

Education on forensic geology at an intensive course of graduate school

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A two-day intensive course of forensic geology was given to graduate students of Graduate School of Science and Technology, Kumamoto University, who majored Earth and Environmental Sciences, in December 2020. It was probably the first intensive course that students could earn credits by learning forensic geology.

This presentation reports how the course was conducted. Outreach lectures, which the author provided to various audiences in recent years, will be also introduced.

Forensic geology is a study to apply knowledge and techniques of geology and its related sciences to crime and accident investigation. Generally, wide range of forensic sciences including geology are studied and practiced by the staff of police laboratories in Japan but hardly investigated at universities with few exceptions. In contrast, many universities and institutes are actively involving in some of overseas countries.

Forensic science requires different viewpoints from other natural sciences as it handles evidence retrieved from scene of crimes and accidents. Therefore, already acquired results including negative data for geological studies have a potential to be new findings that will be useful for forensic application. Such chance may be lost because of the lack of education on forensic sciences. The class included introduction of forensic science, overview of forensic geology and a simple practical work.

This course was a trial case for the author as it was the first experience. If an opportunity offers, the course will be more comprehensible. Education at universities and outreach lectures will develop forensic geology as well as expanding opportunities for geology to contribute to society.

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