

FEPAC Glossary

**(Graduation) Assessment measures**

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

**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.

**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**

FEPAC defines Adjunct faculty as non-tenure track faculty, generally employed as part-time instructors at colleges and universities, because they possess practical real-world experience that may benefit the educational program.

**Administrative records**

Records, whether electronic or hardcopy, related to the administration of the institution.

**Administrative review**

Review of educational program for consistency with mission, goals, and objectives as well as standards of conformity.

**Adverse Accreditation Action or 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 objectively evaluates the achievement and progress towards meeting the institution's mission, goals, and objectives, as well as ensuring continuous compliance with FEPAC Standards. A required element of the report shall be a cover letter containing a declaration from the director of the accredited program of its on-going compliance with all accreditation requirements and the requirements of the Program's own management system.

**Appeal**

A request by the program to FEPAC for reconsideration by that body of a decision it has made relating to that standard or request by a program for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the accreditation body 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.

**Evaluator**

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

**Audit**

A systematic, independent, documented process for obtaining records, statements of fact or other relevant information and assessing them objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled.

**Capstone Experience**

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

**Certification**

The recognition bestowed upon a group or individual recognizing their knowledge, skills, and competence in a particular field.

**Civil law and procedure**

The system of law concerned with private relations between members of a community rather than criminal, military, or religious affairs.

## FEPAC Glossary

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### **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.

### **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.

### **Constituencies**

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

### **Contact hours (instructional hour)**

A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students, and is related to the number of academic credits that will be awarded.

### **Corrective action**

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

### **Credit Hours (semester hour)**

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.

### **Crime/forensic laboratory**

A laboratory (with at least one full-time scientist) which examines physical evidence in criminal matters, issues test reports, and provides opinion testimony with respect to such physical evidence in a court of law.

### **Criminal law and procedure**

A system of law concerned with the punishment of those who commit crimes.

### **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. 2) a set of courses constituting an area of specialization.

### **Demonstrated Research Activity**

An individual has conducted research activities that have been published in a relevant peer-reviewed scientific journal and/or that have been presented at a relevant scientific meeting.

**Denial of Accreditation**

A status signifying that the Commission has determined that the program does not meet the standards. This status may be assigned only to programs seeking initial accreditation.

**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. (from AAFS PPM)

**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**

An individual has conducted research activities that resulted in an appropriate combination of publication in a relevant peer reviewed scientific journal, a formal scientific presentation at a relevant scientific meeting, or a successful peer reviewed grant of which there is a written record.

**Eligible program**

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 are eligible for accreditation. FEPAC will also accredit bachelor's or master's degree programs or programs in a related area with a digital evidence concentration. The program must be located in a regionally accredited institution of higher education that requires state, province, or equivalent approval.

**Ethics**

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

**Evidence**

Material, regardless of form, 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. An educator who works at a college or university in an instructional capacity.

## FEPAC Glossary

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### **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.

### **Forensic Science Education Programs**

Programs that lead to a bachelor's or higher level degree 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.

### **Full-time (instructional) faculty**

Those full-time members of the instructional/research faculty whose major regular assignment includes instruction, including those with released time for research. Also, includes full-time faculty for whom it is not possible to differentiate between teaching, research, and public service because each of these functions is an integral component of his/her regular assignment.

### **Full-time science faculty**

Those full-time members of the instructional/research faculty whose major regular assignment is science instruction, including those with released time for research. Also, includes full-time faculty for whom it is not possible to differentiate between teaching, research, and public service because each of these functions is an integral component of his/her regular assignment.

### **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.

### **GED**

General Education Development high school equivalency certificate.

### **General Standards**

An acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value; a criterion. For FEPAC purposes, General Standards are the criteria that all programs must meet to achieve accreditation.

### **Goals**

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

### **Good Cause**

A remedy available to the Commission for extending statutory deadlines provided the following conditions are met:

## FEPAC Glossary

Updated: May 2023

1. The program/institution has demonstrated significant accomplishments in addressing the areas of non-compliance during the period under sanction, or
2. The program/institution has demonstrated at least partial compliance with the FEPAC Standard(s) and criteria cited and, for any remaining deficiencies, demonstrates an understanding of those deficiencies, as well as readiness, institutional capacity, and a plan to remedy those deficiencies within the period of extension contemplated by the Commission.

When determining whether these conditions have been met, the Commission will also consider whether:

1. The quality of education provided by the program/institution is in material compliance with FEPAC's Accreditation Standards at the time of the extension, and
2. The Commission has no evidence of any new or continuing violations of FEPAC Accreditation Standards regarding programmatic/institutional honesty and integrity, and
3. The Commission has no evidence of other reasons or current circumstances why the program's or institution's accreditation should not be continued for "good cause."

### **Graduate Program Standards**

An acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value; a criterion. For FEPAC purposes, Graduate Program Standards are the criteria that all Master's level or higher programs must meet in order to achieve accreditation.

### **Inspection**

Examination of a program or institution and determination of its conformity with specific requirements or, on the basis of professional judgment, with general requirements.

### **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 laboratory facilities, equipment, and supplies.

### **Instructional Hour**

An instructional hour is a 50-min or 60-min class period. Instructional Hours equal the number of instructional hours per week times the number of weeks in the term (e.g. semester, quarter, trimester).

### **Instructional Personnel**

Staff whose primary function/occupational activity is primarily instruction or instruction combined with research and/or public service. (Source: IPEDS)

### **Internships**

Internships are full-time experiences for students in real-world settings for specified periods of time. They may have exposure to the workplace or research as the primary focus. In the FEPAC context, internships refer to these experiences in casework forensic science laboratories that conduct analyses relevant to the student's program of study.

## FEPAC Glossary

Updated: May 2023

### **Laboratory experience**

Knowledge gained through practical work experience in a laboratory setting for which an institution, through a formalized process, may analyze and award related academic credit to a student.

### **Laboratory training / Laboratory-based instruction**

A component of a science course that includes laboratory-based learning experience (and includes laboratory health and safety).

### **Management Experience**

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

### **Mentoring (Advising)**

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

### **Mission**

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

### **Natural Sciences**

Chemistry, biology and physics.

### **Objectives**

Quality objectives are established to provide a focus to direct the organization. They determine the desired results and assist the organization to apply its resources to achieve these results. The quality objectives need to be consistent with the commitment to continual improvement, and their achievement needs to be measurable.

### **Other Instructional Personnel**

Non-faculty personnel directly involved in instruction within the educational program. Examples may include teaching assistants, research assistants, and guest instructors or lecturers.

### **Part-time Faculty**

Those members of the instructional/research staff who are employed part-time and whose major regular assignment is instruction. Also, includes part-time faculty for whom it is not possible to differentiate between teaching, research and public service because each of these functions is an integral component of his/her regular assignment.

**Pattern evidence**

Evidence which lends itself to pattern analysis and interpretation. Examples of pattern evidence include fingerprints (latent and patent), footwear impressions, and tire impressions.

**Physical Evidence Concepts**

Concepts or fundamentals of physical evidence and its role in forensic investigations that include recognition, documentation, collection, handling, preservation, and approaches to analysis.

**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 a forensic science profession or discipline.

**Procedure**

A specified way to carry out an activity or a process (ISO 1700:2004).

**Professional Degree**

A degree, typically beyond the associate's or bachelor's degree, that may include a master's or doctoral degree. The chosen field in which the degree is awarded generally determines the title of the degree. A professional degree is an academic degree that prepares the holder for a particular profession by emphasizing competency skills along with theory and analysis.

**Professional standards**

Standards of performance that people are expected to achieve in their work, and the knowledge and skills they need to perform effectively. (SSDA)

**Program**

1) A course of academic study; a curriculum. 2) A plan or system of academic and related or ancillary activities. A program is generally designed to lead to a degree.

**Program director**

Full-time faculty member at the academic institution ultimately responsible for the leadership and implementation of the academic program.

**Public Forum**

An opportunity to present research to the public and peers.

**Qualified Instructor**

An instructor with education, knowledge and/or experience that meets or exceeds the criteria



## FEPAC Glossary

Updated: May 2023

necessary to achieve the educational objectives of the program, usually within a particular subject matter area.

### **Quality**

Degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements.

### **Quality assurance**

Those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide sufficient confidence that a laboratory's product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality. (From A/L)

### **Quality control**

Internal activities or activities conducted according to externally established standards, used to monitor the quality of analytical data and to ensure that it satisfies specified criteria. (From A/L)

### **Quality Measures**

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

### **Regionally Accredited Institution of Higher Education**

An institution of higher education that has received accreditation from one of the six regional higher education accrediting bodies: Middle States Commission on Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

### **Requirement**

Need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory.

### **Research**

Original laboratory or field based scientific work of publishable quality in the natural or forensic sciences which must include original data analysis, interpretation, and falsifiable hypothesis testing, but is not 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**

Verification of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of selection and determination activities, and the results of these activities, with regard to fulfillment of specified requirements (3.1) by an object of conformity assessment.

### **Self-study/self-evaluation**

Self-assessment against a set of specified requirements or criteria. (Modified ISO) An

## FEPAC Glossary

Updated: May 2023

organization's self-assessment is a comprehensive and systematic review of the organization's activities and results referenced against the quality management system or a model of excellence. Self-assessment can provide an overall view of the performance of the organization and the degree of maturity of the quality management system. It can also help to identify areas requiring improvement in the organization and to determine priorities.

### **Specialized Knowledge**

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

### **Standards**

Acknowledged measures of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value; criteria.

### **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. (Partial Source: IPEDS)

### **Substantive Change**

Any change that could adversely affect the accreditation status of the program. Examples may include: Any change in the established mission or objectives of the program, any change in the regional accreditation status, the addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in either content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when FEPAC last evaluated the program, the addition of courses or programs at a degree or credential level above that which is included in the program's current accreditation, a change in the number of credit hours required for successful completion of a program, or a change in program director.

### **Surveillance**

System of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity and compliance with FEPAC standards.

### **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 Ph.D., J.D., M.D., or similar degree.

### **Undergraduate Standards**

An acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative or qualitative value; a criterion. For FEPAC purposes, Undergraduate Standards are the criterion that all Bachelor's level programs must meet in order to achieve accreditation.

### **Withdrawal**

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

## FEPAC Glossary

Updated: May 2023

### **Working experience in a forensic laboratory**

Experience gained from employment in a public or private forensic 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.