

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **UOG launches new degree track in forensic chemistry**

A new pathway to the highly employable career field of forensic chemistry is now available to students at the University of Guam. The College of Natural & Applied Sciences has launched a forensic chemistry track, or concentration, under its Bachelor of Science in Chemistry Program, and students can start declaring it as their major in the Fañomnåkan 2024 semester.

[Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) show that employment of forensic science technicians is projected to grow 13% over the next 10 years with 2,600 job openings projected each year. The median annual wage for forensic scientists is 37%, or about \$17,000, higher than other occupations.

On average, 47 UOG students who declare chemistry as their major each academic year. Division of Natural Sciences Chair Dr. Maika Vuki anticipates the forensic track will bring more students to the chemistry major since it is applied chemistry — meaning it teaches the use of chemistry to solve practical problems.

Vuki said incoming students are familiar with and excited about forensic science due to the popularity of “CSI” and other crime investigation TV shows.

The track will prepare students for careers as forensic chemists in local or state crime laboratories. They could also work as analytical chemists, conducting routine chemical analyses in commercial, state, or medical laboratories, or as a scientific officer in environmental or medical applications. Vuki said graduates can also use their degree to teach at the high school and community college level.

Guam has a crime lab within the Guam Police Department and the FBI, as well as several medical diagnostic and radiology labs, at which some of UOG’s chemistry

graduates now work. Other graduates are working in state laboratories in the U.S. mainland.

Students who declare a forensic chemistry track will be required to complete 87 credit hours covering chemistry, biology, math, physics, and law courses, plus a required internship in a forensic lab. They will get to work directly with local forensic experts as well as utilize one of the college's [newest instruments](#) — a gas chromatograph mass spectrometer, or GC-MS, which separates and identifies complex chemical mixtures.

Students interested in the forensic chemistry track should have a strong background in general chemistry and college Algebra and a passion for working in a chemistry lab. Those who are interested can contact Dr. Maika Vuki at (671) 735-2781 or [vukim@triton.uog.edu](mailto:vukim@triton.uog.edu).

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**Photo captions:**

Associate Professor of Chemistry Dr. Bulan Wu inputs a substance into a GC-MS for separation and identification of its chemical elements. Students majoring in the University of Guam's new forensic chemistry track will get to use the instrument, a new addition to UOG's chemistry instrumentation lab as of June.



(From left) University of Guam chemistry faculty Dr. John Limtiaco, Dr. Bulan Wu, and Dr. Maika Vuki and laboratory supervisor and lead technician Ezra Cervera in the Chemistry Teaching & Instrumentation Lab.

*Photos courtesy of University of Guam*