



Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FORENSIC SCIENCE STANDARDS BOARD

This document describes the framework for the OSAC Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) and outlines the authority, composition, terms of office, tasks, and practical rules for the FSSB. In addition to these Terms of Reference, the FSSB shall adhere to the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* and the *OSAC Code of Responsibility*.

1. Purpose

The FSSB shall be the mechanism by which the Administrator (NIST) gains forensic science community input into the management and administration of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science.

The aims of the FSSB are to:

- facilitate the promulgation of standards that will support the development of quality benchmarks and enhance consistency across the forensic science community;
- discuss and address issues related to the OSAC standards development process; and
- coordinate the activities of the OSAC Scientific Area Committees (SACs), Subcommittees (SCs), and Interdisciplinary Committees.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

FSSB responsibilities include:

- determining the overall direction of the OSAC;
- developing OSAC procedures;
- documenting and communicating priorities and topics for SACs, SAC Subcommittees, and Interdisciplinary Committees;
- identifying gaps in the existing body of standards;
- reviewing standards listed and proposed for inclusion on the *OSAC Registry*;
- ensuring that standards identified by a SAC that may affect another SAC or SC are evaluated by that component and managing any conflicting requirements;
- supporting the work of SACs, SCs, and Interdisciplinary Committees by providing advice and assistance;
- ensuring communication flow among the FSSB, SACs, SCs, the Interdisciplinary Committees, and the forensic science community; and
- reporting FSSB activity and decisions to the forensic science community and interested individuals and organizations.

2.1 Task Groups

The chair of the FSSB may establish task groups for the FSSB. Such task groups may be chaired by an FSSB member, an OSAC member, or an OSAC affiliate appointed by the chair of the FSSB. If not chaired by an FSSB member, the task group shall include an FSSB liaison.

3. Membership

The FSSB shall consist of the chairs of each SAC, seven representatives from forensic professional organizations (American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners (AFTE), Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM), International Association for Identification (IAI), National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Inc. (SOFT), one NIST representative (Ex-Officio Member) and a maximum of six Members-at-large. Members-at-large shall include at least one subject matter expert in the areas of: human factors, a forensic science research area, the law, quality management and statistics. In accordance with the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws*, the number of members-at-large or from professional organizations may be changed with the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the FSSB.

3.1 FSSB Forensic Professional Organization Representatives

FSSB members appointed to represent a forensic science professional organization shall be responsible for:

- communication of non-confidential information regarding OSAC to the professional organization;
- providing input to the FSSB on activities of the professional organization related to OSAC;
- providing feedback on FSSB activities; and
- serving as the primary point of contact for dissemination of information, as needed, between OSAC and the professional organization.

4. Organizational Authority

The FSSB oversees and coordinates the following OSAC units:

- SACs;
- SCs;
- Interdisciplinary Committees; and
- FSSB Task Groups.

5. Operation

5.1 Executive Task Group

- The Executive Task Group of the FSSB shall consist of the Executive Officers (chair, vice chair, executive secretary) and the NIST Ex-Officio member. These individuals may participate in debate, make formal motions, and vote.
- The FSSB chair shall manage the activities of the Executive Task Group. This duty includes approving FSSB meeting agendas, presiding over meetings, inviting guests to meetings, and coordinating communication between FSSB and other OSAC units.
- The vice chair shall assume the chair's role in the absence of the chair and manage task group activities.
- The executive secretary shall be responsible for meeting roll call and recording member participation.

5.2 Terms of Office

5.2.1 FSSB Members

- Members serve terms that last no more than three years commencing at the beginning of the federal fiscal year. Members are eligible for reappointment for a second consecutive three-year term on the FSSB.
- Members shall be appointed with the approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the FSSB in accordance with the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* and the *OSAC Nominations Procedure*.
- Members who resign or are unable to complete their terms may be replaced in accordance with the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* and *OSAC Nominations Procedure*.
- The term of a member appointed to fill a vacancy created by the departure of a member shall commence when the replacement is made and conclude at the end of two more fiscal years.
- A member may be removed for insufficient participation or for other good cause as specified in the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws*. Such removal requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the FSSB.
- Under exceptional circumstances, such as when expertise within a specific discipline limits the number of qualified candidates, the FSSB may elect to extend the term limits described above by up to one additional term. This exception requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the FSSB, and all other provisions regarding membership described in the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* and the *OSAC Nominations Procedure* shall be met.

5.2.2 FSSB Officers

- SAC Chairs may not hold an officer position on the FSSB.
- FSSB Executive Officers serve one (1) year terms. Officers shall be elected by the FSSB membership prior to the end of the existing term. Officers are eligible for reelection.
- FSSB members may only hold one Executive Officer position at a time.

5.2.3 FSSB Liaisons

- FSSB liaisons shall be appointed to an FSSB Task Group when an FSSB member is not the chair of a task group.
- FSSB liaisons shall be appointed to Interdisciplinary Committees.
- FSSB liaisons shall provide direction and feedback to the FSSB Task Group or Interdisciplinary Committee and shall provide regular updates to the FSSB, including reporting any significant issues or concerns to the FSSB for discussion and resolution.

5.3 FSSB Meetings

5.3.1 Frequency

- The FSSB meets at least quarterly.
- Special meetings may be called by the chair with 48 hours' notice.

5.3.2 Venue

- The FSSB may meet in-person or virtually.
- NIST shall approve the venue for any in-person meetings.
- Meetings shall be closed to the public.

5.3.3 Participation

- Members shall participate in accordance with the *OSAC Unit Participation Requirements*.

- Members shall attend as many meetings as possible.
- The chair may invite guests to attend meetings. Guest invitations for in-person meetings require approval from the OSAC Program Office.
- Active, healthy debate is encouraged. OSAC processes and voting requirements support a consensus decision where different perspectives are provided an opportunity to be heard, and dissenting opinions are recorded.

5.3.4 Manner of Acting

- Meetings may be conducted without following formal rules of procedure; however, if a member objects to a procedure or the chair deems it appropriate, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.

5.3.5 Agendas

- Agenda items may be suggested by NIST or FSSB Members.
- The executive secretary (or designee) shall ensure the meeting agenda is distributed at least 24 hours prior to the start of each meeting.

5.3.6 Minutes

- The executive secretary (or designee) shall take the minutes of each meeting and distribute them for approval by the FSSB Executive Task Group.
- The approved minutes shall be made available to the FSSB and OSAC unit chairs within ten days of approval.

6. **Voting**

- Two-thirds (2/3) of the FSSB membership shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is required to conduct business in which a vote is required.
- Each member shall have one vote.
- An FSSB member who will not be present at a meeting may notify the executive secretary of his or her vote in advance of the meeting or may designate a proxy who must be an active, voting member of the FSSB.
- Proxy voting contributes to the voting quorum.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the FSSB membership is required to approve a standard for inclusion on the OSAC Registry or to change the size or composition of the FSSB.
- Unless otherwise specified in the OSAC Charter and Bylaws, these Terms of Reference, or a motion from the floor that is adopted, a simple majority all of the FSSB is required to pass a motion.
- Votes may take place during FSSB meetings or via an electronic poll.

7. **Representation and Communication**

- The FSSB chair, or designee, may be invited to represent OSAC at the request of NIST.
- A FSSB Member has no authority to make official representations about OSAC positions without the specific prior, written approval of NIST.

8. **Amendments**

These Terms of Reference may be amended in writing upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the full FSSB.