

Maine Community College System
Five Year Program Review

College: Central Maine Community College
CIP: 43.0406

Program: Forensic Science
Credentials: Associate in Applied Science (AAS)

Review Team: David Lewis, Natalee Stotz, Eric Berg, Matthew Tift, Jeff Green, Dave King, Michael Latti, Samantha Wing, Benjamin Farris

Date: June 2026

Period of Review: AY 2021-2024

Program Overview:

1) **Program description** (*from the most recent college catalog*):

The Associate in Applied Science degree in Forensic Science prepares students for employment in the area of crime scene investigation and/ or to upgrade to a position within the industry. Upon completion of the degree students will be able to photograph crime scene evidence, collect, examine, compare and identify fingerprints, collect blood, trace and fiber evidence, cast shoeprint impressions and assist in identifying deceased individuals. The program will prepare students for career paths in criminal justice including detective, deputy sheriff, criminal investigator, crime scene photographer or crime scene technician.

2) **Program Learning Outcomes: all program learning outcomes are expected to be assessed within the five-year cycle. Please attach an Assessment Data and Reflection Template for each program learning outcome. Explain how the department used the assessment results to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum.**

List the program learning outcomes:	Method of assessment: list the courses and activities/assignments used to assess the learning outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain the fundamental concepts of chemistry and biology as these relate to forensic investigations.2. Demonstrate competency in the collection, processing, analyses, and evaluation of evidence.3. Demonstrate competency in the principles of crime scene investigation, including the recognition, collection, identification, preservation, and documentation of physical evidence.4. Identify the role of forensic investigator and physical evidence within the criminal justice system.5. Demonstrate the ability to document and orally describe crime scenes, physical evidence, and scientific processes.6. Identify and examine current and emerging concepts and practices within the forensic investigation field.	

3) Credentials Awarded within the IPEDS year, i.e. July 1-June 30:

Credentials Awarded					
Credential	AY2021	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425
AAS	1	1	--	--	2

4) Program Graduates Employed:

Number of Completers with any Wage Data	--
% of Completers with any Wage Data	--
# of Completers with First Year Earnings	--
Median First Year Earnings	--

5) Partnerships, collaborations, associations and memberships

<i>Date(s) of Meeting</i>	<i># of college attendees</i>	<i># of Non-college attendees</i>
11/06/2025	2	2
10/01/2024	3	4
11/02/2022	2	4
11/04/2021	2	2

6) Other Indicators of student success, direct and/or indirect, which may include:

	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425	AY2526
Program Advisory Committee Member Survey (on scale of 1-5 averaged):	--	--	--	--	--
Program Curriculum	--	--	--	--	4.25
Technical currency of the program	--	--	--	--	4.5
Preparation of program graduates for work in the field	--	--	--	--	4
Communication from program administration/faculty	--	--	--	--	4.75
Overall quality of the program	--	--	--	--	4.25
Major Equipment Purchased Recently for this Program with Federal Funds:	--	--	--	--	3.7

*Committee members only surveyed on the years they are assessed.

7) Student demographics:

Admissions					
	2021	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fall Applications	46	52	43	70	78
% chg in Fall Applicants from PY	--	13%	-17%	63%	11%
Enrolled (Yield)	11	20	9	17	21
% chg in Enrolled from PY	--	82%	-55%	89%	24%

Student Enrollment ¹					
	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425	AY2526
Unduplicated Headcount Enrolled in Program	30	17	25	39	39
% Change in Headcount from PY	--	-43%	47%	56%	0%
Enrolled Credit Hours	371	198	283	458	454
% Change in Credit hours from PY	--	-47%	43%	62%	-1%
FTE	25	13	19	31	30
% Change in FTE from PY	--	-47%	43%	62%	-1%

¹ = students within the program in the fall of the academic year

Student Success					
Cohort Year	AY2122	AY2223	AY2324	AY2425	AY2526
Cohort Enrollment	17	15	24	31	26
Retained to the next semester	53%	33%	71%	35%	0%
Retained to the next year	24%	13%	33%	23%	--
Graduation Rates					
100% of program time	0%	0%	4%		
150% of program time	0%	7%			
200% of program time	0%				
Transfer Rate (non-graduates) ²	35%				
Transfer Rate (graduates)	0%				
Enrolled in Another Program ²	6%				
Graduated from Another Program ²	24%				

². Determined at the maximum graduation point in this table, i.e. 200%

8) Strengths, challenges, and planned steps for continuous improvement: In your summary assessment you should reference sections of this review that informs the plan.

Program Strengths:

- The Forensic Science program is the only two-year program of its kind in the State of Maine. The program features an overlapping interdisciplinary model that provides students opportunities to develop a holistic understanding of criminal investigation that includes criminal, medico-legal and private investigative perspectives.
- The college has made significant investments in the program, adding the Public Service Simulation Center in 2023. This building has allowed the program to thrive with standalone space for simulation training, enhanced feedback with the use of video recording, and a dedicated classroom.
- The department uses a FARO scanner in some of the forensics courses. The FARO scanner is cutting-edge equipment that allows the capture of crime scene evidence by forensic scientists. The Maine State Police uses FARO scanners at major crime scenes. The addition of this scanner enhances student skills related to crime scene investigation.
- There is a strong relationship with the program advisory board who continuously review curriculum and provide feedback about graduates so that it remains current with industry practices.
- The full-time and adjunct faculty in Forensic Science are a high caliber and represent a wealth of experience in the criminal justice field.
- The Life Sciences Department provides a robust foundation in chemistry and biology that supports programming needs. Students benefit from hands-on learning in the College's state-of-the-art organic chemistry lab.
- Department faculty actively promote the program through outreach efforts. In the past the program participated in Totally Trades, providing an opportunity for high school girls to explore trade, technical and other nontraditional careers. The Public Service & Social Sciences department hosts a yearly summer camp experience for adolescents called "Fun with Forensics", where participants practice various skills related to crime scene processing.
- Students that plan to transfer to a four-year institution benefit from articulation agreements with the University of Southern Maine. The program directly transfers to their B.A. in Criminology, B.A. in Chemistry or B.S. in Chemistry programs.

Challenges:

- Forensic Science students report to faculty that they find the science courses challenging. Faculty and the Learning and Advising Center work together to connect students with tutoring options through the Math and Science Center.

- Due to the nature and wide array of Criminal Justice occupations, career counseling and well-planned course selection is unique to each individual student. A lot of time is needed to advise each student to ensure correct choices are being made and academic pathways are flexible as students explore various directions within the industry.

- The department is currently seeking funding sources to expand the Public Service Simulation Center. This expansion will help centralize programming throughout the department and foster connectivity throughout the student body within our programs, strengthening the public service culture among our students.

Planned steps for continuous improvement:

- Program faculty will continue to monitor the challenges students report related to the advanced sciences to determine appropriate adjustments to the curriculum.

- The department will continue to pursue funding for the expansion of the Public Service Simulation Center

- The program will continue to be responsive to societal changes and expectations of law enforcement to be empathetic communicators, effective problem solvers, analytical critical thinkers, and positive agents of community advocacy.

Five-year Assessment Plan for Program Learning Outcomes

Forensic Science

April 2026

Name of Program or General Education Domain

Date

Learning goal:

Program Educational Outcomes	Academic year during which assessment will occur	Source(s) and type of assessment artifact(s) that will be collected (e.g.: embedded questioning, capstone assignments, standardized testing, performance observation, portfolio reviews, etc.)	Method(s) to be used for assessing artifact(s)	Assessment Goal (targets/criteria) for direct measure	Assessment Outcome (Number of Students Achieving an "acceptable" or better)	Assessment Goal was:		
						Met	Not Met	Pending Review
CM PLO FRN 1: Explain the fundamental concepts of chemistry and biology as these relate to forensic investigations.	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	80% of Students pass at 75% or higher	84.21%	X		
CM PLO FRN 2: Demonstrate competency in the collection, processing, analyses, and evaluation of evidence.	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	80% of Students pass at 75% or higher	84.21%	X		
CM PLO FRN 3: Demonstrate competency in the principles of crime scene investigation, including the recognition, collection, identification,	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	80% of Students pass at 75% or higher	84.21%	X		

preservation, and documentation of physical evidence.								
CM PLO FRN 4: Identify the role of forensic investigator and physical evidence within the criminal justice system.	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	<i>80% of Students pass at 75% or higher</i>	84.21%	X		
CM PLO FRN 5: Demonstrate the ability to document and orally describe crime scenes, physical evidence, and scientific processes.	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	<i>80% of Students pass at 75% or higher</i>	84.21%	X		
CM PLO FRN 6: Identify and examine current and emerging concepts and practices within the forensic investigation field.	Fall/Spring 25/26	CRJ 250 Final Exam	Standardized Test	<i>80% of Students pass at 75% or higher</i>	84.21%	X		

Most significant assessment findings? (Pedagogical, instructional, curricular changes). Please report on actions taken and on ongoing assessment plans.

Students performed markedly better since the previous review in 2021, when achievement was at 71.4% for all program learning outcomes.