

# NATS 3008 COMPLEX FORENSIC STUDIES

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 300911

**Coordinator** Val Spikmans ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Val Spikmans/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Val%20Spikmans/))

**Description** This is an advanced and integrating capstone unit for students studying forensic science. It incorporates previous science, forensic science and social science units to form a comprehensive examination of the functionality of forensic evidence within the contemporary Australian judicial system. This capstone highlights the needs for an interdisciplinary approach to define and critique forensic science evidence from various perspectives including science, law, criminology, policing and social science. Students are required to use their skills and knowledge with additional independent research and inquiry using a range of set literature. The unit will study a range of contemporary issues including how the judicial system evaluates the reliability of evidence from an admissibility threshold, identification evidence from CCTV, contextual bias with forensic examination, contamination issues with forensic evidence and methods of expressing forensic findings and/or significance.

**School** Science

**Discipline** Forensic Science

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 2 10cp

Check your HECS Band contribution amount via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 3 subject

**Pre-requisite(s)** NATS 2010 AND  
NATS 2019 AND  
NATS 1008 AND  
NATS 2022 OR  
NATS 2021

**Equivalent Subjects** NATS 3007 - Complex Forensic Case Studies

**Restrictions** Students must be enrolled in 3589 Bachelor of Science (Forensic Science), 3562 Bachelor of Science (Advanced Science) (Forensic Science), MT3022 Forensic Science, MT3023 Forensic Chemistry or MT3024 Forensic Biology.

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Explain the interconnections between forensic science and its wider social and legal contexts, both within Australia and Internationally.
2. Apply logical, critical and creative skills to solving a range of problems in a forensic context.
3. Integrate and manage several different classes of forensic evidence within an overall case.
4. Describe and evaluate an understanding of court structure and procedures.
5. Explain and critique the principles of ethical and professional behaviour during a forensic case and describe the potential

conflicts of interest that can occur during the collection and analysis of evidence, and its presentation in court.

## Subject Content

1. Current issues with forensic evidence.
2. Identification evidence: contemporary issues.
3. Identification from CCTV images.
4. Contamination of forensic evidence.
5. Contextual bias with forensic examinations.
6. Various case studies relevant to unit content.
7. Expressing forensic findings and evidence significance.
8. Daubert ruling.

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Item	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task
Participation and Short answer: Group work answering questions on the topic of the workshop.	500 words (x 3 workshops)	20	N	Group
Report on the different Courts	Report - maximum 2000 words.	25	N	Individual
Quizzes: Four workshop quizzes and three online quizzes – mix of short answer / multiple choice.	20 minutes per quiz (x 7 quizzes)	30	N	Individual
Short Answer: Short-essay questions related to contemporary issues in forensic science	300 words per response (x 4)	25	N	Individual

Teaching Periods

## Spring Hawkesbury Day

**Subject Contact** Chris Lennard ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Chris Lennard/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Chris%20Lennard/))

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject\\_code=NATS3008\\_22-SPR\\_HW\\_D#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/even/timetable/?subject_code=NATS3008_22-SPR_HW_D#subjects))