

OSAC Preferred Terms

Term	Definition
Administrative Review	An evaluation of the report and supporting documentation for consistency with organizational policies and for editorial correctness.
Authentication, Biometric	Process of assessing a level of confidence in identify or identification.
Bias, Cognitive	A set of influences that may affect the reliability and validity of one's observations and conclusions.
Bias, Confirmation	The tendency to search for data or interpret information in a manner that supports one's preconceptions, expectations, or desires.
Bias, Contextual	A deviation in human judgment caused by exposure to information that is either irrelevant to the judgmental task or inappropriate for consideration.
Bias, Statistical	A systematic tendency for estimates or measurements to be above or below their true values. NOTE 1: Statistical bias arises from systematic as opposed to random error. NOTE 2: Statistical bias can occur in the absence of prejudice, partiality, or discriminatory intent.
Chain of custody	Chronological record of the handling and storage of an item from its point of collection to its final return or disposal.
Competency testing	Evaluation of a person's knowledge and ability to perform work before authorization to do so independently.
Control	Material of established origin used to evaluate the performance of a test or comparison. Or a test performed to demonstrate that a test method works correctly and to ensure that data are valid. Positive controls confirm that the procedure will produce the expected result. Negative controls confirm that the procedure does not produce an unintended result.
Exclusion	A result that compared items did not originate from the same source, are not the same substance, or do not share the same composition or classification, based on an exclusionary difference.
Exclusionary Difference	A difference in one or more characteristics between compared items that is sufficient to determine that the compared items did not originate from the same source, are not the same source, or do not share the same composition or classification. NOTE: What is sufficient depends on the performance and limitations of the method used on the material in question.

Term	Definition
Forensic	Related to methods, techniques and processes used to establish conclusions and/or opinions, facts and findings which can be used for legal proceedings.
Forensic Science	The application of scientific principles and techniques to matters of criminal justice especially as relating to the collection, examination, and analysis of physical evidence.
Forensic Services	Activities included in the collection, examination, and analysis of items and reporting of observations and opinions for matters of criminal justice, or for regulatory, or legal proceedings.
Forensic Service Provider	An organization or individual that provides forensic services.
Forensic Science Service Provider	An organization or individual that provides forensic science services.
Interlaboratory Comparison	Organization, performance, and evaluation of measurements or tests on the same or similar items by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions.
Interpretation	Explanations for the observations, data, and calculations.
Intralaboratory comparison	Organization, performance, and evaluation of measurements or tests on the same or similar items within the same laboratory in accordance with predetermined conditions.
Observation	Recognizing and noting an occurrence.
Opinion	View, judgment, belief – takes into consideration other information in addition to observations, data, calculations, and interpretations.
Peer review	An independent evaluation of a scientific, professional, or academic manuscript or publication by a qualified second party to evaluate the claims, methods, interpretations, and conclusions.
Performance Monitoring	The ongoing process of evaluating a forensic service provider’s ability to perform work. Examples include quality control measures, observation, case review, retesting, blind testing, testimony monitoring, intra- or interlaboratory comparisons, and proficiency testing.
Proficiency testing	Evaluation of participant performance against pre-established criteria by means of interlaboratory comparisons.
Reliability, Evidentiary/Legal	Credibility and trustworthiness of proffered evidence.
Reliability, Statistical	Consistency of results as demonstrated by reproducibility or repeatability.
Repeatability	Extent of agreement between more than one result determined in the same place, by the same person, on the same equipment, in the same way, at similar times.
Replicability	See “Reproducibility”.
Reproducibility	Extent of agreement between more than one result determined under any combination of different conditions.



Term	Definition
Result	The product of the forensic service provider. This term is broad and includes observations, data, calculations, interpretations, and opinions.
Technical Review	A qualified second party's evaluation of reports, notes, data, and other documentation to ensure there is appropriate and sufficient support for the actions, results, conclusions, opinions and interpretations.
Validation	A process of evaluating a system, method, or component to determine that requirements for an intended use or application have been fulfilled.
Verification, Analytical	Performing subsequent testing to ascertain if the results are concordant.

For a complete list of forensic science terms organized by discipline, please visit the **OSAC Lexicon** (www.nist.gov/osac/osac-lexicon).