



## Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC AREA COMMITTEES

This document describes the framework for Scientific Area Committees (SACs) and outlines the authority, composition, terms of office, tasks, and practical rules regarding all SACs. In addition to these *Terms of Reference (ToR)*, the SACs shall adhere to the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* and the *OSAC Code of Responsibility*.

#### 1. Purpose

SACs manage the activities and priorities of the forensic science discipline-specific subcommittees within the SACs and foster collaboration and harmonization across all SACs and subcommittees. The SACs shall disseminate information to the public regarding their activities and serve as the mechanism by which the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) gains public input into the activities of OSAC.

#### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

SAC responsibilities include:

- providing direction and oversight for the work performed by its subcommittees,
- identifying gaps in existing standards,
- communicating activities and progress of the SAC and its subcommittees to the FSSB and the public,
- communicating priorities and recommendations of the FSSB to its subcommittees,
- supporting the work of other SACs and subcommittees by providing advice and assistance regarding the development of standards,
- ensuring that standards identified by a subcommittee that may affect another area are vetted by the other subcommittees or SACs and are not conflicting; and
- providing input on the creation, merger or abolishment of subcommittees by recommendation of the SAC chair to the FSSB; and,
- approving subcommittee member appointments.

##### 2.1 Task Groups

The chair of a SAC may establish task groups for the SAC. Such task groups shall be chaired by a SAC member, shall include OSAC members, and may include affiliates.

#### 3. Membership

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*. Each SAC will include a chair, vice chair, and its subcommittee chairs. Additional members may be appointed.

#### 4. Organizational Authority

A SAC shall oversee and coordinate its subcommittees and task groups.

#### 5. Operation

##### 5.1 Executive Officers

The Executive Officers of a SAC are the chair and vice chair.

- The chair shall manage the activities of the SAC. This duty includes approving meeting agendas, presiding over meetings, inviting guests to meetings, preparing and presenting SAC activities to the FSSB and at OSAC meetings, and coordinating communication between the SAC and its subcommittees and other OSAC units.
- The vice chair shall assume the chair's role in the absence of the chair and manage all of its task group activities. The vice chair shall be responsible for recording meeting participation, assisting with the development and distribution of meeting agendas, preparing minutes, and distributing documents.

##### 5.2 Terms of Office

###### 5.2.1 SAC Members

- Members serve terms that last no more than three years commencing at the beginning of the federal fiscal year.
- SAC 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.
- A subcommittee chair may not be an executive officer of the SAC.

##### 5.3 SAC Meetings

###### 5.3.1 Frequency

- The SAC meets at least quarterly.
- The SAC shall provide at least one public status report annually.

###### 5.3.2 Venue

- Each SAC 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, but the process moves forward after the required level of support is achieved.

### 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 FSSB members, SAC chair and members, and FSSB resource task group chairs.
- The vice chair shall ensure the meeting agenda is distributed at least 24 hours prior to the start of each meeting.

### 5.3.6 Minutes

- The vice chair (or designee) shall take the minutes of each meeting and distribute them for approval by the SAC prior to the next meeting.
- The approved minutes shall be made available to the SAC within ten days of approval.

### 5.3.7 Public Update Meetings

- The SAC will provide regular reports to the public on the OSAC, its priorities, targets, and decisions.
- Public update meetings provide an opportunity for members of the community to provide comments on SAC activities.

## 6. Voting

- Two-thirds (2/3) of a SAC's membership constitutes a quorum. A quorum is required to conduct business in which a vote is required.
- Each member shall have one vote.
- SAC members who will not be present at a meeting may notify a SAC officer of their votes in advance of the meeting or may designate proxies.
- Proxy voting contributes to the voting quorum.
- Unless otherwise specified in the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* or these *Terms of Reference*, a simple majority vote of the membership is required to pass a motion.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the membership is required to forward a standard for consideration.
- Votes may take place during SAC meetings or via an electronic poll.

7. Representation and Communication

- The SAC chair, or designee, may be invited to represent OSAC at the request of NIST.
- A SAC 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.