



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

FORENSIC GEOLOGY

MSc Block Course



Institute of Earth Sciences – Im Neuenheimer Feld INF 234 - 236
D-69120 Heidelberg
Heidelberg University | 11-15 May 2026



IUGS-IFG training in crime scene examination and geological trace evidence collection (left) and ground search for burials (right)
(source: IUGS-IFG, Laurance Donnelly).

What is this course about?

Forensic geology (also known as 'forensic geoscience' or 'geoforensics') is the application of geology to police and law enforcement investigations.

Forensic geology includes crime scene examination, geological trace evidence, and ground searches for burials related to homicide, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism.

Students will learn how soils, sediments, minerals and rocks can provide trace evidence that could be presented in court. They will also learn how to conduct ground searches for burials at a simulated crime scene.

International experts from:

- International Union of Geological Sciences, Initiative on Forensic Geology (IUGS-IFG)
- Academia (UK and Europe)
- Police agencies (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA), Germany
- Legal professionals and prosecutors

Core topics

- Crime scene examination and sample collection.
- Geological trace evidence and laboratory analysis including for example, mineralogy, geochemistry, XRD, chain-of-custody and associated protocols.
- Ground search strategies using GIS, remote sensing and geophysics.

The forensic interpretation, reporting, and communication of data, information and evidence in legal contexts, including expert witness and a mock trial.

Assessment

There will be a written examination.

Who should attend?

- MSc students interested in forensic geology and applied geoscience.
- Environmental and forensic science students.
- Students interested in careers linking science, law and society.

Registration & contact

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Hands-on training will be provided at a simulated crime scene at the interface of:

geoscience, law and society