

 ONLINE COURSE CONDUCTED ONCE A YEAR

# Essentials of Forensic Interpretation

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Practitioners of forensic genetics – including reporting officers, lawyers, accreditation bodies – having a University degree (at least BSc) or an equivalent degree of a higher education programme

The course is given in English. For exercises, discussions and one-to-one tutorials, English or French are available as further languages.

## ORGANISATION

Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

## INTRODUCTION

Given by recognized specialists in the field, this online course covers the essentials of forensic interpretation applied to the solution of inferential problems in forensic science and in the administration of justice. It is designed to make practitioners at ease with a probabilistic approach to the evaluation and interpretation of forensic findings.

The content focuses on the so-called likelihood ratio, a measure that is supported by the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes and the UK Association of Forensic Science Providers due to its qualities such as coherency and transparency.

## OBJECTIVES

- Provide practitioners with a theoretical and practical background in probabilistic and statistical reasoning without leaving their desk (online course)
- Be able to apply the likelihood ratio approach in casework
- Help practitioners explain their reasoning in Court and feel at ease with expert debate and the published literature on interpretation
- Have specialized and up-to-date knowledge in the field of forensic interpretation and evaluation of forensic results
- Acquire a good knowledge of probabilistic reasoning and elements of Bayesian networks in forensic science
- Understand the principles of interpretation and the use of propositions at different levels (hierarchy of propositions)
- Acquire skills in writing communications about uncertainty
- Identify the importance of pre-assessment



The course is conducted once a year. Dates of the next session are available on the website.



Online course



Certificate of participation  
5 ECTS credits



3,500 Swiss Francs



Online registration



The course lasts 12 months with a workload per week of 4 hours on the online platform.

Course breaks and holidays are included to allow flexibility.

LEARN MORE



## TOPICS

- Uncertainty in forensic science
- Nature of probability
- First reflections on forensic interpretation of scientific findings (concepts of uniqueness and individualisation)
- Evaluation of forensic findings with a logical approach
- Communication of results, relevant populations and pitfalls of intuition
- Introduction to a choice of specialized topics (fingermarks, Bayesian estimation, handwriting or transfer material such as fibers, glass, GSR or drugs)

The course is based on research that has been described as providing the essential building blocks for the proper assessment, understanding and communication of findings in the National Academy of Sciences (NSA) report "Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward".

## EXAMINATION

The course delivers 5 ECTS credits if the candidate passes the written on-line examination that takes place at the end of the course. See specific ECTS credits conditions on the course website.

## ACADEMIC DIRECTORS

- **Professor Franco Taroni**,  
*Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration, UNIL*
- **Professor Christophe Champod**,  
*Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration, UNIL*
- **Professor Alex Biedermann**,  
*Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration, UNIL*
- **Dr. Sc. Tacha Hicks Champod**,  
*Faculty of Law, Criminal Justice and Public Administration, UNIL*

## CONSULTANTS

- **Professor Colin Aitken**,  
*University of Edinburgh, Scotland*
- **Dr. Sc. Ian Evett**,  
*United Kingdom*

The instructors have theoretical and practical experience with evaluation and interpretation from laboratory to courtroom. They have published over the years numerous scholarly papers and textbooks on the subjects of evaluation and statistics in forensic science.

## CONTACT

For academic questions:  
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