



National Forensic Science Academy

Forensic Manager Certification Program

Certified Forensic Manager

Certification

FAQs

What is the Forensic Manager Certification Program?

RTI International (RTI) has established a Forensic Manager Certification Program (FMCP) in collaboration with the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), whose mission is to develop the next generation of leaders that reflect the highest standards for practice, management, and science within crime laboratories. The FMCP establishes a national standard for professional development of crime laboratory leaders and creates positive change within the criminal justice system by instilling a culture of excellence and collaboration in the production of accurate, scientific, forensic results. The FMCP is a program of RTI's National Forensic Science Academy (NFSA), an endeavor by RTI to provide the Forensic Science community with a primary location for professional certifications for a wide range of job roles, organization levels, and disciplines.

The FMCP is the nation's first and only body to certify crime laboratory leaders in laboratory management. The FMCP program provides criteria to training and education providers that cover a comprehensive, consensus-based curriculum to prepare forensic scientists to become leaders. The training is designed for forensic science professionals aspiring to be leaders within their laboratories, unit supervisors, managers, and executives in public laboratories as well as units within police agencies or commercial laboratories. By requiring providers to maintain a specific level of topical coverage, the FMCP targets the students who finish those programs, offering them an opportunity to achieve professional certification in addition to completing the required training.

What is the mission of the FMCP?

"FMCP's mission is to promote excellence in the management, leadership, and practice of forensic science through professional certifications."

How is the FMCP organized?

The FMCP is organized into two strategic councils, the Advisory Council and the Conformance and Certification Committee (CAC). The Advisory Council's primary focus is on the overall direction, strategy, and operation of the FMCP. The CAC is a panel of experts that oversee the certification exams, curricula, approved providers, as well as reviewing the validity and reliability of the entire certification process.

The Advisory Council and CAC collaborate to jointly approve certifications and conduct the periodic reviews of the validity and reliability of the certification process. The Advisory Council and the Conformance and Certification Committee include crime laboratory directors, other forensic science professionals, and experts in science, education, and leadership.

Why does the FMCP need to exist?

Public crime laboratories are often led by technical professionals who have demonstrated top-notch skills as forensic practitioners but who lack training in leadership and public sector management.



The 2009 report of the National Academy of Sciences, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, advocated for improved leadership training and detailed specific gaps for technical leaders and managers¹. In addition, according to the Innocence Project, 45% of wrongful convictions are related to the misapplication of forensic science, including improperly applied techniques, inaccurate testimony, and lack of quality measures².

The training and certification provided by the FMCP seeks to improve the ability of crime laboratory leaders to instill science-based standards, a positive work environment, and efficient case flow. Improved management will address concerns related to forensic negligence and misconduct by improving oversight within the laboratories themselves. In this way, the FMCP complements efforts to improve forensic practice at the national level by providing a critical mechanism for the adoption of rigorous best practices right down to the unit level.

The FMCP has been structured to demonstrate independence as a certifying body that administers a certification program which demonstrates competency of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be a leader in a top-performing forensic laboratory. Additionally, the competency requirements are based on consensus developed minimum standards in four key content areas as follows:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Human Resources & Legal
- Laboratory Operations

Who should have the Certified Forensic Manager certification?

The CFM certification is primarily tailored for forensic professionals or those seeking to become forensic professionals. Such individuals could include students, crime laboratory employees, commercial laboratory professionals, or individuals in other public safety agencies who perform forensic science related work. Additionally, professionals in other criminal justice communities, such as law enforcement or legal professionals, whose responsibilities would benefit from forensic science-specific leadership and management strategies would also benefit greatly from a CFM certification.

How does the Certified Forensic Manager scale?

The FMCP consists of three levels of certification, corresponding to supervisors (Level I), managers (Level II), and executives/directors (Level III):

- Certified Forensic Manager – Level 1 (CFM-I)
 - The individual can supervise a team of individuals within a forensic science organization with well-defined roles and responsibilities.

¹ From “Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward” by the National Research Council of the National Academies, 2009

² From “Overturning Wrongful Convictions Involving Misapplied Forensics”, The Innocence Project;
<https://www.innocenceproject.org/overturning-wrongful-convictions-involving-flawed-forensics/>



- Certified Forensic Manager – Level 2 (CFM-II)
 - The individual can manage a forensic science organization with multiple teams, develop and implement new business and technical processes, and lead and manage personnel to meet organizational missions and objectives.
- Certified Forensic Manager – Level 3 (CFM-III)
 - The individual can direct a forensic science organization or system, including the development of policies, procedures or innovations; anticipate, mitigate and solve complex organizational problems; instill a leadership culture within a forensic science organization or system; and provide leadership for the forensic science community.

Each certification level's content builds on the concepts of the certification preceding it, creating a progressive certification level system where each certification level should be taken in order from CFM-I to CFM-III, regardless of actual job position or title.

How do I maintain my certification?

CFM certifications will be maintained through a continuing education (CE) system that will allow the CFMs to utilize a combination of training and work experiences related to the CFM content that best align with their personal and professional goals. More details on the CE recertification requirements will be available prior to its launch in late 2020.

Is there a cost to become a CFM?

There is a \$200 USD exam fee in order to sit for a CFM exam. The exam fee is required with every attempt at the exam.

