



# TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*Justice Through Science*

1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 445  
Austin, Texas 78701

## **TEXAS GENERAL FORENSIC ANALYST LICENSING EXAM AND FORENSIC TECHNICIAN/FORENSIC BIOLOGY SCREENER EXAM PROCTOR INSTRUCTIONS**

You have been selected to serve as a proctor for the Texas General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam (“GFE”) and/or the Forensic Technician Exam (“FTE”). The GFE and FTE are required components to obtain either a Texas Forensic Analyst License or a Texas Forensic Technician License. The Forensic Biology Screener exam is the same as the FTE. The GFE is an assessment of general application, measuring a forensic analyst’s knowledge of the following seven domains:

1. Evidence Handling;
2. *Brady v. Maryland*/Michael Morton Act;
3. Statistics in Forensic Applications;
4. Expert Testimony;
5. Professional Responsibility;
6. Human Factors; and
7. Root Cause Analysis.

The GFE consists of **110 multiple-choice questions** for which examinees shall select one correct answer for each question. Of the total 110 questions, 100 will be scored (10 extra questions are unscored pilot questions for future exams). Examinees must answer a minimum of 70 questions correctly to pass the exam. Examinees are required to complete the GFE within **4 hours** from the start time. Examinees may take breaks as needed.

The FTE is an assessment of general application, measuring a forensic technician’s knowledge of the following five domains:

1. Evidence Handling;
2. *Brady v. Maryland*/Michael Morton Act;
3. Professional Responsibility;
4. Human Factors; and
5. Root Cause Analysis.

The FTE consists of **50 multiple-choice questions** for which examinees shall select one correct answer for each question. Examinees must answer a minimum of 35 questions correctly to pass the exam. Examinees are required to complete the FTE within **3 hours** from the start time. Examinees may take breaks as needed.

It is within the discretion of the laboratory which dates and times to offer the GFE and/or FTE. Both can be offered simultaneously in one administration session. **We request at least one week’s notice prior to exam administration.** We also request the exams be administered between the

hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. This ensures Commission staff are available to assist with any technical issues that may arise during exam administration.

The GFE and FTE are administered electronically through a program called TopClass. Examinees must create an account in TopClass before taking the exam. To create an account in TopClass, please visit <https://fsclicensing.txcourts.gov/topclass/login.do>. **For optimal exam software performance, please use the [Google Chrome](#) browser or, if you are unable to use Chrome, use the [Mozilla](#) browser versus Safari or Internet Explorer to navigate to the login website and access the exam. Either Chrome or Mozilla can be downloaded for free at the links provided.**

Proctors are required to review and strictly enforce the security and confidentiality policies outlined below, provide instructions to examinees following the script, and sign the agreement at the end of this document.

Before beginning the exam session, please ensure that examinees have access to their own separate computers and/or laptop stations and that all browsers are closed out except for the window showing the TopClass screen for the *General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam*. [What about the technicians? What will they see?] If examinees are taking the exam at their work stations, please ensure the work station is free of any reference material and is compliant with the instructions set forth below.

Please write each examinee's PIN on a colored sheet of paper and place it next to their computer face down such that the PIN cannot be seen through the sheet of paper. Please also provide 3 sheets of copy paper for use as scratch paper for examinees who would like scratch paper for notes during the exam.

### Exam Material Security

The content contained in the GFE and FTE may not be used for any purpose other than the legitimate assessment of authorized participants/examinees. The entire GFE and FTE or individual questions from the GFE and FTE may not be copied, transmitted, or reproduced in any manner, under any circumstances.

### Breaches of Security

The Texas Forensic Science Commission must be notified immediately if any breach of security occurs during administration of the exam. Once the Texas Forensic Science Commission has been notified of a breach, steps will be taken to determine the extent of damages as well as the steps needed to remedy the breach.

### Proctors

All exam proctors must be approved by the Texas Forensic Science Commission prior to exam administration. Exam proctors are entrusted with the security of the exam content for their sites.

## Permitted and Prohibited Items

Permitted Items: Pens, pencils, blank scratch paper provided by proctor, English language translation dictionary.

Prohibited Items: Study materials, notes, cell phones, digital watches, cameras, scanners, recorders, headphones, calculators, backpacks, purses, tote bags.

## Necessary Accommodations

Exam proctors are permitted to use their discretion to allow examinees to bring items not listed above into the secure exam area, such as medical supplies or lactation pumps. If you believe you need any special arrangements to address health or disability-related conditions for your examinees, please contact the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

## Proctor Responsibilities

Proctors are responsible for the actual administration of the exam. Proctors are expressly prohibited from coaching participants during the exam and altering or interfering with a participant's responses. Additional responsibilities include:

- Familiarize yourself with the administration procedures in this guide.
- Be present at all times during the administration of the exam and ensure that the exam is conducted in a quiet and efficient manner.
- Communicate instructions for the exam session to participants.
- Ensure exam site has adequate seating and desktop space for participants.
- Confirm the identity of each exam participant.
- Inform participants that the exam is closed book.
- Use of the Internet by exam participants is strictly prohibited.
- Notify participants that the use of iPhones®, smart phones, mobile devices, cellular phones, wrist watches with calculators, smart watches, devices that can record data, and similar technology is not allowed during the session.
- Monitor the exam process during administration by moving unobtrusively around the exam area.
- Protect participants from disturbances and distractions.
- Ensure that participants follow the exam procedures and security policy requirements and enforce proper procedures in the event of non-compliance.
- Report any breach of security, no matter how small or insignificant, to the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

## Exam Participant Responsibilities

Exam procedures must be followed by all participants and enforced by the proctor. If a violation of the exam procedure occurs, the participant must cease testing. The time and nature of the incident must be reported to the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

The following behavior is prohibited by exam participants during administration:

- Looking at another participant's computer screen or scratch paper.
- Giving or receiving assistance from the proctor or another individual.
- Using an iPhone®, smart phone, mobile device, cellular phone, wrist watch with calculators, smart watch, devices that can record data, and similar devices.
- Copying, transmitting, or reproducing any portion of the exam in any manner whatsoever.
- Attempting to remove scratch paper taken during the exam from the exam site.
- Creating a disturbance in the exam room.
- Failing to follow the exam procedures as outlined by the proctor.

## **Administering the Exam**

### Exam Guidelines

The exam room and external conditions may have a significant effect on a participant's exam score. Ideally, the exam room should be closed off from all other activity and be quiet and devoid of distracting movement.

### Late Arrivals

Close the exam area five minutes before the time designated to begin the exam session. Any participant arriving after the closing time may be admitted at the proctor's discretion, provided the actual exam has not started. As the proctor, you should have a predetermined policy for handling late arrivals. This policy should be adhered to consistently throughout the entire exam process.

### Early Completion

Examinees who finish the exam early may leave the exam area upon finishing and should minimize noise to avoid disturbing those who may not yet have finished the exam.

The maximum time limit for the GFE is 4 hours. The maximum time limit for the FTE is 3 hours.

### Requests to Leave the Room

If a participant needs to leave the exam room for any reason, ensure no outside materials are taken out or brought in upon the participant's return.

### Preparing to Take the Exam

Begin the exam session by making sure participants are seated and all unauthorized devices and materials are put away.

### During the Exam

- Make sure the exam room remains quiet and free from distractions.

- Handle necessary interruptions as quickly and quietly as possible.
- Remind participants of the procedures to follow if they complete the exam early.
- Document any irregularities that occur (i.e., fire alarm, electrical outage).
- End the exam session by ensuring all examinees have turned in their PIN sheets and scratch papers.

### After the Exam

- Send an email to the Commission with the list of individuals who took the exam to [licensing@fsc.texas.gov](mailto:licensing@fsc.texas.gov).
- Report any irregularities to the Commission.
- Return the signed Exam Proctor Confidentiality Agreement.

Begin reading the following script to examinees before starting time for the test.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL SCRIPT FOR EXAM:**

Welcome to the Texas Forensic Science Commission's General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam (and/or Forensic Technician Exam as appropriate). The GFE consists of 110 multiple-choice questions for which you are required to select one answer for each question and finish within 4 hours from the time I say BEGIN. The FTE consists of 50 multiple-choice questions for which you are required to select one answer for each question and finish within 3 hours from the time I say BEGIN.

Each of you should have a sheet of colored paper at your workstation. On the backside of the sheet of paper is a PIN which you will need to enter before you can begin the exam. Do not turn your sheet of paper over until the conclusion of these instructions.

This test room is a designated secure area. No outside materials are allowed. No other browser windows or programs may be open on your computer during the exam besides the TopClass General Forensic Exam site. Absolutely no cell phones or other electronic devices are permitted in the secure area.

**You must not leave the room without my permission.** If you need to use the restroom during the test, please approach me and ask my permission before leaving the secure area. Please also let me know when you return.

All exam material and content are confidential and must not be shared with anyone at any time either during or after the exam. You must not communicate with anyone other than me during the testing session, including during breaks. This prohibition includes even casual comments to other examinees.

The timer on your computer will track how much time you are taking. If you finish the exam early, please approach me and let me know that you are finished. Please make every effort not to disturb anyone else nearby who may still be taking the exam.

All scratch paper and the paper with your PIN must be turned in to me at the end of the testing session.

You may now open your computer and access the website for your exam <https://fsclicensing.txcourts.gov/topclass/login.do>. If you need assistance finding the site, please raise your hand. Please login with your username and password created when you set up your account to access the study materials. Click on View My Learning. You should now see a screen that contains the icon for either the General Forensic Exam or the Forensic Technician Exam. Click "Launch." At this point, you should be at the instructions page for the exam. Take a few minutes to read through these instructions and look up when you are done. [After all examinees have finished reading instruction page], Click "Next." At this point you should be at the "Acknowledgement" page for the exam. Click "Start." Read through the acknowledgment carefully and then check the box below the text to sign. Please enter the date in the appropriate boxes below and then select the blue "Submit" button. You will now see a page showing your acknowledgment was accepted. Click "Next." At this time, you will turn over the sheet of paper I gave you containing your four-digit PIN. When I say "BEGIN" you will enter your PIN in the designated box and click "Start" the exam. A pop-up screen will ask you if you wish to continue. Please click "Start Test."

At this time, you may BEGIN.

[At either 3 hour or 4 hours from START depending on whether the examinees are taking the GFE or the FTE or upon examinee finishing test] **The examinee will be prompted to enter their PIN one additional time at the conclusion of the exam and then will Click "Submit."** Please ensure all examinees have turned in the sheets with PIN numbers and scratch paper. Please ensure all PIN numbers and scratch paper are destroyed immediately after the conclusion of the exam.

When you are finished administering the exam, please send the signed statement below to [licensing@fsc.texas.gov](mailto:licensing@fsc.texas.gov).

**Exam Proctor Security and Confidentiality Agreement:**

I have read and understand the Texas Forensic Science Commission’s Exam proctor instructions described herein, including the policies for security and confidentiality of exam material. I have not given aid to any examinees during the exam or otherwise violated the policies outlined in this document. If I become aware of anyone else having violated any aspect of the provisions set forth in this document, I will immediately report this information to the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Exam Proctor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Exam Proctor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Laboratory

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date