



Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science

September 2015 | Vol. 1, Issue 2



Newsletter

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Feature Article:

OSAC Performs Outreach and Requests Feedback from Forensic Science Stakeholders

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) program, and the forensic science community at large, has a wide-ranging and varied list of stakeholders: that includes the criminal justice system; forensic science service providers; accrediting bodies; certifying bodies; professional forensic science and other scientific organizations; international and national standards organizations; Federal, state, and local government agencies (to include thousands of state and local law enforcement agencies); academia; and the public.

To help strengthen the nation's use of forensic science and advance the professional practice, the OSAC is committed to effective communication and outreach with each of these stakeholders. The focus of OSAC outreach will be to 1) keep stakeholders apprised of program activities and to 2) collect feedback on those activities from all interested parties.

Recent OSAC conference outreach efforts include (but are not limited to):

- The Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Subcommittee, the Friction Ridge Subcommittee, and Human Factors Committee representatives provided an update at the *International Symposium on Forensic Science Error Management* in July 2015

- OSAC Affairs, the Physics/Pattern SAC and Digital/Multimedia SAC provided public updates at the International Association for Identification's (IAI's) 100th *International Education Conference* in August 2015, including a Q&A session
- OSAC Affairs, the Physics/Pattern SAC, and the Chemistry SAC provided public updates at the National Institute of Justice's *Impression Pattern and Trace Evidence Symposium* in August 2015
- NIST leadership provided an update to the National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS) in August 2015

Upcoming OSAC conference outreach efforts include:

- The Facial Identification Subcommittee will provide updates at the *Global Identity Summit* in September 2015
- OSAC Affairs, and the Materials (Trace), Seized Drug, and Bloodstain/Pattern Subcommittees will provide updates at the Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists Annual Meeting in September 2015

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Message from the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB)

OSAC Will Capture and Publish Research Needs that Arise, While Keeping Focus on Its Primary Standards Mission and Objectives

As you may be aware, the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science's (OSAC's) primary role is to develop and promote consensus standards and guidelines within the forensic science community that have a technically valid and reliable basis. OSAC also recognizes, however, that due to its unique makeup of academic scholars, legal professionals, forensic laboratory management, and forensic science practitioners, OSAC is well positioned to inform the community of research needs that are identified by its experts during the course of standards and guidelines development and promotion.

One of OSAC's objectives is to inform the forensic science community of research priorities that are uncovered

during OSAC's standards development activities. These research priority recommendations may be considered by other agencies and organizations when they develop their own agency research priorities, and when soliciting funding for forensic science research. OSAC also encourages the respective funding agencies to consider these research priority recommendations when developing new solicitations so that research efforts can be strategically advanced in areas where they are most needed.

OSAC will document practitioner feedback that arises during research gap analysis, and consolidate and share that feedback with the broader community. OSAC will routinely document, consolidate, and publish its

recommendations on where additional scientific inquiry is warranted on its Kavi public workspace. This research list will encompass inputs from the all of the 24 subcommittees and 5 SACs.

Please contact forensics@nist.gov with any feedback or questions.

Public Comment Periods for Standards/Guidelines Under Consideration for the OSAC Registry

Public comment period recently closed for the following standards under consideration for the OSAC registry. OSAC sought comments on whether these standards should be included on the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards*. OSAC subcommittees are in the process of reviewing and the adjudicating comments that were received.

ASTM: E2329-14 Standard Practice for Identification of Seized Drugs



ASTM: E2330-12 Standard Test Method for Determination of Concentrations of Elements in Glass Samples Using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) for Forensic Comparisons

ASTM: E2548-11e1 Standard Guide for Sampling Seized Drugs for Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

ASTM: E2881 - 13e1 Standard Test Method for Extraction and Derivatization of Vegetable Oils and Fats from Fire Debris and Liquid Samples with Analysis by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry

ASTM: E2926-13 Standard Test Method for Forensic Comparison of Glass Using Micro X-ray Fluorescence (μ -XRF) Spectrometry

Note that specific instructions on how to access the read-only standards for the purpose of providing public comment were provided and must be followed explicitly in order to access the standard. If you experienced issues accessing the read-only standards during the comment period, please contact forensics@nist.gov so that we can assist in troubleshooting where possible.



About OSAC

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) is part of an initiative by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to strengthen forensic science in the United States. The organization is a collaborative body of more than 500 forensic science practitioners and other experts who represent local, state, and Federal agencies; academia; and industry. OSAC is organized into 33 operating units based on discipline and purpose. The OSAC fosters the development and promotion of technically sound, consensus-based documentary standards and guidelines that can be used to strengthen the practice of forensic science.

The purpose of OSAC is to strengthen the nation's use of forensic science by:

- providing technical leadership necessary to facilitate the development and promulgation of consensus-based documentary standards and guidelines for forensic science
- promoting standards and guidelines that are fit-for-purpose and based on sound scientific principles

- promoting the use of OSAC standards and guidelines by accreditation and certification bodies
- establishing and maintaining working relationships with other similar organizations.

The aims of the OSAC are to:

- populate the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards* and the *OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines*
- compile and update the *Forensic Science Catalog of External Standards and Related Documents*
- maintain Priority Action Plan documents on OSAC strategic objectives and associated goals and intended actions
- promote and improve the communication, dissemination and use of forensic science standards, accreditation, and personnel competencies
- encourage forensic science service providers in the United States to implement guidelines and standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025, etc.) for quality and

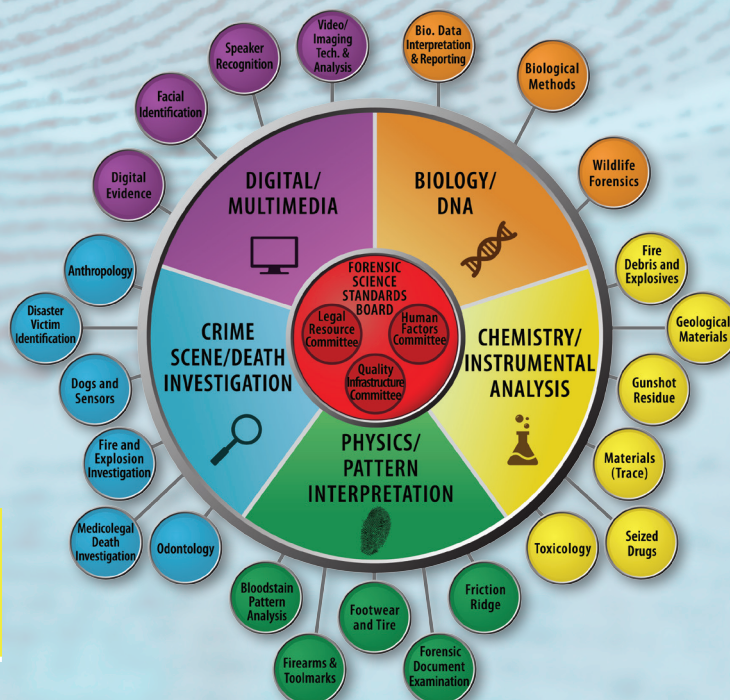
competency

- provide insight on each forensic science discipline's research and measurement standards needs
- enlist stakeholder involvement from a broad community to provide public comment on OSAC outputs.

To learn more about OSAC, visit:

<http://www.nist.gov/forensics/osac/index.cfm>

To access OSAC's public workspace and view work products, visit: <https://workspace.forensicosac.org/kws/public>





QIC Meeting in January 2015: Top row left to right: Shannan Williams (Affiliate), Deborah Friedman, Arlene Hall, Barbara Andree, Alice Isenberg, Pamela Bordner, Timothy Kupferschmid; Bottom row left to right: Sally Aiken, Kris Cano, Karen Reczek, Jason Bond, and Matthew Gamette; Not pictured: Karin Athanas, Keith Greenaway, Bruce Houlihan, Fran Schrotter

Resource Committee Corner

Quality Infrastructure Committee Develops OSAC Processes, Available for Other Quality-Related OSAC Needs

Did you know that OSAC members and affiliates have direct access to accreditation and certification specialists, quality system managers, forensic science practitioners, forensic science laboratory directors, and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards specialists to consult with while they are performing OSAC work? The Quality Infrastructure Committee (QIC) consists of these listed professionals, including five (5) representatives of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD). The QIC serves as a resource to OSAC members and affiliates on all quality-related issues. The QIC

also helps support OSAC operations for the SACs and subcommittees by developing and maintaining all associated processes, procedures and worksheets.

Recently, the QIC [with substantial Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) input] has developed the *OSAC Registry Approval Process* as well as of the accompanying forms, and other supplementary materials. The QIC is also responsible for maintaining the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards* and the *OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines*, and the *Catalog of External Standards and Guidelines*.

Current and future activities of the QIC include coordinating the development of the *OSAC Registry Approval Process: Appeals Procedure*, and the *OSAC Registry Approval Process: Comment Adjudication Procedure*, as well as finalizing and publishing the *OSAC Working with a Standards Development Organization Process*. The QIC also looks forward to continued liaising with the various SACs and subcommittees.

For more information on the QIC, visit: <http://www.nist.gov/forensics/osac/qic.cfm>.

OSAC Standards/Guidelines Registry Approval Process Available to Public

The OSAC Standards/Guidelines Registry Approval Process will soon be publicly available. This process includes an analysis of technical merit, the openness of the development process (to ensure balanced interests are represented), consensus, harmonization, and the impact on the forensic science community on all standards or guidelines before they are posted to OSAC registries.

The consensus-based documentary standards and guidelines that will be approved for posting on the OSAC Registry of Approved Standards and the OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines should be considered by:

- 1) crime laboratories and forensic science service providers as standard methods for specific analyses,
- 2) by accrediting bodies offering accreditation services to the forensic industry as discipline-specific supplementary accreditation standards

3) officers of the court when evaluating processes employed and testimony given by forensic science experts, and

4) Congress and Federal funding agencies in response to forensic science research priorities.

To view the process, visit this link: https://workspace.forensicosac.org/kws/public/workgroup?wg_abbrev=library

Please provide any feedback to forensics@nist.gov.



OSAC Harmonization Worksheet

This worksheet must be submitted with your Registry Request Form. The form is intended to assist in the evaluation of potential conflicts with documents currently listed on the OSAC Registries.

DATE: _____ SUBMITTING SUBCOMMITTEE: _____

CHAIR: _____ TECHNICAL CONTACT (if different than Chair): _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Affiliation: _____ Affiliation: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____



OSAC Technical Merit Worksheet

This worksheet is intended to assist in reviewing a potential standard or guideline to determine its appropriateness for inclusion on the OSAC Registries. Depending upon the nature of the standard or guideline, not all areas will be applicable. Additional factors may be needed for the evaluation of standards relating to observational- and judgment-based practices or human factors such as training, qualifications, research and quality control.

DATE: _____ SUBMITTING SUBCOMMITTEE: _____

CHAIR: _____ TECHNICAL CONTACT (if different than Chair): _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Affiliation: _____ Affiliation: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Document Title, Number, and Year: _____

1. Are the purpose and scope clearly stated? Yes No
2. Terminology
Are relevant terms, acronyms, or abbreviations used in the document clearly defined? Yes No N/A
3. Bibliographic References
Does the document contain: _____
4. Quality Control
Does the document describe: _____
5. Is the document a test reporting guideline, etc.?



OSAC Impact Worksheet

This worksheet must be completed and included with the Registry Request Form if the referenced document is likely to produce a financial, human resource, or other impact on the forensic community.

DATE: _____ SUBMITTING SUBCOMMITTEE: _____

CHAIR: _____ TECHNICAL CONTACT (if different than Chair): _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Affiliation: _____ Affiliation: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Document Title, Number, and Year: _____

1. What is the intended use of this document? Describe the document's utility and the expected audience size. For example, is this standard expected to be followed nationwide by all forensic scientists or by specific-discipline forensic scientists? Is this a niche application that will be used rarely?



OSAC Standard Development Process Worksheet

Complete the following worksheet if the standard or guideline submitted for addition to the OSAC Registry was not developed by a recognized standards development organization (SDO) but might meet the process requirements. Provide all documentation to support the responses as attachments.

DATE: _____ SUBMITTING SUBCOMMITTEE: _____

CHAIR: _____ TECHNICAL CONTACT (if different than Chair): _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Affiliation: _____ Affiliation: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Document Title, Number, and Year: _____

1. Was a written procedure used to govern the creation of this standard or guideline?



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- The Seized Drug Subcommittee will provide updates at the Southern Association of Forensic Scientists Annual Meeting in October 2015
- The Chemistry SAC, the Fire Debris Analysis Subcommittee, and the Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Subcommittee will provide updates at the Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists Annual Meeting in October 2015
- The Quality Infrastructure Committee (QIC) will provide updates at the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers Training Conference in October 2015
- The Legal Resource Committee (LRC) will be providing details on OSAC to San Diego County Judges in October 2015
- The Biology/DNA SAC will provide updates during the *International Symposium on Human Identification (ISHI)* in October 2015
- The Video/Imaging Technology and Analysis (VITAL) Subcommittee will provide a presentation at the *Law Enforcement Emergency Services Video Association International (LEVA) Conference* in November 2015
- OSAC Unit Chairs will provide public updates at the *American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Meeting* in February 2016

Overwhelmingly the number one question has been, “How can I help?” OSAC members replied by describing how to apply to be a member or an affiliate of the program.

Other feedback includes that the OSAC should provide free access to standards that are placed on the OSAC registries.

In addition to recent conference presentations, articles on the OSAC were also published in the American Society of Trace Evidence Examiners May 2015 newsletter and the July and August 2015 issues of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences newsletters, as well as in other publications.

OSAC kindly requests that if you plan to perform outreach on behalf of OSAC to please contact us at forensics@nist.gov. Also, if you would like to provide feedback on the OSAC program, please contact us. The OSAC will document and consider all feedback provided.



Recent and Upcoming Meetings

- Physics/Pattern Scientific Area Committee (SAC) in Sacramento, CA during International Association for Identification (IAI) meeting on August 2-3, 2015
- Digital/Multimedia SAC in Sacramento, CA during IAI meeting on August 3rd & 5th, 2015
- Biology/DNA SAC in Grapevine, TX during International Symposium on Human Identification (ISHI) on October 13th & 15th, 2015
- Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) at DEA Special Testing Laboratory in Sterling, VA on December 3-4, 2015
- Full OSAC Subcommittee Meeting in the DC metro area on January 25-29, 2016
 - January 25th – FSSB Meeting (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
 - January 26th – 5 SAC and 3 Resource Committee (RC) Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
 - January 27th – 24 Subcommittee and 3 RC Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
 - January 28th – 24 Subcommittee and 3 RC Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
 - January 29th – ½ day 24 Subcommittee Meetings (8:30 AM – approximately 1:00PM)
- OSAC public reporting occurs at American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) in Las Vegas, NV on February 22-23, 2016. (5 SAC Chairs & 24 subcommittee chairs or their designee will present)



OSAC resource committees collaborate at recent meetings at NIST.



OSAC Physics/Pattern SAC deliberations at recent meeting in Sacramento, CA.



Message from the OSAC Affairs Director: Vision for Implementation

In last month's inaugural OSAC newsletter, the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) task group described their ongoing activities and active task groups. One ongoing FSSB task group is the OSAC long-range planning task group. This task group is analyzing and formulating their vision for OSAC impact and implementation in years to come. One of the questions they are analyzing is "how might OSAC standards affect the practice of forensic science in the laboratory and expert testimony in the courtroom in the next five to ten years?" As they conceptualize and document their vision, they will share it with the OSAC community and beyond.

In the meantime, I wanted to share my personal aspiration to see OSAC succeed in manifesting the following notable improvements in the industry:

1. Forensic science practitioners embrace change
2. Forensic analyses routinely employ quantification, uncertainty measurement and probabilistic modeling to the extent possible within each discipline
3. *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards* and *OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines* become implemented in the practice of forensic science across all forensic disciplines in addition to DNA
4. Prosecutors and defense attorneys begin to use the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards* and *OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines* in direct and cross examinations of expert forensic science witnesses
5. Judges and juries routinely hear expert witnesses testify about how their analysis met current standards and scientific validity and openly describe the limitations of the tests in general and their interpretations in the specific case
6. Significant forensic science research is well organized and well-funded with influence from OSAC to inform research priorities
7. Standards enforcement by accrediting bodies becomes the rule rather than the exception.

We hope the OSAC infrastructure continues to bring a uniform standards recognition platform to the community, enhance scientific rigor and increase communication among forensic scientists, research scientists, academicians, statisticians, attorneys, managers, and quality assurance specialists as well as across governmental entities.

-Mark Stolorow, Director for OSAC Affairs

For more information, contact forensics@nist.gov.

