



OSAC Organizational Priorities

Purpose

Forensic science seeks to help answer fundamental questions such as: What substances are in this questioned sample? Does a sample contain an illicit substance? Did a questioned sample and a known sample originate from the same source? What is the provenance of the sample? What caused an injury or damage? When did an event occur? Forensic scientists develop and use methods to help answer such questions. Method creation and standard development in forensic science are on-going activities.

This document identifies priorities for the OSAC and its activities.

In this document,

- “shall” indicates a requirement.
- “should” indicates a recommendation.
- “may” indicates a permission.
- “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

Organizational Priorities

Standards Development

The OSAC’s primary mission is to facilitate the development and promote the use of high-quality, technically sound standards for the forensic sciences. These standards define minimum requirements, best practices, standard protocols, and other guidance to help ensure that the results of forensic analysis are reliable and reproducible.

The topics of these standards and expected details within them are defined in the [Mandatory Requirements for Standards Development](#).

Accreditation

The OSAC supports the accreditation of all entities engaged in the full- or part-time delivery of forensic services. It supports accreditation programs based on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025¹, ISO/IEC 17020²), and supplemental standards specific to forensic science and associated guidance documents (e.g., based on ILAC G19³). It also supports the use of an accrediting body that is a signatory to the ILAC

¹ ISO/IEC 17025, General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

² ISO/IEC 17020, Conformity assessment – Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection.

³ ILAC G19, Modules in a Forensic Science Process.

(International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) Mutual Recognition Arrangement in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011.

Certification

The OSAC supports the certification of all individuals engaged in the full- or part-time delivery of forensic services. It supports the use of a certification body accredited to ISO/IEC 17024 by an accrediting body that is a signatory to the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011.

Proficiency Tests

OSAC supports the use of a proficiency test provider accredited to ISO/IEC 17043 by an accrediting body that is a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011.

Outreach

To strengthen the nation's use of forensic science and advance professional practice, the OSAC is committed to effective communication and outreach to forensic science stakeholders. Outreach shall include:

- international standards organizations
- standards developing organizations
- justice system
- forensic science service providers
- accrediting bodies
- certifying bodies
- proficiency test providers
- professional scientific organizations
- professional forensic science organizations
- forensic scientific working groups
- academia and the broader scientific community
- peer-reviewed scientific journals
- public and private research funding agencies
- suppliers of forensic-science related products
- the general public

OSAC shall engage with these groups by seeking feedback during OSAC comment periods, hosting OSAC stakeholder feedback sessions, delivering presentations during professional conferences, offering webinars through OSAC and with external partners, sharing assessments of research needs, providing monthly publications on the status of standards, and corresponding with SDOs.