

What is FEPAC?

FEPAC, the **Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission**, accredits forensic science education programs that lead to a bachelor's or master's degree in forensic science or in a natural science with a forensic science concentration.

FEPAC promotes academic quality through formal accreditation of forensic science programs in the United States. All programs that FEPAC accredits are located within institutions that are accredited by a regional accreditation organization. The FEPAC accreditation process and policies employ rigorous, consensus standards that assure and advance academic quality at accredited institutions.

Why was FEPAC formed?

An assessment of forensic sciences published in 1999 by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), entitled *Forensic Science: Review of Status and Needs*, described the educational and training needs of the forensic science community as "immense." Among the recommendations contained in the report was the establishment of the following:

- National standards for education in forensic sciences,
- An independent, community-wide, consensus-building, standard-setting body such as a technical working group for education in forensic sciences, and,
- An accreditation system for forensic science education programs.

The NIJ established a technical working group for education and training in forensic sciences (TWGED) in 2001 for the purpose of recommending sample curricular guidelines for educational programs in forensic sciences. The results of TWGED's deliberations were delineated in a research report published in 2003, entitled "Education and Training in Forensic Sciences: A Guide for Forensic Science Laboratories, Educational Institutions, and Students."

Acknowledging the importance of an accreditation system for academic programs built on the foundation of TWGED, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) established the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) and awarded its first accreditation February 2004.

Do I need a program with FEPAC Accreditation?

FEPAC accredited programs have been rigorously reviewed and found to meet the standards for quality forensic science education. Choosing an accredited program is added assurance that your education will assist you in establishing a career in forensic sciences by meeting the requirements of employers in the laboratory. Keep in mind there are many fine forensic science programs that have not yet applied for FEPAC accreditation. If you are reviewing a program not yet accredited by FEPAC, compare the curriculum against the course requirements of a FEPAC accredited program. If they are comparable and fulfill the science and mathematics basics, you can feel comfortable that the program is a good one.

Where can I find the course requirements for a FEPAC accredited program?

Complete details of FEPAC accreditation can be found on the in the FEPAC Accreditation Standards .pdf document located on the AAFS web site. The direct link to the FEPAC site is http://www.aafs.org/default.asp?section_id=aafs&page_id=committees&subpage_id=fepac and look for the **Accreditation Standards** link. In the Accreditation Standards document Undergraduate curriculum requirements begin with Standard 4.0 Undergraduate Program Standards on page 6 of the document and Graduate program curriculum requirements begin with Standard 5.0 Graduate Program Standards on page 10.

Do employers look for students from FEPAC accredited institutions?

Although employers do not exclude applicants who have graduated from non-accredited programs, more and more are looking to FEPAC programs as the gold standard for forensic science education. Employers know that graduates from FEPAC accredited programs have received education in all necessary science courses such as biochemistry, biology, chemistry, genetics, and others.