To qualify for a starting position in any forensics field the minimum requirement is a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, physics, or any of the natural sciences. Forensic specialist Kay Sweeney recommends a chemistry degree: ‘Anyone with a scientific background will be qualified to work in a police crime lab, but chemistry is a science that is somewhat investigative. A great part of lab work is being given unknowns and coming up with answers. Chemistry is a science where you are constantly asking problems and solving problems.’

In addition to a degree, applicants are required to take a written test that examines such basic skills as math and reading comprehension. Study guides that may be useful are those geared toward SAT or GRE preparation, many of which are published by Barrons and Arco.

Forensic specialties require advanced degrees. For forensic anthropology, for example, the desired course of study would include an undergraduate degree in anthropology with courses in cultural anthropology, archaeology, and physical/biological anthropology as well as linguistics, genetics, biology, and other science courses. Graduate studies would then focus on forensic or applicable courses such as osteology or skeletal biology.

[As of 2000] Entry-level salaries for forensic science professionals are between $28,000 and $32,000 annually.

Candidates for employment as forensic lab technicians must have a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, physics, or any of the natural sciences. The position also requires some study of or practical experience in criminal justice, law, and the basic philosophy of forensic science [as of 2000].

With these skills in place, a candidate moves on to specialized training, whether on the job, in an internship capacity, or in academia. Facilities that provide such training include:

* The FBI Science Research and Training Center at Quantico, Virginia.
* Institutions such as the California Criminalistic Institute, a unit of the California Department of Justice, which provides more than fifty specialized training classes for forensic scientists including crime-scene and casework review. Classes are free to qualified California residents, and available to those from out of state for a fee of $500 per week.
* Private training facilities such as the Pacific Coast Forensic Institute or the National Forensics Science center, which offer both short- and long-term training. Fees vary.
* Individual police departments that offer advanced training to the officers, either through the department or recognized adjunct training facilities. Colleges and universities offer forensic training, which varies by institution.

MORE INFORMATION:

Here's a list of Forensic Specialists:

Forensic Ondontologists - Dental
Forensic Anthropologists - Skeletal Remains
Forensic Entomologists - Insects

Medical Examiners are physicians.

Internships:
http://www.rit.edu/~gtfsbi/forensics/internships.htm