



Organization for Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC AREA COMMITTEES (SACs)

This document sets out the framework from which the Scientific Area Committees (SACs) shall operate and outlines the organizational authority, composition, terms of office, tasks and practical rules regarding the SACs. In addition to these Terms of Reference, the SACs shall adhere to the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws*.

1. Purpose

The Scientific Area Committees (SACs) shall coordinate the activities of the forensic science discipline-specific subcommittees. The SACs shall serve as the primary platform by which the public provides input on OSAC priorities, standards and guidelines. The SACs shall also serve as the mechanism by which the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) gains public input into the activities of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC).

The aim of the SACs is to coordinate the activities of the SAC Subcommittees and foster collaboration and harmonization across all of the SACs and their respective forensic science discipline-specific subcommittees. Each SAC shall disseminate information to the public regarding its activities, including notification of standards and guidelines being considered for approval on the OSAC Registries.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Each SAC will also be responsible for:

- Providing direction and oversight for the work performed by its SAC Subcommittees
- Reviewing and approving all standards for submission to the FSSB for approval and listing on the OSAC Registry of Approved Standards
- Reviewing and approving all guidelines for listing on the OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines
- Identifying gaps in existing standards and guidelines
- Interfacing with Resource Committees on human factors, legal and quality issues
- Communicating activities and progress of the SAC and its Subcommittees to the FSSB and the public
- Communicating activities and recommendations of the FSSB to their Subcommittees
- Supporting the work of other SACs and Subcommittees by providing advice and assistance with regard to the production of standards and guidelines
- Ensuring that standards identified by a Subcommittee that may affect another area are vetted by the other Subcommittees or SACs and are not conflicting
- Providing input on the creation, merger or abolishment of Subcommittees by recommendation of the SAC Chair to the FSSB.

2.1 Task Groups

As needed, Task Groups of each SAC shall be established by the SAC Chair and their activities administered by the SAC Vice-Chair. SAC Task Groups must be chaired by a SAC Member. SAC Task Group Members must include OSAC Members and may include Affiliates.

3. Membership

Each SAC will have a maximum number of fifteen (15) Members, unless granted an exemption by NIST. NIST has the authority to make any exceptions to the maximum number. Each SAC shall be comprised of its Subcommittee chairs, representatives of national professional forensic science organizations appropriate to the scientific discipline, practitioners, researchers and measurement scientists.

4. Organizational Authority

Each SAC oversees and coordinates:

- Its SAC Subcommittees
- Task Groups of the SAC.

5. Operation

5.1 Executive Officers

The Executive Officers of the SAC shall consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Executive Secretary. With the exception of the SAC Chair, officer positions shall be elected by each SAC's Membership as terms end. (The SAC Chairs are appointed by the FSSB in accordance with the OSAC Charter and Bylaws.)

- Each SAC Chair shall manage the activities of his/her Scientific Area Committee. These duties include, but are not limited to, approval of meeting agendas, presiding over meetings, inviting guests to SAC meetings, acting as a spokesperson for the SAC, preparing and presenting SAC activities to the FSSB, and coordinating communication between the SAC and its Subcommittees, and other OSAC units.
- The SAC Vice-Chair shall execute the SAC Chair's role in the absence of the SAC Chair and shall manage all of its SAC Task Group activities.
- The SAC Executive Secretary shall be responsible for recording meeting participation of Subcommittee Members, assist with agenda development and distribution, meeting planning and facilitation, meeting minutes, and document distribution.

5.2 Terms of Office

5.2.1 SAC Members

- SAC Members are appointed by the FSSB Nominations Task Group, as positions become available. (Refer to the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws* for more details on the nomination and selection process.)
- The terms of the SAC Members shall be three (3) years and shall commence at the beginning of the Federal fiscal year. In the first year, SAC Members will draw straws for 2, 3, and 4 year terms.
- A SAC Member may be terminated for insufficient participation or for cause as specified in the *OSAC Charter and Bylaws*. Such termination requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the FSSB.
- Vacant positions shall be filled by the FSSB. Replacement appointees will serve the balance of that term.

5.2.2 SAC Officers

- The SAC Chair is appointed by the FSSB.
- The SAC Vice-Chair and Executive Secretary is elected by a majority vote of each SAC's total Membership.
- SAC Subcommittee Chairs may not hold an officer position on the SAC.
- The terms of SAC officers shall be a fixed term of three years.
- An elected officer serving a two (2) year term (as defined in 5.2.1) can be considered for reappointment for another three (3) year term and if appointed, can be eligible for reelection.
- The SAC Chair shall be appointed by the FSSB and the SAC Vice-Chair and Executive Secretary shall be elected by the SAC Membership as terms end.
- SAC Members may only hold/fill one officer position at a time.
- In the event of disengagement or withdrawal of the SAC Chair, the title and all duties and obligations shall be assumed by the SAC Vice-Chair until the FSSB appoints a new Chair.

5.3 SAC Meetings

5.3.1 Frequency

- There shall be a minimum of four (4) meetings of each SAC per year in addition to one public status report.
- Meetings may consist of both executive session and public meetings as defined by the SAC Chair. Public meetings must be approved by the FSSB Executive Board.
- Additional meetings may be arranged, as needed, to address issues as they arise.
- Special executive session meetings may be called by the SAC Chair with 48 hours' notice.

5.3.2 Venue

- Executive session and public meetings can be in-person or virtual using teleconference and webconference technology.
- NIST shall approve the venue for any in-person meetings.

5.3.3 Participation

- Two-thirds (2/3) of each SAC's Membership shall represent a quorum. A quorum is required to conduct business in which a vote is required.
- SAC Member participation is critical. All SAC Members shall attend as many of their respective SAC meetings as possible.
- Active healthy debate is encouraged; once a decision is made, the SAC speaks with one voice.
- Meetings will be attended by each SAC Member and invited guests.
- Up to five guests may be invited to participate in the SAC meetings, unless an exception is approved by the FSSB. Invitations will be extended by the SAC Chair or designee for in-person meetings, invitations may only be extended after travel authorization is approved by NIST.

5.3.4 Manner of Acting

- When deemed necessary by the SAC Chair, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.

5.3.5 Agendas

- Topics may come from FSSB Members, SAC Chairs and Members, SAC Subcommittees Chairs and Chairs of the Resource Committees.
- The agenda shall be distributed prior to the start of each SAC meeting by the SAC Executive Secretary.

5.3.6 Minutes

- The SAC Executive Secretary (or designee) shall take the minutes from his/her respective SAC meetings which are to be distributed to the SAC Membership prior to, and approved by, each SAC at its next meeting.
- The minutes of each SAC meeting shall be distributed to the FSSB, the Chairs of the Resource Committees and the Chairs of its respective SAC Subcommittees within thirty (30) days of approval. Minutes of the public SAC meetings shall be posted on the OSAC website within fifteen (15) days of approval.

5.3.7 Public Meetings

The SAC provides regular reporting to the public on the OSAC, its priorities, targets and decisions.

- The primary public interface with the OSAC is via open SAC meetings. From time to time the SAC Chair may invite parties to make a presentation or comment on a particular issue.
- Notifications and agendas for open SAC public meetings shall be posted on the OSAC website a minimum of fifteen (15) days prior to the meetings.
- Public meetings provide an opportunity for members of the community to provide comments on SAC activities.

6. Voting

- Each Member shall have one vote. SAC Members who will not be present for an in-person or virtual meeting may notify the SAC Executive Secretary of his/her vote in advance of the meeting.
- Proxy voting is permitted and contributes to the voting quorum.
- Two-thirds (2/3) of each SAC Membership shall represent a voting quorum. A majority vote of the quorum is required unless otherwise specified.
- A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting membership is required to approve a guideline on the OSAC Registry of Approved Guidelines or to forward a standard to the FSSB for approval and placement on the OSAC Registry of Approved Standards.
- Votes may take place during SAC meetings or via an electronic poll.

7. Representation and Communication

- The SAC Chair, or designee, shall be invited to represent OSAC at the request of NIST.
- A SAC Member shall provide public statements representing OSAC policies or positions only upon approval of NIST.

8. Amendment, Modification or Variation

These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied, or modified in writing upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the full FSSB.