courses, extended diplomas) on offer where forensic science forms a significant proportion of the overall programme. These courses would be eligible for Endorsement for the forensic science elements. The CSFS expects that such L3 courses will be based on fundamental science (biology, chemistry, physics and underpinning mathematics) and with IT and communication set within a forensic context to aid the learning.

2 | Benefits of Endorsement

Endorsement by the CSFS, as the Professional Body for forensic science practitioners provides an assurance of quality to prospective students, parents, universities and employers.

Benefits of Endorsement include:

- Website marketing: Advertises the name of Endorsed institutions and their programmes. This provides valuable information for prospective students seeking good quality courses in the forensic sciences including crime scene investigation;
- All Endorsed courses and their institutions are listed on the CSFS website;
- Provides a web page for each institution to advertise their forensic courses and other relevant material (such as testimonials from ex-students, information on higher education prospects and employment, links to publications and other developments related to their institution);
- Endorsed institutions also have access to online resources which may be used in education of students;
- Reduced rates for job vacancy advertisements in connection with teaching posts related to the forensic aspects of the Endorsed course(s).

3 | Criteria for Endorsement

There are two main criteria, one relating to student contact hours for the forensic-related content and a second relating to the nature of the forensic-related content.

3.1 | Contact hours for Forensic-related course content

There is an expectation that the Level 3 courses will incorporate fundamental science (biology, chemistry, physics and underpinning mathematics) with IT and communication. The forensic information should be at least 40% of guided learning hours (GLH) for BTEC, diploma programmes and for extended diplomas. Other programmes would be considered on a case by case basis.

3.2 | Nature of the Forensic-related course content should demonstrate

- An understanding of fundamental science and mathematics;
- An understanding of communications (oral and written) and a range of IT skills;
- A general introduction of forensic science context, principles and practice (the investigative process from crime scene to court);
- An introduction to the interpretation, evaluation and recording of evidence and its presentation in court;

- An awareness of a range of analytical techniques and their application in forensic science.

4 | Course Delivery

Providers are expected to deliver a variety of inspiring learning opportunities including practical classes as well as formal/informal teaching with formative and summative assessment. Please note that this is not limited to face to face, self-directed or e-learning. It can also include on-campus courses, blended learning and online learning. Online programmes should demonstrate an equivalent number of learning hours. The invitation to external speakers from the industry is to be encouraged and establishments will be helped to identify CSFS members who can speak/are available to assist with lessons/programmes of study.

5 | Applications for Endorsement¹

Providers must supply the following:

- A copy of the curriculum (timetable) with forensic elements highlighted and the numbers of student learning hours (contact hours) allocated against each highlighted element;
- Examples of course work such as essays, portfolios etc.;
- Examples of assessment including examination papers and model answers and a range of scripts;
- Teaching staff CVs (with relevant forensic experience/knowledge highlighted);
- Previous student feedback or examples of personal statements which focused on a BTEC Level 3 or equivalent forensic course;
- Awarding Body Centre Number/Certification.

6 | Assessment

The CSFS will nominate an assessor to visit the organisation/college to discuss the course content and supporting facilities and resources prior to the approval of the application.² A visit will only take place when the assessor is satisfied that the application material appears to cover the requirements for Endorsement.

A second CSFS assessor will independently review the documentation submitted including the visit report and will make a decision about whether the evidence supports awarding Endorsed Status. The Assessors may request further information if that provided is not sufficient to allow a judgement to be made.

The final decision rests with the CSFS Accreditation Sub-Committee.

In addition, the CSFS, as part of its overall quality management may contact the institution/college for further information or clarification.

6.1 | Non Compliance

Once granted the Endorsement is valid for a three year period and is subject to annual review. The Society reserves the right to visit at short notice. Examples of non-compliance may lead to the award of Endorsement being withheld or withdrawn. This may be because the Society loses confidence in the institution/college to deliver the quality required including:

- Insufficient hours of delivery;
- Issues with the assessment of students;
- Teaching staff with insufficient forensic knowledge or relevant CPD;
- The institution/college not informing the Society of significant changes;

¹ Hard copy or preferably electronic

² All applications generate a visit and the application fee reflects this.

7 | Appeals

If the award of Endorsement is withheld or withdrawn and the institution/college wishes to lodge an appeal they must do so in writing within fourteen days of having been informed of the decision. The grounds of the appeal must be specified and sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Society (info@csofs.org).

8 | Cost of Endorsement

The fee will include:

- a review of all documentation including requests for further information as necessary;
- a site visit;
- discussions between the assessors who will document the recommendation to award or not to award.

Please contact the CSFS at accreditation@csofs.org for current fees.

9 | Quality Assurance

The CSFS reserves the right to audit Endorsed courses by calling on institutions/colleges with the minimum of notice to talk with students and staff on the course. Should the course not comply with the original specification as detailed in the original application, Endorsement may be withdrawn. Good practice would dictate that links with potential employers would be forged by institutions running Endorsed courses.

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