**Crime Scene Investigation: Certificate of Achievement**

**Item 1. Program Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the Crime Scene Investigation certificate is to provide students with foundational knowledge and skills required to effectively document and process crime scenes. Students who complete the curriculum satisfactorily may be qualified to take civil service examinations for entry-level employment with state, county, city and private agencies for civilian positions such as forensic technician, forensic specialist, crime scene specialist, crime scene investigator, crime scene photographer, evidence technician, or evidence specialist.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this certificate, students will be able to:

* Apply knowledge of sequential fingerprint development techniques for porous and non-porous surfaces.
* Display foundational knowledge in the history and sub-disciplines of forensic science, the structure and organization of crime labs and crime scene units, and the analytical processes and procedures used on forensic evidence.
* Articulate a realistic perspective of the field of forensic science and crime scene investigation, including the roles of forensic and investigative personnel, their separate duties and how they work together, the nature of the work, its limits, challenges, and successes.
* Write clear, correct, detailed, descriptive, and effective reports.
* Apply critical thinking, logic, and the scientific method to investigating crime scenes.
* Demonstrate practical skills and competence in recognizing, documenting, collecting, and preserving evidence at a variety of crime scenes.

**Item 2. Catalog Description**

The 18-unit certificate in Crime Scene Investigation offers instruction in the areas of crime scene processing and documentation, evidence preservation, fingerprints, photography, report writing, and legal issues relating to physical evidence. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students desiring an entry-level, civilian position working crime scenes or handling evidence, or enhancing the credentials of police officers in order to join a sworn CSI unit. Students may earn the certificate as a stand-alone credential or as part of their Associate of Science degree in Administration of Justice.

**Item 3. Program Requirements**

The program requirements are shown in the table below

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DEPT. NUMBER | COURSE NAME | UNITS | SEQUENCE |
| ADMJ 52 | Concepts of Criminal Law | 3 | Fall or Spring |
| ADMJ 57 | Introduction to ADMJ | 3 | Fall, Spring, or Summer |
| ADMJ 63 | Fingerprints | 3 | Fall |
| ADMJ 66 | Forensic Evidence | 3 | Spring or Summer |
| ADMJ 68 | Report Writing | 3 | Fall or Spring |
| ADMJ 69 | Crime Scene Documentation | 3 | Fall |
|  |  | 18 Total |  |

Minimum completion time for the certificate is two semesters.

**Item 4. Master Planning**

The certificate in Crime Scene Investigation is a revision of the Forensic Identification certificate program (now defunct). The decision was taken to revise the certificate because the coursework in the Forensic Identification certificate did not offer a realistic path to any specific career in the forensic field. Further, the Forensic Identification certificate was aimed primarily at students who were already police officers, or who were seeking to become police officers. However, 1) most of the students in these courses are not police officers, and 2) the professional trend in this field is to hire civilians as CSIs (rather than police officers) for a number of important reasons: civilians cost less than police officers (to train and to retain); civilians may be more likely to have attained some college credits by the time of application; and, finally, police officers rarely stay assigned to a CSI unit for the length of their careers.

The new certificate program addresses each of these issues with 1) a name change that accurately reflects the coursework and occupational goal, 2) the removal of courses only marginally related to the field (ADMJ 53, 62), and 3) the addition of new and revised courses (ADMJ 57, 68, 69). Coursework now includes training in criminal law, physical evidence, fingerprints, crime scene documentation/photography, and report writing – all essential skills for this field. Students possessing the skills acquired in this new certificate will be competitive for civilian jobs such as evidence technician, forensic technician, forensic specialist, crime scene investigator, crime scene photographer, or evidence specialist. This coursework may also be useful to those currently employed in law enforcement or investigations who wish to enhance their skill set.

A Perkins grant was awarded and used this year to purchase cameras and crime scene equipment for the program. Cameras, tripods, numbered placards, measuring devices, and other necessary equipment have already been purchased and delivered to the College.

**Item 5. Enrollment and Completer Projections**

The projected number of annual completers for the Crime Scene Investigation certificate is 5-10 students. This estimate is based on the enrollment data for the required courses shown in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | AY16-17 | | AY17-18 | |
| Dept. & Course # | Course Name | Annual Enrollment | Annual # Successful Completers | Annual Enrollment | Annual # Successful Completers |
| ADMJ 52 | Concepts of Criminal Law | 156 | 116 | 159 | 134\* |
| ADMJ 57 | Intro. to ADMJ | 203 | 175 | 199 | 147\* |
| ADMJ 63 | Fingerprints | 18 | 15 | 15 | 12 |
| ADMJ 66 | Forensic Evidence | 22 | 20 | 60 | 41 |
| ADMJ 68 | Report Writing | 0 | 0 | 15 | 15 |
| ADMJ 69 | Crime Scene Doc. | 0 | 0 | 15 | 12 |
|  |  |  | 326 |  | 361 |

*Notes:*

*\* Does not include summer 2018 totals*

*ADMJ 69 is a new course as of fall 2017.*

*ADMJ 66 is now offered both fully online and in person. Enrollment has increased with online offerings.*

*ADMJ 57 and 68 will soon be offered both online and in person. Enrollment is expected to increase.*

*As of fall 2019, ADMJ 52, 57, and 68 are required courses in the ADMJ major; enrollment in these courses is expected to increase.*

**Item 6. Place of Program in Curriculum/Similar Programs**

The CSI certificate replaces the Forensic Identification certificate, which has already been deactivated by the College. No other departments at CCSF offer a similar curriculum.

**Item 7. Similar Programs and Courses at Other Colleges in Service Area**

**Bay Area Community Colleges:** In the Bay Area, Contra Costa College offers the [“Forensic Criminalist”](https://www.contracosta.edu/classes/academic-departments/administration-justice/administration-justice-degrees-certificates/#Forensic%20criminalist) 16-unit certificate, and Diablo Valley College offers the [“Crime Scene Investigator”](http://voyager.dvc.edu/~jsinsel/AJ_Certificates.htm) 13-unit certificate.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **College** | **CCSF** | **DVC** | **CCC** |
| **Name of Program** | Crime Scene Investigation | Crime Scene Investigator | Forensic Criminalist |
| **Required Courses** | 1) AJ 57 Intro to Admin. Justice  2) AJ 52 Concepts of Crim. Law  3) AJ 66 Forensic Evidence  4) AJ 69 Crime Scene Documentation  5) AJ 63 Fingerprints  6) AJ 68 Report Writing | 1) Intro to Admin. Justice  2) Criminal Investigation  3) Physical Evidence and the  Lab  4) Patrol Procedures | 1) Criminal Procedures  2) Concepts of Crim. Law  3) Introduction to Forensic Science  4) Legal Aspects of Evidence  5) Basic Investigations |
| **Required Units** | 18 | 13 | 16 |

The three classes highlighted in yellow set CCSF’s program apart from the other two programs. The primary task of the CSI is to thoroughly and accurately document crime scenes (using notes, photos, video, and diagrams), topics which are covered in AJ 69. Further, a CSI is frequently tasked with locating and lifting latent fingerprints (AJ 63). And, lastly, a CSI must write clear, factual, thorough reports that can withstand mechanical and legal scrutiny (AJ 68).

It is not clear why the DVC program includes Patrol Procedures in their CSI cert, given that most CSIs are civilians rather than police officers, and therefore do not conduct patrol procedures. The title of the Contra Costa College program is highlighted because it is misleading. A “criminalist” is a job title for someone who works in a *crime lab;* these positions require a 4-year degree in biology or chemistry; a certificate is insufficient to obtain a job as a criminalist.

**Bay Area CSUs:** San Francisco State University offers a BA degree in Criminal Justice Studies. Many of CCSF’s students transfer to this program, but currently SFSU does not offer any lower or upper division crime scene or forensic science coursework. Both San Jose State University and CSU East Bay offer BS degrees in forensic chemistry and forensic biology. However, these are science degrees that prepare students to work in crime labs, which is a significantly different academic and career path than CSI. San Jose State University offers a minor in forensic studies, which is quite similar to the coursework offered in the CCSF’s CSI certificate, however, that minor cannot be obtained as a stand-alone credential; an accompanying 4-year major is required. This may not be an option for some students due to time and cost. Also, a four-year degree is currently not needed to obtain a position as a civilian CSI.