



OSAC Preferred Terms

Term	Definition
Administrative review	An evaluation of the report and supporting documentation for consistency with organizational policies and for editorial correctness.
Chain of custody	Chronological record of the handling and storage of an item from its point of collection to its final return or disposal.
Cognitive bias	A set of influences that may affect the reliability and validity of one's observations and conclusions.
Confirmation bias	The tendency to search for data or interpret information in a manner that supports one's preconceptions, expectations or desires.
Contextual bias	A deviation in human judgment caused by exposure to information that is either irrelevant to the judgmental task or inappropriate for consideration.
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.
CSI effect	Perception of the near infallibility of forensic science in response to popular media.
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.
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 publication or other work product by a qualified second party to evaluate the methods, claims, and conclusions, and interpretations therein before dissemination.
Reliability, evidentiary/legal	Credibility and trustworthiness of proffered evidence.
Reliability, statistical	Consistency of results as demonstrated by reproducibility or repeatability.
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.

For a complete list of forensic science terms organized by discipline, please visit the [OSAC Lexicon](#).