

**The author(s) shown below used Federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Justice and prepared the following final report:**

**Document Title: Forensic Accreditation Board: An Accreditation Program for Forensic Specialty Programs**

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**Document No.: 189029**

**Date Received: 08/03/2001**

**Award Number: 98-IJ-CX-0074**

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
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CATEGORICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRESS REPORT

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| 1. GRANTEE<br>The American Academy of Forensic Sciences, Inc.   |   | 2. AGENCY GRANT NUMBER<br>98IJCX0074                       | 3. REPORT NO.  |
| 4. IMPLEMENTING SUBGRANTEE  |   | 5. REPORTING PERIOD (Dates)<br>FROM: 01/01/01 TO: 03/31/01 |  |
| 6. SHORT TITLE OF PROJECT<br>Forensic Accreditation Board: An Accreditation Program for Forensic Specialty Programs |   | 7. GRANT AMOUNT<br>\$51,000.00                             | 8. TYPE OF REPORT<br><input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> SPECIAL REQUEST<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FINAL REPORT |
| 9. NAME AND TITLE OF PROJECT DIRECTOR<br>Graham R. Jones, PhD, Chairman   | 10. SIGNATURE OF PROJECT DIRECTOR<br><i>Graham R. Jones</i> | 11. DATE OF REPORT<br>05-16-01                             |  |

12. COMMENCE REPORT HERE (Continue on plain paper)  
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## Original Objectives

The original objectives of the program were:

*To develop minimum standards for credentialing boards;  
To develop a program for certifying credentialing boards; and  
To establish an accrediting board, ultimately independent of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.*

## Results of Grant Funded Activities

The original objectives stated in the NIJ grant application have been met. During the period of the grant, the AAFS Accreditation and Certification Task Force has met several times, both in conjunction with the AAFS and separately, to develop proposed *accreditation standards* and *by-laws* for an accreditation board. An important aspect of this process was the use of international ISO standards and standards from other recognized accreditation bodies, where appropriate. As a result of these efforts and continued dialogue with the various forensic specialty credentialing boards, *Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB)*, was legally incorporated on June 16, 2000.

Having established the FSAB as a legal entity, a way of involving "qualified" forensic credentialing boards in the final development and implementation of an accreditation program had to be devised. The concept of "initial nominating organizations" (INO) was developed. The "INO"s would be forensic credentialing boards which already incorporated certain minimum components, and which were interested in participating in final development and implementation of the FSAB program. Applications were therefore solicited from existing forensic credentialing boards which met the requirements of the proposed FSAB bylaws. In order to be accepted as an "INO", the forensic credentialing board's programs must have the following components: *periodic recertification*; an *examination* that covers the knowledge base of the relevant forensic specialty for which certification is offered; a *credentialing process*; and a *code of ethics* or reference thereto. After due process, nine organizations were elected to have representation on FSAB. These nine "INO"s represent the majority of the recognized boards offering forensic specialty certification in North America and are:

*American Board of Criminalists (ABC)  
American Board of Forensic Document Examiners (ABFDE)  
American Board of Forensic Odontology (ABFO)  
American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT)  
American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI)  
Association of Forensic Document Examiners (AFDE)  
Forensic Toxicologist Certification Board (FTCB)  
International Association for Identification (IAI)  
International Institute of Forensic Engineering Sciences (IIFES)*

Each organization is represented on the FSAB board with one seat; there are an additional five directors-at-large. Designation as an "initial nominating organization" does not confer accreditation, or give the organization any special status in that regard, but does provide an opportunity to participate in the process of developing the FSAB program.

At the first full FSAB board meeting in Chicago in November 2000, draft *bylaws* and *accreditation standards* were adopted. The following officers were elected: President, Graham Jones; Vice President, Yale Caplan; Secretary, Susan Johns; and Treasurer, Richard Tontarski.

### Continued Development of the FSAB Program

Considerable progress has been made by formation and incorporation of the desired accreditation board (FSAB), and in development and approval of the Bylaws and Accreditation Standards. However, in order to develop an *operational* program, *policies and procedures* for the program need to be developed, which must necessarily outline how the *accreditation standards* are to be interpreted and implemented. For example, while the accreditation standards require that an applicant credentialing board operate a credible continued competency (continuing education) program, they do not define or give guidance as to what is acceptable, and what is not. Another critical area to be addressed is how to assess whether the examination and skill assessment component of the applicant certifying body is adequate. The process of developing these *policies and procedures* is currently underway.

### FSAB Program Implementation

Implementation of the FSAB accreditation program depends on final development of the operating process and standards interpretation referred to above. While this progress has started and will continue, the speed at which this can be accomplished will depend on the ability to effectively discuss and resolve difficult issues via electronic communication, and hopefully at face-to-face meetings. However, because most or all of the credentialing boards represented on FSAB have relatively small numbers of certificants, they therefore have very limited fiscal resources. Accreditation of certification boards is vital and urgent, therefore additional financial support is required in order to implement the FSAB program in a timely manner, and to support operation of the program until it is financially viable. Since FSAB has no other source of revenue it will be seeking additional financial support until the program reaches maturity and can be supported fully from accreditation fees. It is hoped that the FSAB accreditation program can be offered within the next 12-24 months.

The AAFS Accreditation and Certification Task Force wishes to thank NIJ for their support of this initiative, and making possible development of the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board program in a much shorter time than would otherwise have been possible.

Graham R. Jones, Ph.D., D-ABFT  
Chair, AAFS Accreditation and Certification Task Force; and  
President, Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board.

Attachments:

FSAB Bylaws; FSAB Accreditation Standards

**Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board**  
(A Non-Profit Corporation)

**BYLAWS**

**1. NAME AND OFFICES**

- 1.1 The name of this corporation shall be Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (the "Board").
- 1.2 The Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board shall exist as a non-profit corporation under the Colorado Non-profit Corporation Act (the "Act").

**2. OBJECTS AND PURPOSES**

- 2.1 The objects and purposes of this corporation shall be as set forth in the corporations Articles of Incorporation (the "Articles").

**3. SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS**

- 3.1 The Board of Directors may, by 2/3 affirmative vote, invite organizations having a legitimate interest in a forensic science or other forensic specialty, to become Sponsoring Organizations.
- 3.2 The principal role of a Sponsoring Organization is endorsement and support of the objectives and purposes of FSAB and recognition of FSAB activities and programs.
- 3.3 All Sponsoring Organizations shall be invited to designate a liaison to FSAB.
- 3.4 A Sponsoring Organization shall not be an organization engaged in forensic certification activities.
- 3.5 The FSAB shall remain independent from any Sponsoring Organization in its decision- making in all matters of accreditation.
- 3.6 A Sponsoring Organization shall not have any obligations for financial support of the Board and shall not, by virtue of its sponsorship, have authority over, liability or responsibility for any FSAB operations or activities.

**4. NOMINATING ORGANIZATIONS**

**4.1 Initial Nominating Organizations**

- 4.1.1 Within one year of the date of incorporation, the initial directors of the Board shall solicit organizations to apply to become Initial Nominating Organizations
- 4.1.2 The initial directors of the Board shall review the applications and designate Initial Nominating Organizations based on the following criteria:
  - 4.1.2.1 The applicant shall be a legally identifiable entity offering certification in a forensic specialty.
  - 4.1.2.2 The certification program shall have the following components:
    - 4.1.2.2.1 Periodic recertification.
    - 4.1.2.2.2 An examination that covers the knowledge base of the relevant forensic

specialty for which certification is offered.

4.1.2.2.3 A credentialing process.

4.1.2.2.4 A code of ethics or reference thereto.

4.1.3 The Board shall require applicants to provide documentation to demonstrate that they fulfill the criteria for Initial Nominating Organizations. When the Board has verified that the applicant meets the criteria, the Board may designate the applicant as an Initial Nominating Organization.

4.1.4 The Board shall have the sole authority to designate or revoke the designation of a certification body as an Initial Nominating Organization.

4.1.5 An Initial Nominating Organization shall name one qualified individual as a regular director of FSAB until such time as Nominating Organizations are designated by the Board.

#### 4.2 Transition to Nominating Organizations

4.2.1 On February 28, 2000:

4.2.1.1 Those Initial Nominating Organizations that are also accredited by the Board shall be designated as Nominating Organizations.

4.2.1.2 The Board shall revoke the designation of Initial Nominating Organization for all certification bodies which are not accredited by the Board.

4.2.1.3 The Board shall not designate any additional Initial Nominating Organizations.

4.2.1.4 Initial Nominating Organizations shall no longer be recognized by the Board and shall have no rights to name or nominate regular directors for the Board.

#### 4.3 Nominating Organizations

4.3.1 When Initial Nominating Organizations are no longer recognized by the Board, the Board shall designate Nominating Organizations.

4.3.1.1 A Nominating Organization shall be a legally identifiable entity offering certification in a forensic specialty which is accredited by the Board.

4.3.2 Nominating Organizations may submit the name of one nominee for regular director of the Board.

4.3.3 The designation or revocation of Nominating Organization status shall be solely at the discretion of the Board.

4.3.4 The designation of Nominating Organization status shall require a majority affirmative vote of the Board.

4.3.5 The revocation of Nominating Organization status shall require a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Board.

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## 5. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The business and property of the corporation shall be managed by the Board.

5.2 The Board shall be comprised of directors whose number shall be not less than five (5) and not more than twenty-five (25).

5.3 There shall be three categories of directors: regular, public and at-large.

### 5.3.1 Regular Directors

5.3.1.1 Regular directors shall be named by Initial Nominating Organizations or elected by the current Board of Directors from qualified nominees submitted by Nominating Organizations.

5.3.1.1.1 When a regular director named by Initial Nominating Organizations leaves the board, the Initial Nominating Organization shall be entitled to name a qualified individual to fill the vacancy until such time as Nominating Organizations are designated by the Board.

5.3.1.1.2 Once Nominating Organizations are designated by the Board, directors shall be elected by the current Board of Directors from qualified nominees submitted by Nominating Organizations.

5.3.1.1.2.1 Each Nominating Organization shall be requested to submit the names of one or more qualified persons for eligible board vacancies at least 15 days prior to a scheduled election.

5.3.1.2 All regular directors shall be certificants of the Initial Nominating Organization or Nominating Organization.

### 5.3.2 Public director

5.3.2.1 There shall be one (1) public director.

5.3.2.1.1 A public director shall not be certified by an Initial Nominating Organization or a Nominating Organization.

5.3.2.1.2 This director may or may not have any forensic experience or qualifications, but will represent public interests as determined by the Board.

5.3.2.1.3 The public director shall be appointed by the President.

### 5.3.3 At-Large Directors

5.3.3.1 There shall be up to five (5) at-large directors.

5.3.3.2 The at-large directors shall be nominated by any member of the Board and elected by the Board.

5.3.3.3 The incorporators of the corporation shall be the Board's initial at-large directors.

5.3.3.4 At least one (1) public director shall be a lawyer with experience and interest in

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forensic evidence.

#### 5.4 Term for Directors

5.4.1 The first full term for directors shall commence at the close of the annual meeting, February 2001.

5.4.2 The full term for each director shall be three years.

5.4.2.1 A director shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms without an intervening period.

5.4.3 The term of a director shall commence at the close of the annual meeting where he or she was elected or appointed.

5.4.4 Vacancies occurring on the Board shall be filled.

5.4.4.1 When a regular director named by an Initial Nominating Organization leaves the board, the Initial Nominating Organization shall be entitled to name a qualified individual to fill the vacancy until such time as Nominating Organizations are designated by the Board.

5.4.4.2 Once Nominating Organizations are designated by the Board, vacancies occurring for regular and at-large directors shall be filled from nominees provided by Nominating Organizations.

5.4.4.2.1 Directors shall be elected by a majority affirmative vote of the Board. Such election may be conducted by mail ballot.

5.4.5 Removal of a director shall require a (2/3) affirmative vote of the current directors.

5.5 The Board shall have at least one regular meeting per year at the call of the President, at a location designated by him or her, within or without the State of Colorado. Notice of the annual meeting shall be given to each Director at least thirty (30) days before the meeting date. An annual meeting may be conducted by electronic conference upon the written consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors.

5.6 Special meetings of the Board may be held at a location designated by the President at any time on call of the President, or of the Executive Committee, or upon the written request of a majority of the directors in office, on a date and at a time and location to be designated by the President, within or without the State of Colorado. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to each director at least fifteen (15) days before the meeting date, with information regarding the subject(s) to be considered. A special meeting may be conducted by electronic conference.

5.7 A quorum at any meeting of the Board shall consist of a majority of the directors, and action by the Board on any matter shall be taken by the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum exists. No director shall be entitled to vote through use of proxy.

5.8 The business at any meeting of the Board shall include the following:

- I. Approval of the minutes
- II. Reports of officers and committees

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- III. Unfinished business
- IV. New business
- V. Adjournment

5.9 Directors shall not receive any compensation for their services as a director.

5.10 There shall be an Executive Committee, a Liaison Committee and such other committees as established by resolution of the Board. The resolution designating such committee shall state the powers of the Board to be assigned to such committee, except that such powers shall not include those that the Act prohibits from being assigned to a committee.

5.10.1 The Executive Committee

5.10.1.1 The Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The President shall serve as the chair.

5.10.1.2 A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its members, and its formal actions shall require a majority vote unless otherwise provided herein.

5.10.1.3 The Executive Committee shall be empowered to act for and on behalf of the Board on matters which require urgent action between meetings of the Board and to accomplish other specifically assigned tasks. Action taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the full Board as soon as practical; shall be subject to review and ratification by the Board; and shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board.

5.10.2 The President shall appoint a Liaison Committee for the purpose of identifying entities representing judicial, prosecutorial, defense and scientific organizations, from whom the President shall solicit liaisons.

5.10.3 Each committee shall consist of two (2) or more persons.

5.10.4 The chair of each committee shall be a director.

5.10.5 The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

5.10.6 The President shall appoint the chair and members of each committee, unless otherwise provided.

5.10.6.1 Unless otherwise provided, the chair and other members of every committee shall serve one (1) year terms and be eligible for reappointment.

5.10.7 Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board or by a committee at a meeting thereof may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all of the directors or all of the committee members, as the case may be, entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof.

## 6. OFFICERS

6.1 The officers of the corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Any two offices may be held by the same person, except no person may be President

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and Vice President at the same time.

6.2 Officers shall be elected by the Board at the annual meeting of the Board, or if deemed necessary by the Board, at a special meeting of the Board. The Board may discharge any officer with or without cause, and shall fix the duties of the officers and any other agents or employees of the corporation.

6.2.1 Officers shall be regular, public or at-large directors.

6.2.2 The term of office for all officers shall be one (1) year.

6.3 Each officer shall hold office from the time of his election until his death, resignation, or removal from office, or until his successor has been duly elected and qualified, except that no officer's term shall exceed six (6) consecutive years. The Board may elect an officer to fill any vacancy in office occurring for any reason for the unexpired portion of the officer's term.

6.4 The President shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation. The President shall preside at meetings of the Board, and shall execute, on behalf of the corporation, such notes, certificates and other instruments of writing as may be directed by the Board. The president is responsible for the supervision of the corporation and its other officers and employees, and shall perform such other duties as are required by the Articles, these Bylaws, and/or the Board. The President may also appoint ad hoc committees as necessary from time to time, and define the duties of such committees.

6.5 In the absence or disability of the President, all the powers of the President will be vested with the Vice President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be required by the President.

6.6 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the custody and control of all funds and valuables of the corporation and shall keep a full and accurate account of all receipts and disbursement. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the deposit of all monies and other valuables in the name of the corporation and to its credit in such depository as may be designated by the Board.

6.7 The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the Board as may be required by the Articles, these Bylaws, the Board or the Act. The Secretary shall prepare and keep the minutes of all meetings as the Board may require, and shall countersign all certificates and official documents requiring the signature of the President. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the corporate seal.

## 7. WAIVER OF NOTICE

7.1 Any Officer or Director may waive in writing any notice required to be given under the Bylaws, either before or after the time for which said notice would be required.

## 8. CORPORATE SEAL

8.1 The corporate seal shall be a circular device bearing the Seal in the center thereof, and the words the "Forensic Specialty Accreditation Board" and "Colorado" around the perimeter thereof.

## 9. AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION AND BYLAWS

9.1 These Bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the directors.

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9.2 The Articles may be amended by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Directors.

10. RULES OF ORDER

10.1 "Roberts Rules of Order - Newly Revised" shall determine parliamentary practice and procedure in all cases to which they apply except where inconsistent with these by-laws or the laws of the State of incorporation.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 2000.

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## Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board

# Standards for Accrediting Forensic Specialty Certification Boards

### 1. Scope

This document outlines the standards to be applied by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board for the accreditation of programs that certify individuals practicing a forensic science or other forensic specialty. The included standards address only the process by which such knowledge, skills and abilities are assessed, documented and maintained.

### 2. References

These materials were used as references during the development of these standards. Inclusion of a reference document, or lack thereof, in the following list is not intended to vest control or authority in those listed, or to suggest lack of importance for those not listed.

- 2.1 ISO Guide 58 (1993)  
*Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems - General requirements for operation and recognition*
- 2.2 Draft ISO/IES 17024 (October 1998)  
*General requirements for certification bodies operating certification of personnel*
- 2.3 ISO Guide 2 (1991)  
*General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and related activities*
- 2.4 Draft ASTM Guide (E36.20 subcommittee on Certification/Registration) (1998)  
*Standard guide for establishing requirements for bodies operating certification systems for personnel*
- 2.5 NCCA Standards (National Commission for Certifying Agencies) (1998)  
*NCCA standards for accreditation of national certification organizations*
- 2.6 CESB Guidelines (Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards) (1991)  
*Guidelines for engineering and related specialty certification programs*

### 3. Definitions

The following definitions are specific to this document:

- 3.1 *accreditation*: The procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks.
- 3.2 *applicant*: A person or body that seeks to obtain a license from a certification body.
- 3.3 *appraiser*: A person who monitors the work of a candidate on the job and conducts the performance appraisal component of the certification system.
- 3.4 *audit*: An assessment against standards.
- 3.5 *candidate*: An applicant eligible who is eligible to take an examination.

- 3.6 *certification body*: Governmental or non-governmental body that administers a certification system and issues licences or certificates of competence.
- 3.7 *certificant*: Person who holds a current and valid certificate of competence.
- 3.8 *credentialing*: The process by which an individual's education, training and work experience is reviewed against a minimum standard.
- 3.9 *continued competency*: The process of ongoing learning, growth and professional development within a field of expertise.
- 3.10 *continuing education*: A formal or informal program of continued learning and growth within an individual's profession.
- 3.11 *examiner*: Person who conducts the performance examination component of a certification system.
- 3.12 *forensic specialty*: A recognized area of expertise which is being applied in a legal context.
- 3.13 *independent*: Having no vested interest in the outcome or the certification/accreditation activity documents.
- 3.14 *proctor*: The person who administers the written examination component of a certification system.
- 3.15 *psychometrics*: Science and technology of mental measurement.
- 3.16 *public member*: Representative of the public at large and consumers of services provided by candidates or certificants, but not an immediate stakeholder or one who derives income directly from stakeholders.
- 3.17 *quality system*: The organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes and resources for implementing quality management.
- 3.18 *reliability (examinations)*: Degree to which an examination provides a consistent measure of competency.
- 3.19 *stakeholders*: All parties with a direct interest in the use of a certification system, including candidates, certificants, employers, authorities and specifying entities.
- 3.20 *validity (examinations)*: Degree to which an examination measures those competencies it is designated to measure.

#### 4. Certification Body

##### 4.1 General Provisions

- 4.1.1 All mechanisms used by the certification body to evaluate the knowledge, skills and abilities of the applicants shall possess the statistical attributes of reliability, validity, and non-discriminatory effect appropriate to their nature and application.

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- 4.1.2 The certification body shall make its programs accessible to all applicants. Certification bodies shall not require membership in any other professional organization for certification; nor shall they impose undue financial requirements for certification.
- 4.1.3 The criteria used to evaluate candidates for certification shall be only those published by the certification body.

## 4.2 Organization

- 4.2.1 The certification body shall be a legally identifiable entity or part of such an entity.
- 4.2.2 The certification body shall be independent and impartial in all matters of certification. All decisions relating to certification shall be the responsibility of the certification body's governing board and shall not be subject to undue influence or approval by another body.
- 4.2.3 The certification body's governing board shall include representatives from all levels of certification issued by the body, as well as at least one public member, as full voting members.
- 4.2.4 The certification body shall use formal procedures for nominating members to its board. The current board members shall not nominate a majority of their successors.
- 4.2.5 The certification body shall have documentation outlining the committees or individuals responsible for each component of each certification program offered.
- 4.2.6 The certification body shall have sufficient financial and human resources to fulfill its mission.
- 4.2.7 The certification body shall ensure that any training or related activities conducted do not compromise the confidentiality, objectivity or impartiality of its certification program.
- 4.2.8 The certification body shall maintain documents and records in a secure manner.
- 4.2.9 The certification body shall have policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints, appeals and disputes.
- 4.2.10 The certification body shall maintain a quality system appropriate for the number of applicants and certificants.

## 4.3 Subcontracting

- 4.3.1 If a subcontractor is used for any purpose, the subcontractor shall have no vested interest or other conflict with the task being performed.

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#### 4.4 Policies and Procedures

- 4.4.1 The certification body shall establish a policies and procedures manual for the administration of its program.
- 4.4.2 The policies and procedures shall be fair, objective and non-discriminatory, and comply with all federal, state, and local laws.
- 4.4.3 The policies and procedures manual shall address inquiries regarding the certification status of an individual.

#### 4.5 Quality System and Management Review

- 4.5.1 The nature and extent of the quality system shall be outlined in a policies and procedures manual. This manual shall include at least the following:
  - 4.5.1.1 A quality policy statement of the management of the certification body.
  - 4.5.1.2 A description of the organizational structure of the certification body, including all positions and committees; and a brief description of the function and responsibilities of each position and committee.
  - 4.5.1.3 The policies and procedures for conducting periodic audits of the certification program.
  - 4.5.1.4 The policies and procedures for the issuance and revocation of certificates or related documents.
  - 4.5.1.5 The policies and procedures for examining and certifying applicants.
  - 4.5.1.6 The policies and procedures for processing appeals, complaints, inquiries, disputes, or information alleging adverse behavior or activities.
- 4.5.2 The quality system shall be the responsibility of a designated individual who reports to the highest level of management of the certification body.
- 4.5.3 The certification body shall conduct a review or audit of its records annually to ensure that they are complete and up to date.

#### 4.6 Available Documentation

- 4.6.1 The certification body shall maintain and make available upon request:
  - 4.6.1.1 A description of the organizational structure and legal status of the organization.
  - 4.6.1.2 A description of the certification programs including rules for granting, maintaining, suspending and revoking certificates.
  - 4.6.1.3 Purpose of the certification program.
  - 4.6.1.4 An outline of the required knowledge, skills and abilities for applicants.

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4.6.1.5 An outline of the examination and certification procedure.

4.6.1.6 A description of restrictions or limitations on the use of the certification body's marks, and on ways of referring to the certificates granted.

4.6.1.7 A directory of certified individuals.

#### 4.7 Examination and Other Records

4.7.1 The certification body shall maintain for an appropriate period of time, records regarding the certification program, applicants and certificants.

4.7.2 The certification body shall maintain the security of examination questions and materials.

4.7.3 The certification body shall also maintain, as appropriate, the following records:

4.7.3.1 Purpose of the examination, including an outline of the job or practice of the target forensic specialty.

4.7.3.2 Examination specifications including:

4.7.3.2.1 Validation procedures.

4.7.3.2.2 Dates offered.

4.7.3.2.3 Outline of content.

4.7.3.2.4 Number and format of questions.

4.7.3.2.5 Time limits.

4.7.3.2.6 Scoring procedures.

4.7.3.2.7 Statistical characteristics.

4.7.3.3 For each examination administration:

4.7.3.3.1 Question content.

4.7.3.3.2 The identify and qualifications of proctor(s), examiner(s), or appraisers.

4.7.3.3.3 Performance statistics for all competency evaluation mechanisms.

4.7.3.3.4 Examinee age, gender, race, occupation, years of professional experience, and employment location.

4.7.3.3.5 Examination outcome.

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#### 4.8. Confidentiality

- 4.8.1 The certification body shall safeguard confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its activities, consistent with applicable laws.
- 4.8.2 Except as described in these standards, information about a particular individual shall not be disclosed to a third party without the written consent of that individual. Where the law requires disclosure, the individual shall be notified of the information provided.

### 5. Certification Standards

#### 5.1 General Provisions

- 5.1.1 Certificates shall be awarded only to applicants who meet or exceed the criteria set by the certification body.
- 5.1.2 These criteria shall include at minimum appropriate credentials, successful examination completion, and agreement to abide by defined ethical and professional standards.
- 5.1.3 The certification body shall require periodic recertification.

#### 5.2 Credentialing

- 5.2.1 Credentialing of applicants shall include an assessment and verification of:
  - 5.2.1.1 Academic education, including specific subject requirements.
  - 5.2.1.2 Relevant professional experience or employment.
  - 5.2.1.3 Other relevant training.
  - 5.2.1.4 Relevant professional licensure, certification, or registration.

#### 5.3 Competency and Examination

- 5.3.1 Competency shall be assessed, at least in part, by a reliable and valid examination of relevant discipline specific knowledge, skills and abilities.
- 5.3.2 The examination shall, at least in part, require the candidate to apply forensic expertise to some set of facts.
- 5.3.3 The examination shall include some written component.
- 5.3.4 Assessment of competency may also include, but is not limited to, proficiency testing, case audits, audit of court testimony, case presentations, appraisals, or an appropriate combination of these methods.
- 5.3.5 The examination shall include some assessment of ethics and professional standards.

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#### **5.4 Ethics and Professional Standards**

- 5.4.1 The application process shall include some inquiry into the applicant's adherence to ethical and professional standards.
- 5.4.2 The certification process shall also require that the candidate agree in writing to abide by the ethical and professional standards identified by the certification body. These standards shall be documented and shall include the disciplinary procedures for any breach thereof.

### **6. Recertification**

#### **6.1 General Requirement**

- 6.1.1 Recertification shall require successful demonstration of continuing competency, continuing education, work experience, and reaffirmation of ethical and professional standards.

#### **6.2 Continuing Competency**

- 6.2.1 A continuing competency program shall consist of one or more measurable components including, but not limited to, ongoing learning, growth and professional development within the certificant's field of expertise.
- 6.2.2 Measurement of continuing competency may include, but is not limited to, proficiency testing, case audits, relevant publication, conducting training, audit of court testimony, case presentations, and appraisals.

#### **6.3 Continuing Education**

- 6.3.1 Recertification shall require documentation of continuing education, the requirements for which shall be defined by the certification body.

#### **6.4 Work Experience**

- 6.4.1 Recertification shall require documentation of continued relevant work experience, the requirements for which shall be defined by the certification body.

#### **6.5 Ethical and Professional Standards**

- 6.5.1 Prior to recertification, certificants shall be provided with current versions of ethical and professional standards identified by the certification body.
- 6.5.2 Recertification shall require certificants to reaffirm in writing that they will continue to adhere to the ethical and professional standards identified by the certification body.

### **7. Competency Evaluation Personnel**

#### **7.1 Training and Instruction**

- 7.1.1 Proctors, examiners and appraisers shall be impartial, trustworthy and

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responsible individuals who have received training or instruction appropriate for the tasks they perform.

## **7.2 Conflicts of Interest**

- 7.2.1 Proctors, examiners and appraisers shall avoid situations that might affect their objectivity, or appear to affect their objectivity, in performing the tasks they are assigned.

## **8. Competency Evaluation Methods**

### **8.1 Examinations**

- 8.1.1 Examinations shall be used to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, skill and ability in a valid and reliable fashion.
- 8.1.2 Examinations shall be revised periodically to maintain their currency.
- 8.1.3 Examinations shall be prepared by individuals who have sufficient knowledge, skill, ability and experience in the target forensic specialty.
- 8.1.4 Examinations shall encompass the knowledge, skill and ability required for competent practice within the target forensic specialty.
- 8.1.5 The methods used for scoring and grading examinations shall be methodologically sound.
- 8.1.6 Reasonable accommodation shall be made for candidates with an identified disability.
- 8.1.7 Examinations shall be administered in an area that provides the environmental and physical conditions, and security generally accepted as necessary for an examination.
- 8.1.8 Candidates who fail an examination shall not be re-examined immediately. The certifying body shall specify a mandatory minimum waiting period between examinations.
- 8.1.9 The certification body shall provide adequate security for examinations and examination questions. If it becomes apparent that integrity of the examination has been compromised, a different examination shall be offered.

### **8.2 Performance Evaluation**

- 8.2.1 Where performance evaluations are used, the same general principles that apply to written examinations shall apply.

## **9. Certificates**

### **9.1 Issuance**

- 9.1.1 Certificates shall be issued upon the successful completion of all requirements of the certification program.

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## 9.2 Contents

9.2.1 The certificate shall include at a minimum:

9.2.1.1 Name of the certification body or program.

9.2.1.2 Name of the certificant.

9.2.1.3 Certificate number.

9.2.1.4 Date issued.

9.2.1.5 Period of validity or expiration date.

9.2.1.6 Forensic specialty covered by the certificate.

## 9.3 Expiration

9.3.1 The certificate shall be valid for a period of no more than five years.

## 10. Changes in Certification Requirements

### 10.1 Notification

10.1.1 The certification body shall give reasonable notice to all certificants (and as practical, other interested parties) of any changes to its certification requirements, the exact nature of the changes, and their effective date.

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February 18, 2001