

**Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) Forensic Science
Service Provider Standards Implementation Survey**

FOUR STANDARD SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate to survey.

On February 4, 2014, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced the formation of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science. The OSAC is a collaborative body of approximately 800 forensic science practitioners and other experts who represent all levels of the government, academia and industry.

NIST established the OSAC to strengthen the nation's use of forensic science by supporting the development and promulgation of consensus built forensic science documentary standards and guidelines. The ultimate objective of the OSAC is to create a sustainable organizational infrastructure that produces consensus built documentary standards and guidelines to improve the quality and consistency of work in the forensic science community.

The OSAC is made up of 29 units, which includes 22 Subcommittees, 7 Scientific Area Committees (SACs), and the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB). In addition to supporting efforts to develop and publish standards, these units also evaluate documentary forensic science standards for placement on the OSAC Registry. The OSAC Registry is a freely available repository of scientifically sound forensic science standards that have been evaluated from a balanced perspective and approved for inclusion by the OSAC FSSB.

The purpose of this data gathering initiative is to collect information relating to the implementation of OSAC Registry standards across the national forensic science landscape. To achieve this goal, forensic science service providers will be asked to voluntarily complete an online questionnaire built using the Qualtrics electronic survey platform. The target audience for completion of this questionnaire are the laboratory directors, quality assurance managers, commanding officers, or designees thereof from forensic laboratories and forensic units throughout the United States. The data collected from this questionnaire is critical for assessing the impact of OSAC efforts, measuring the extent of OSAC Registry standards implementation throughout the United States, and obtaining feedback that can be used to strengthen existing forensic science standards and improve OSAC efforts to better support the national forensic science network.

2. Explain how the survey was developed including consultation with interested parties, pre-testing, and responses to suggestions for improvement.

This current questionnaire has been built from the foundation of previously approved efforts in this area. The earlier, previously approved efforts were initially developed from a survey conducted by the Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) which was modified for use by the OSAC program. The results of the ASCLD survey and subsequent OSAC data collection efforts provided useful information on the extent of forensic standards implementation and areas in which improvements were necessary to produce a stronger, more standardized national forensic science environment.

The production of this current effort leveraged input from previous survey participants via direct communications and webinars, included reviews by the entire NIST OSAC program staff, and included input from members of the OSAC FSSB. Additionally, beta testers from the FSSP community reviewed the questionnaire and provided suggestions for improvements that were evaluated for feasibility and incorporated whenever possible. As part of a continuing improvement process, respondents are asked to provide feedback on the survey process to the OSAC Program Office for future recommendations upon completion.

It should be noted that, as of July 2025, the survey will have been in place a full year. The continuation of this approval is requested to build on the success of its implementation and continue to collect this important data.

3. Explain how the survey will be conducted, how customers will be sampled if fewer than all customers will be surveyed, expected response rate, and actions your agency plans to take to improve the response rate.

The survey will be conducted online using the Qualtrics survey platform. The process will be announced and communicated through the OSAC program network via email lists and the program website. Additional amplification of the data collection process will leverage the program's existing professional relationships with the Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), the Association for Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM), the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE), the International Association for Identification (IAI), the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT), and the Scientific Working Group on Digital Evidence (SWGDE) who can extend the communication reach to their respective members via their respective email lists and communication channels. It should be noted that there is considerable overlap between the memberships of these organizations; therefore, the total number of personnel reached will not be fully cumulative. Additionally, numerous individuals from the same agency are often members of these organizations (e.g., some agencies may have 25 or more employees that are AAFS members).

Through these efforts, a response rate of 30% is expected. To improve and maximize this response rate we will use the communication channels of OSAC, and the professional organizations listed above to announce and reinforce the importance of these efforts through newsletters, websites, and electronic communications. We will also have direct communications

with specific stakeholders to help encourage agencies to participate and offer direct support and guidance. We estimate that approximately 1000 people will be surveyed. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey is targeting laboratory director's, quality assurance managers, and commanding officers from government and private FSSPs and forensic units.

Total burden hours are calculated to be $1000 \text{ (respondents)} * 30 \text{ (minutes)} / 60 \text{ (minutes in an hour)} = 500 \text{ hours}$.

4. Describe how the results of the survey will be analyzed and used to generalize the results to the entire customer population.

The results of the survey will be analyzed by an OSAC program manager with the intended product being a combined report on the current state of implementation based upon survey respondents. The responses will be anonymized and visualized using charts and graphs to report the overall implementation status of all the standards on the OSAC Registry. This will be a yearly snapshot of the implementation of OSAC standards across forensic laboratories and the results will be compared on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis to determine effectiveness of implementation.