SO, YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THE FBI?

Stevenson University is career-oriented, which is why we established three respected master’s degree programs in forensics to address the needs of today’s employers: forensic studies with tracks in accounting, criminalistics, information technology, investigations, and law; forensic science; and cyber forensics. It’s not unusual to ask one of our forensics students what he or she wants to do when they graduate and get the response, “I want to go to work for the FBI.” In fact, many of our former and current students have worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or have expressed an interest in working there.

The mission of the FBI is to protect and defend the United States against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the United States, and to provide leadership and criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, and international agencies and partners. It is a noble mission and many highly talented and motivated citizens would like to work for the FBI, including students from our forensic studies, forensic science, and cyber forensics master’s degree programs.

The FBI employs a broad range of employees, from administrative staff and technical experts to special agents and more. Special Agent positions are considered to be the most elite. As of September 30, 2012, 13,913 Special Agents worked for the FBI. An FBI agent’s position offers tremendous professional opportunities. The job also has good benefits.

So how does someone become a special agent with the FBI? All applicants for the Special Agent position must first qualify under a Special Agent Entry Program, including the Accounting, Computer Science/Information Technology, and Diversified Entry Programs.

To qualify under the Accounting Entry Program, candidates must have been certified as a Certified Public Accountant or possess, at minimum, a four-year degree with a major in accounting and three years of progressively responsible accounting work. Students in Stevenson’s forensic studies accounting track could be eligible under this program.

Computer Science/Information Technology Entry Program candidates must have a computer or information technology related degree, a degree in electrical engineering, a Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) certification, or a Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert (CCIE) certification. Students in our forensic studies information technology track and cyber forensics program could fit this program.

To qualify for the Diversified Program, candidates must have at least a four-year college degree in any discipline, plus three years of full-time work experience or an advanced degree accompanied by two years of full-time work experience. Forensic studies students in our investigations, legal, and interdisciplinary tracks would be able to apply under this program.

After qualifying for one of the Entry Programs, applicants will be prioritized in the hiring process based upon certain critical skills for which the FBI is recruiting. It’s good news for forensic studies accounting track and information technology track students as well as cyber forensics students
that among the FBI's top hiring priorities are candidates with critical skills in accounting and computer science/information technology expertise.

But what if the FBI is not hiring or ends up hiring someone else? Students from our forensics master’s degree programs also could qualify for special agent positions in other federal agencies besides the FBI. Most federal agencies have some type of special agent, investigator, or background investigator position, including the Secret Service; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Drug Enforcement Administration; Internal Revenue Service; Postal Inspection Service; or Inspector General offices in more than 70 federal agencies and many other offices.

What’s the Benefit of Working at the FBI?

In addition to having an interesting career, FBI employees are well compensated for their work. Special Agent trainees at the FBI Academy are paid as GS-10, step 1 ($43,441) plus a locality adjustment (17.5 percent) during their time at the FBI Academy, totaling $51,043 annually. After they complete their initial training and get assigned, Special Agents get a 25 percent increase in salary due to their requirement to average a 50-hour work week during the course of the year. Thus, new Special Agents in their first field offices earn between $61,100 and $69,900, depending upon the region of the country to which they are assigned. New Special Agents assigned to certain designated high-cost offices like New York and Washington, D.C., may also be paid a one-time relocation bonus of approximately $22,000 to help offset higher real estate and living costs.

In addition to good pay, which results in many special agents earning well over $100,000 annually, FBI Special Agents are covered under the law enforcement officer (LEO) provisions of the federal retirement system. That system enables Special Agents to receive a full retirement at age 50 with 20 years of federal law enforcement officer service or at any age with 25 years of such service. A Special Agent who earned $100,000 a year for the last three years of service and retiring with 20 years of LEO service would receive an annual pension of $34,000, adjusted periodically for inflation.

As an FBI employee, Special Agents are also entitled to a variety of benefits, including group health and life insurance programs, generous vacation and sick leave, and a full retirement plan.

For more information and updates about working at the FBI go to www.fbi.gov. 
100 YEARS AGO
IN 1913...

Two farmers walking near a quarry outside of Edinburgh, Scotland, find two small, dead bodies floating in the water, tied together. Although the bodies were so waterlogged that authorities could barely confirm that they were human, Sydney Smith, the century’s first “Quincy,” was able to use forensics to help solve the crime.

Smith was at the beginning of his 40-year career and working as an assistant to Professor Harvey Littlejohn at Edinburgh University. The first thing he noticed about the bodies was the presence of adipocere, a white and hard type of fat. The level of adipocere in the bodies, which takes months to form inside the human body when exposed to water, led Smith to believe that they had been in the quarry somewhere between 18 to 24 months.

The adipocere had preserved the stomachs of the bodies and Smith saw that the children had eaten peas, barley, potatoes, and leeks approximately an hour before they died. Given the seasonal nature of the vegetables, Smith figured that the kids had died at the end of 1911. Most importantly, Smith found an indication that one of the children’s shirts had come from the Dysart poorhouse.

With this information, law enforcement officials quickly found the killer. Patrick Higgins, a widower and drunk, had placed his two boys in the Dysart poorhouse in 1910. When he didn’t pay the small fees, Higgins was jailed. He eventually took the young boys out of the poorhouse but they had not been seen since November 1911.

Higgins was arrested and pled temporary insanity at his trial in September 1913. The jury rejected his defense and, on October 2, 1913, he was hanged.

Sydney Smith went on to be a pioneer in forensic medicine.

www.history.com/
this-day-in-history/forensic-evidence-captures-a-murderous-father
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For more information or to register call Angela Scagliola at 443-352-4414, email ascagliola@stevenson.edu, or visit accelerate.stevenson.edu.