

NATIONAL FORENSIC SCIENCES UNIVERSITY: DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPECTS

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This article examines the stages of establishment, current status, and future development prospects of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)—the world's first specialized university dedicated to education, training, and research in the field of forensic science and related disciplines. The study demonstrates that the creation of the university was the result of India's state policy aimed at strengthening the criminal justice system, advancing forensic science, and integrating scientific achievements into law enforcement practice.

Particular attention is given to the transformation of the university from a regional educational institution in the State of Gujarat into a national university of international standing operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs of India. The article analyzes the key directions of NFSU's campus network expansion both within India and abroad, including the establishment of its first international campus in Uganda, as well as the development of an interdisciplinary educational model.

The paper reviews innovative academic programs in the fields of forensic medicine, digital forensics, cybersecurity, forensic psychology, financial investigations, and artificial intelligence. It also highlights the activities of the university's research centers and centers of excellence, which focus on advancing digital forensics, ballistics, narcotics analysis, cybersecurity, and technologies for countering emerging threats.

The significance of scientific research, international cooperation, and practice-oriented specialist training for law enforcement agencies and the judicial system is emphasized. The article notes the university's achievements on the international stage, including cooperation with Interpol and participation in international educational and research initiatives. It concludes that NFSU is becoming one of the world's leading centers for forensic science education and training, making a substantial contribution to the development of criminalistics, digital security, and the scientific support of justice.

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Introduction

The National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) is an outcome of the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi, who as a chief minister of Gujarat identified the immense potential of forensic science in advancing the criminal justice system, and also recognized the acute shortage of forensic experts in India and globally. This realisation envisioned into establishment of an unique institution of international standards dedicated to the advanced study of forensic and allied sciences i.e., Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in 2008 [1]. This state university was elevated by an Act of Parliament in 2020 (Act 32 of 2020) to the status of a National Forensic Sciences University, an Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Home Affairs [2]. NFSU is widely recognised as the world's first and only university exclusively devoted to forensic sciences and allied domains[3]. The establishment of NFSU was driven by the objective of producing highly trained professionals to meet the growing demands of criminal justice and public safety systems. In just over a decade, NFSU has grown from two campuses respectively in Gandhinagar, Gujarat and Delhi to a multi-campus, multidisciplinary university with 13 campuses domestically and 1 offshore campus in Uganda [4-5].

National Footprint and Campuses

Since its inception, NFSU has expanded aggressively beyond its Gujarat headquarters to establish a nationwide presence. As of 2025, NFSU operates over eleven campuses across India and one overseas campus[5]. The main campus remains in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, which houses the university's administrative headquarters, including flagship schools namely, the School of Doctoral Studies and Research, School of Forensic Science, School of Law, Forensic Justice & Policy Studies, School of Cyber Security and Digital Forensics, School of Management Studies, School of Engineering and Technology, School of Pharmacy, School of Behavioural Sciences and School of Open Learning. Maintaining excellence in education, research, and training with state-of-the-art facilities within this campus encourages collaborations across multiple disciplines and skill sets by offering an array of advanced and specialized postgraduate-level academic programs such as forensic nursing, forensic pharmacy, forensic structural engineering, forensic accounting, and forensic odontology.

The very second campus was established in Delhi through the elevation of the status of NFSU to a National Forensic Sciences University in 2020, where the Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences in Rohini, New Delhi was

assimilated in NFSU [2]. This campus contributes to the university's mission of strengthening the criminal justice system by offering programs in forensic and allied sciences. The NFSU Goa Campus started its journey in 2021. It offers specialized programs in Forensic Sciences and Cyber Security, including integrated B.Sc.-M.Sc. Forensic Science and M.Sc. Digital Forensics.

The Tripura Campus, established in Agartala in 2021, focuses on programs in Forensic Science, Criminal Investigation, and Cyber Security. It aims to provide world-class education and training in these domains, filling the gap in the demand for forensic experts. The Bhopal Campus of NFSU, an off-site campus, is dedicated to strengthening forensic facilities in Madhya Pradesh. It currently offers programs in Forensic Science and PG Diplomas in various forensic disciplines.

Established in collaboration with the Directorate of Forensic Science Services (DFSS, New Delhi) and Central Forensic Science Laboratory - Pune (CFSL-Pune), this off-campus academy in Pune provides quality education and training in forensic and allied sciences. The aim is to bridge the gap in the availability of forensic experts and resources for investigative research. This NFSU Academy in Guwahati, Assam, is another off-campus of NFSU in collaboration with the Directorate of Forensic Science Services. It offers courses in DNA forensics, forensic document examination, and fingerprint science. These programs cater to students and in-service personnel, with a focus on promoting forensic science education in the northeastern region of India.

NFSU's Manipur campus aims to address the high rate of crime in the region by facilitating the creation of qualified manpower in forensic science. NFSU Dharwad campus in Karnataka offers specialized academic programs in Forensic Sciences, Pharmacy, and Cyber Security. NFSU made a significant international move by opening its first overseas campus in Jinja, Uganda [4]. It offers an array of courses and marks a milestone in the India-Uganda relationship, making NFSU the first Indian government university to establish a campus abroad [4]. Recently NFSU opened its two new campuses in Nagpur and Raipur respectively, and have another two proposed campuses in the pipeline in one in the south India (Chennai) & another in the east- India (Bhubaneshwar) [6]. These campuses of NFSU collectively contribute to the university's mission of strengthening the criminal justice system through education, research, and training in forensic and allied sciences, both within India and beyond.

Table 1.

NFSU Campuses (India and Abroad) and Year of Establishment

Campus	Location	Year Established
Gandhinagar	Gujarat, India	2009 (as GFSU); 2020 (NFSU)
Delhi (LNJN NICFS Campus)	New Delhi, India	1972 (NICFS); integrated 2020
Goa Campus	Ponda, Goa, India	2021
Tripura Campus	Agartala, Tripura, India	2021

Bhopal Campus	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India	2022
Pune Campus (Academy)	Pune, Maharashtra, India	2022
Guwahati Campus (Academy)	Guwahati, Assam, India	2022
Manipur Campus	Imphal, Manipur, India	2022
Dharwad Campus	Dharwad, Karnataka, India	2023
Uganda Campus	Jinja, Eastern Region, Uganda	2023
Nagpur Campus	Maharashtra, India	2025
Raipur Campus	Chhattisgarh	2025
Bhubaneswar campus	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	2025
Chennai Campus	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	2025

Along with the its own campuses, NFSU also affiliates other institutes as recognized colleges or research centers, extending its academic reach, the Lloyd Institute of Forensic Science (Greater Noida), the College of Traffic Management & Forensic Science, the Narnarayan Shastri Institute of Forensic Science & Cyber Security (Ahmedabad), the U.P. State Institute of Forensic Sciences (Lucknow), and NIELIT Kolkata are among the external institutes affiliated to NFSU. These affiliations allow such colleges to offer NFSU-accredited programs and collaborate on research, thereby standardizing forensic science education across diverse institutions under NFSU's guidance.

Academically, NFSU's structure has further expanded as of 2025 the university reportedly comprises 13 schools spanning a wide range of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas, supported by numerous departments and centers. For example, NFSU established a School of Medico-Legal Studies to cover forensic medicine-related disciplines (including forensic nursing and forensic odontology), and plans have been made to launch new schools such as a School of Emerging Technologies and a School of Defence and Strategic Studies to address evolving fields at the intersection of technology, national security, and forensics.

Innovative Academic Programs

NFSU is known for its innovative range of interdisciplinary academic programmes, which are first of its kind in India and world-wide, programmes offered at NFSU transcend from tradition forensic courses to emerging specialization. One of the innovative programmes offered at NFSU is Masters of Science in Forensic Nursing, this programme aims to train healthcare professional in handling legal evidences and victims of violence. Similarly, one of the specializations offered at NFSU is forensic odontology, where students are trained to identify victims and suspects through the help of dental evidence, which earlier was only offered as a short time course. Likewise, to combat white collar crime MBA in Forensic Accounting and fraud investigation is offered and to fulfil the need of trained leaders in managing cybersecurity threats and data-driven decision-making MBA in Business intelligence is offered at NFSU. Further School of Law, Forensic Justice & Policy Studies offers B.Sc.LLB integrating data science with laws aims to prepare technocratic lawyers for

future criminal justice delivery system. Apart from this NFSU also offers specializations such as M.Sc. Forensic Nanotechnology, M.Sc. Digital Forensics and Information Security, and B.Sc.-M.Sc. Integrated program in Forensic Science to develop expertise from the undergraduate level itself. Interestingly NFSU programs ranges from traditional forensic domains such forensic chemistry, biology, and physics to specialized domains like Forensic Toxicology, Wildlife Forensics, Food Forensics, Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology and even niche areas like Forensic Entomology or disaster victim identification. Some of these specializations are offered as electives under NFSU's curriculum.

Courses on topics such as Drone Forensics, Cryptocurrency Forensics, and Artificial Intelligence in Law are being developed or offered via workshops, keeping pace with technological advancements.

Centres of Excellence and Research Leadership

Beyond education, NFSU serves as a powerhouse for research and development (R&D) in forensic science and allied fields. The university's mandate includes generating new scientific knowledge, developing forensic technologies, and providing expert services that strengthen the criminal justice system. NFSU has established multiple Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and research centres that focus on high-priority areas of forensic science. For instance, NFSU hosts accredited CoEs in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) analysis, Cyber Security, Digital Forensics, and Nutritional Supplements Testing for Sports. These centres are equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories and certifications (such as ISO/IEC accreditations and NABL accreditation for labs) to ensure the quality and reliability of forensic analyses. The Cyber Security CoE, for example, not only provides advanced cybersecurity services but is also certified under ISO/IEC 27001 for information security management. Similarly, the NDPS centre is ISO 17025 accredited for drug analysis, which has positioned NFSU as a key player in supporting law enforcement agencies with chemical analysis of narcotics. CoEs in emerging domains like Ballistics and Financial Crime & Fraud Investigation are also being established to develop expertise in firearms analysis and economic offenses, respectively.

Centre for Forensic Psychology and a Centre for Behavioural Forensics, which advance research in criminal psychology, offender profiling, and detection of deception; a Wildlife Forensics centre aids in solving crimes against wildlife and enforcing environmental laws; a Crime Scene Management centre to innovate in crime scene investigation techniques; an Emergency Toxicology centre focusing on rapid toxicological analysis in poisoning cases; and even a Child Rights Advocacy Centre set up in collaboration with India's National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to address offenses against children. Notably, NFSU has even initiated an Indian chapter of the Innocence Project, aiming to use scientific and legal expertise to review wrongful conviction cases a

project that underscores the university's commitment to justice through science. Recently, NFSU opened the International Digital Dispute Resolution Centre, which is the first of its kind institution that will enable resolution of dispute in fully digital format.

NFSU's research productivity can be gauged by its growing output of projects, publications and patents. NFSU faculty and researchers have undertaken hundreds of research projects over 220 projects in total with a cumulative external funding of approximately INR 2426 lakh (INR. 24.26 crores) granted for these projects to date. Research at NFSU has yielded a high volume of scientific publications, with around 3400 research papers published in journals and conferences by 2025. The university encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, resulting in dozens of patents (at least 37 patents filed/granted by 2025) on new forensic technologies and methods, as well as the incubation of startup companies by NFSU students and faculty. For example, NFSU innovators have developed indigenous forensic products and technologies a fact recognized by calls to allow direct procurement of these "innovative products" by law enforcement agencies to speed up their adoption. To promote commercialization and scaling of such innovations, NFSU has established a dedicated Research and Innovation Council (RIC) as a Section-8 (not-for-profit) company, which plays a crucial role in incubating and commercializing innovations/products developed by its students, faculty and startups. This model provides financial and mentorship support to translate research prototypes into market-ready solutions for forensic and security applications.

Research at NFSU is often problem-oriented, aligning with national priorities in security and justice, this is exemplified by the projects undertaken by University, one such project is the Risk Assessment and Prevention of Sexual Offense and Intimate Partner Violence study, which addresses pressing social issues by developing tools to identify and prevent sexual crimes. Further university was recognized as a Centre of Excellence by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), leading to the creation of a Malware Research Lab and a 5G security testbed under the Telecom Centres of Excellence program. The university has also contributed to a blockchain-based solution for policing, partnered with C-DAC, and collaborated on a cyber forensic framework for user-centric human threat intelligence analysis, reflecting its involvement in cutting-edge cybercrime research. These projects illustrate that the aim of research is not only to publish papers but also to produce tangible improvements in investigative techniques, forensic technologies, and crime prevention policies.

Achievements and Global Recognitions

In its relatively short history, NFSU has achieved an impressive array of accomplishments and leadership roles. It became the first Indian institution admitted to the INTERPOL Global Academy Network [7,8], a select consortium of leading law enforcement

and forensic training institutes. This membership enables NFSU to collaborate globally with top police academies and forensic institutes. NFSU also holds prominent positions in professional bodies: it secured the vice-presidency of the International Association of Police Academies (INTERPA) and key leadership roles in the Indian Society of Criminology.

NFSU has twice won the Data Security Council of India (DSCI) Excellence Award in the Academic category, in consecutive years 2023 and 2024 [9, 10]. The DSCI (a prominent industry body for data protection) award recognizes institutions for outstanding contributions to cyber security education and research.

Beyond awards, NFSU is highly sought as a consultant and trainer. By mid-2025, it had delivered forensic training and advisory services to agencies in 83 countries [8]. International clients include police forces of Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Cambodia, and Namibia, as well as organizations like Saudi Arabia's security establishment, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Within India, NFSU has trained officers of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard), elite security units (SPG, NSG), and federal investigative agencies (NIA, CBI, ED, NCB, DRI), as well as many state police forces. In total, the university reports over 260 formal collaborations, including 68 international and 162 national MoUs ranging from joint research projects to the establishment of new forensic laboratories.

Shaping the Future: Strategic Growth and Emerging Priorities

NFSU's strategic plans explicitly target the evolving challenges in crime and technology. To prepare workforce future ready, NFSU is innovating in education and research. It is launching two new schools: the School of Emerging Technologies and the School of Defence & Strategic Studies. The School of Emerging Technologies will cover areas such as artificial intelligence, data science, blockchain, and quantum computing, applying these fields to forensic and security problems. The School of Defence & Strategic Studies will address the interface of forensic science with national security, covering topics like military and battlefield forensics, homeland security technologies, and strategic intelligence.

International collaboration is also central to NFSU's strategy. Building on the Uganda campus, it is exploring further overseas centers and joint-degree programs. For example, NFSU has initiated a joint LL.M. in law and forensic justice with Tashkent State University of Law (Uzbekistan) and is developing a cyber-forensics program with the University of Kent (UK). More than 68 international MoUs (and dozens more national) now facilitate faculty and student exchanges and joint research, enabling NFSU to both export India's forensic expertise and benchmark itself against global leaders.

On the research front, NFSU has laid out a forward-looking research roadmap that concentrates on emerging threats and technologies, with the proliferation of drones in both

criminal activities and warfare, NFSU plans special research initiatives in anti-drone systems and drone forensic analysis. This involves developing methods to detect and investigate rogue drones and counter-drone technologies to prevent drone-based attacks. Further recognizing the rise of cryptocurrency in money laundering and terror financing, NFSU is focusing on crypto-forensics, tracking illicit financial flows through blockchain analysis and developing tools to deanonymize and investigate crypto-transactions. This research will enhance law enforcement's ability to tackle cyber-financial crimes in the era of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. University intends to delve into quantum forensics, particularly quantum cryptography and computing as they relate to security. Quantum computing poses both opportunities and challenges: future quantum computers could break current encryption (impacting digital evidence security), but quantum cryptography offers unbreakable communication which could secure forensic data. NFSU's plan includes research on post-quantum cryptographic techniques and possibly the use of quantum computing for complex forensic computations. Another thrust area is the development of an Automated Ballistic Identification System (ABIS) to trace firearms and link ballistic evidence nationally. With the advent of AI-generated fake media (deepfakes) affecting security and trust, NFSU is investing in deepfake detection technology. Research is underway to build algorithms that can identify manipulated images, audio, and video crucial for authenticating digital evidence in court and combating disinformation. NFSU is exploring early-intervention strategies where psychologists profile at-risk youth (using forensic psych techniques) to steer them away from narcotics. This ties into a broader notion of using forensic science in service of public health and prevention.

Additionally, NFSU plans to establish several new Centres of Excellence in the next five years to support these research priorities. Potential new CoEs could include those for Drone Forensics, Cryptocurrency Investigation, AI and Big Data in Forensics, Explosives and Hazardous Materials Analysis.

Conclusion

In a remarkably brief period, the NFSU has evolved from an aspirational concept into a distinguished global authority for forensic education and research. Envisioned by a progressive state leader and cultivated through national policy, NFSU stands as the singular institution globally dedicated to the field of forensic sciences. The expanding network of campuses, coupled with innovative interdisciplinary programs and a research output of international significance, serves to fortify India's criminal justice capabilities in a profound manner. As we progress, NFSU is poised to produce a substantial number of adept forensic professionals, while simultaneously influencing the development of future tools and policies within law enforcement. In doing so, it remains steadfast in its commitment to uphold justice through the application of scientific principles.

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НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ СУДЕБНО-ЭКСПЕРТНЫХ НАУК: РАЗВИТИЕ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

Покхариял П.

В статье рассматриваются этапы становления, современное состояние и перспективы развития Национального Университета Судебной Экспертизы (National Forensic Sciences University, NFSU) первого в мире специализированного университета, ориентированного на подготовку кадров и проведение научных исследований в области судебной экспертизы и смежных направлений. Показано, что создание университета стало результатом государственной политики Индии, направленной на укрепление системы уголовного правосудия, развитие судебно-экспертной деятельности и внедрение научных достижений в практику правоохранительных органов.

Особое внимание уделено трансформации университета из регионального образовательного учреждения штата Гуджарат в национальный университет

международного уровня, функционирующий под эгидой Министерства внутренних дел Индии. Проанализированы основные направления расширения сети кампусов NFSU в Индии и за ее пределами, включая создание первого зарубежного филиала в Уганде, а также формирование междисциплинарной образовательной модели.

Рассматриваются инновационные образовательные программы в сферах судебной медицины, цифровой криминалистики, кибербезопасности, судебной психологии, финансовых расследований и искусственного интеллекта. Освещается деятельность научно-исследовательских центров университета, ориентированная на развитие цифровой криминалистики, баллистики, анализа наркотических веществ, кибербезопасности и технологий противодействия современным угрозам.

Подчеркивается значение научных исследований, международного сотрудничества и практико-ориентированной подготовки специалистов для правоохранительных органов и судебной системы. Отмечаются достижения университета на международной арене, включая взаимодействие с Интерполом и участие в международных образовательных и исследовательских инициативах. Делается вывод о том, что NFSU становится одним из ведущих мировых центров подготовки специалистов в области судебной экспертизы, внося существенный вклад в развитие криминалистики, цифровой безопасности и научного обеспечения правосудия.

Ключевые слова: криминалистика, цифровая криминалистика, кибербезопасность, судебная экспертиза, уголовное правосудие, научные исследования, инновационное образование.

ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԴԱՏԱԿԱՆ ՓՈՐՁԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ. ԶԱՐԳԱՅՈՒՄԸ ԵՎ ՀԵՌԱՆԿԱՐՆԵՐԸ

Պոկհարիյալ Պ.

Հոդվածում դիտարկվում են Ազգային դատական փորձագիտությունների համալսարանի (National Forensic Sciences University, NFSU) կայացման փուլերը, արդի վիճակը և զարգացման հեռանկարները: Այն աշխարհում առաջին մասնագիտացված համալսարանն է, որի գործունեությունը ուղղված է դատական փորձագիտություններ ոլորտում, նաև հարակից ոլորտություններով կադրերի պատրաստմանն ու գիտական հետազոտությունների իրականացմանը: Յույց է տրված, որ համալսարանի ստեղծումը Հնդկաստանի պետական քաղաքականության արդյունք է, որն ուղղված է քրեական արդարադատության համակարգի ամրապնդմանը, դատափորձագիտական գործունեության զարգացմանը և իրավապահ մարմինների պրակտիկայում գիտական նվաճումների ներդրմանը:

Հատուկ ուշադրություն է դարձված Գուջարաթ նահանգի տարածաշրջանային կրթական հաստատությունից համալսարանի վերակազմավորմանը միջազգային մակարդակի ազգային համալսարանի, որը գործում է Հնդկաստանի ներքին գործերի նախարարության հովանու ներքո: Վերլուծված են Հնդկաստանում և նրա սահմաններից դուրս NFSU-ի ուսանողական ավանների ցանցի ընդլայնման հիմնական ուղղությունները, ներառյալ Ուզանդայում առաջին արտասահմանյան մասնաճյուղի ստեղծումը, ինչպես նաև միջառարկայական կրթական մոդելի ձևավորումը:

Դիտարկվում են նորարարական կրթական ծրագրեր՝ դատական բժշկության, թվային քրեագիտության, կիբերանվտանգության, դատական հոգեբանության, ֆինանսական հետաքննությունների և արհեստական բանականության ոլորտներում: Լուսաբանվում է համալսարանի գիտահետազոտական և գերազանցության կենտրոնների գործունեությունը, որն ուղղված է թվային քրեագիտության, ձգաբանության, թմրամիջոցների վերլուծության, կիբերանվտանգության և ժամանակակից սպառնալիքների հակազդման տեխնոլոգիաների զարգացմանը:

Ընդգծվում է գիտական հետազոտությունների, միջազգային համագործակցության և իրավապահ մարմինների ու դատական համակարգի համար գործնական կողմնորոշումով մասնագետների պատրաստման նշանակությունը: Նշվում են համալսարանի ձեռքբերումները միջազգային ասպարեզում, այդ թվում՝ փոխազդեցությունը Ինտերպոլի հետ և մասնակցությունը միջազգային կրթական ու հետազոտական նախաձեռնություններին: Եզրակացություն է արվում այն մասին, որ NFSU-ն դառնում է դատափորձագիտության ոլորտում մասնագետների պատրաստման համաշխարհային առաջատար կենտրոններից մեկը՝ զգալի ավանդ ներդնելով քրեագիտության, թվային անվտանգության և արդարադատության գիտական ապահովման զարգացման գործում:

Բանալի բառեր. քրեագիտություն, թվային քրեագիտություն, կիբերանվտանգություն, դատական փորձաքննություն, քրեական արդարադատություն, գիտական հետազոտություններ, նորարարական կրթություն:

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