



Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) Standards and Documents Category Descriptions

This document attempts to answer the frequently asked question (FAQ), what is the difference between the OSAC Catalog, Scientific Working Group (SWG) documents, standards developing organization (SDO standards), OSAC Discipline-Specific Baseline Documents, OSAC Technical Publications, and standards placed on the OSAC Registry

Document Type	Description	Adhere to Formal Procedures	Assessed for Technical Merit by OSAC Community	Openness/ No Single Interest Dominates	Fit for Purpose	Status of Funding
OSAC Catalog	<p>The catalog contains any standard, guideline, best practice, protocol or policy created in collaboration with a body of stakeholders that is applicable to forensic science. OSAC members can potentially select standards and guidelines from this listing to submit for addition to the OSAC Registry, or to form a basis for new standards and guidelines to be created.</p> <p>https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/osac-standards-and-guidelines</p>	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	Funded through OSAC
SWG Documents	<p>For more than 20 years, several federal agencies have supported the efforts of various scientific working groups, often referred to as SWGs, for the advancement of forensic standards and techniques. SWGs consist/consisted of representatives from the fields of forensic, industrial, commercial and academic communities. These multidisciplinary groups created various documents made freely available to the respective community.</p> <p>https://www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/Pages/scientific-working-groups.aspx</p>	Some	No	Some	Yes	National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funding of SWGs has stopped; SWGDAM and SWGDE will continue with FBI funding; SWGDRUG with DEA funding.



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SDO Standards	<p>SDOs are organizations whose primary role is the development of documentary standards created using a voluntary consensus process.</p> <p>Have established and documented procedures including processes for selection, balance requirements, revisions, commenting, appeals, consensus, transparency and openness. In most cases, SDOs follow the principles set forth in the ANSI Essential Requirements or the World Trade Organization’s Decision on the Principles for the Development of International Standards committee.</p>	Yes	Sometimes	Usually	Sometimes	Private sector funding and open access standards funding
OSAC Discipline-Specific Baseline Documents	<p>A listing of existing documents (SWG or SDO) that are identified by OSAC Subcommittees and posted to OSAC Subcommittee web pages. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are not “endorsed” by NIST or OSAC. (Only documents that are posted on the OSAC Registry are awarded OSAC endorsement.) -However, placement of these documents on a subcommittee’s web page indicates the state of the science or state of the “art” of the discipline that the subcommittee has found contain practical information that can help forensic scientists, judges, lawyers, researchers, the general public and other interested parties, to better understand the nature, scope, and foundations of the individual forensic disciplines as they are currently practiced. <p>https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/osac-organizational-structure and click on the individual subcommittee pages.</p>	Some	No	Some	Yes	Funded through various sources



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OSAC Technical Publications (Coming Soon)	<p>OSAC may publish stand-alone <i>OSAC Technical Series</i> publications. The purpose of this series is to share information that was gathered during the standards analysis and development process that is not going to be part of a standards document.</p> <p><i>OSAC Technical Series</i> publications focus on topics that have broad applications to forensic science standards, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary documents • Frameworks: a basic conceptual structure related to a forensic science topic or issue • Foundational Science: including claims & literature references • Process maps: documents the steps taken for discipline’s claims • Standards gaps that need to be addressed/problems that need to be solved • Road maps: paths forward • Lessons learned • State of the discipline: including technical concerns/problems and recommendations for how to proceed, without presenting a definitive solution. 	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Funded through OSAC



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OSAC Registry	<p>The OSAC Registry is a listing of published consensus-based documents that the overarching OSAC community feels has technical merit and was developed by due process and should be used by the greater forensic community when possible and applicable. This Registry serves as a trusted repository of high-quality, science-based standards and guidelines for forensic practice. To be posted to the OSAC Registry, standards and guidelines must have been developed using a consensus-based process and must pass a review of technical merit by forensic practitioners, academic researchers, statisticians, legal professionals, quality managers and measurement scientists. OSAC does not have authority to enforce standards. However, by placing standards on the OSAC Registry, OSAC promotes their adoption by forensic science service providers.</p> <p>https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/osac-registries</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Funded through OSAC