



THE FQS UPDATE



Welcome to "THE FQS UPDATE"

We have a very "accreditation oriented" newsletter this quarter. While the invitation is always out to our readers to provide us with "quality" articles for publication, we are also interested in your **ideas** for articles, whether or not you are able to provide the written text. Pat Wojtowicz, Manager of Accreditations,

New and revised FQS-I documents

The following are new and/or revised documents recently authorized for use by FQS-I. The documents are posted on the FQS web site at www.forquality.org. This list does not include documents that were revised in early 2008 where the only revision was the removal of the previous FQS-I address and telephone numbers.

Revision-General Requirements for Accreditation (GRA): Version 2008/2: Move fee discussion to Section 1.2.2; add information in 1.2.3 regarding consideration of requirements of regulators when expanding programs; expand scope discussion to reference conformance with the ILAC MRA; remove "FRA-2" designation from the FBI DNA QAS audit document, add a separate section for discussion of this standards document; change application process for new applicants to include document review prior to setting dates for on-site assessment; add requirement to correlate DNA QAS findings to an ISO 17025 or FRA-1 requirement and its effect on the assessment reports; add requirement for an opening meeting during on-site assessment; clarify surveillance types and when each will be used

Revision—Policy on claims of accreditation (FRAP-5). Version 2008/2: Examples of the FQS-I logo and accreditation symbol added; Section 2—accredited organizations prohibited from providing the symbol to external parties except to facilitate advertising and publicity that conforms with all requirements of this policy; additional steps added to clarify requirements for the use of the accreditation symbol or claims of accreditation in reports; more detailed policy information in all sections; added Section 8 on Quality Management System statement.

New—Policy on cross-frontier accreditation (FRAP-8)—Version 2008/1: This document describes FQS-I policy in situations where FQS-I accreditation is sought by a testing agency based outside of the United States.

New—Form to request FQS-I assessor checklists—Form to request electronic copies of the FQS-I of assessor checklists that contain language from ISO 17025. Requestors must certify that they have an official copy of the ISO/IEC 17025 Standard.

Retired—FRA-2—FQS-I has removed its FQS-I identifier from the "Quality Assurance Audit for Forensic DNA and Convicted Offender DNA Databasing Laboratories." DNA audits will now be done with the source DNA audit document.

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FQS calendar of activities

July 21, 2008: "ISO Without Tears" mini-workshop, to be presented by FQS-I Mgr. of Accreditations Pat Wojtowicz, IAFA Meeting, New Orleans, LA

October 27-29, 2008: "ISO Without Tears", FQS Workshop, Clearwater, FL

Proper claims of FQS-I accreditation

by Pat Wojtowicz, FQS-I Manager of Accreditations

Accreditation provides formal recognition that a testing or calibration laboratory is capable of meeting certain standards. These are standards of quality, performance, technical expertise and competence. Misuse of claims of accreditation status by any organization could significantly undermine the credibility of the whole international accreditation process and the value of accreditation for accredited agencies.

As an accrediting body, FQS-I must comply with an International Standard for the operation of accreditation bodies, ISO/IEC 17011. ISO/IEC 17011 clause 8.3 requires an accreditation body to have a policy governing the use and protection of its accreditation symbols and reference to accreditation by its accredited organizations. The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) has published a document (ILAC P8: 07/2006) that provides supplementary requirements as well as guidelines for the use of accreditation symbols and for claims of accreditation status in the context of the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). FQS-I is in the process of seeking to become a member of the ILAC MRA through the evaluation of its accreditation program by the InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and, therefore, must comply with all ILAC supplemental requirements.

The complete FQS-I policy on claims of accreditation is "FRAP-5: Use of Accreditation Symbols and Claims of Accreditation." The policy is too lengthy to be repeated here, but is available from the FQS web site (www.forquality.org). The policy contains general requirements for claims of accreditation, a discussion of "the FQS-I accreditation symbol" versus "The FQS-I logo", reproduction of the accreditation symbol, claims of accreditation on reports, sub-contracted activities, advertising and publicity, claims of accreditation where FQS-I has agreements with other accreditation bodies, and misuse of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or other claims of accreditation.

The claim of FQS-I accreditation is voluntary; however, FQS-I accredited organizations are encouraged to promote their accreditation by using the FQS-I accreditation symbol.

The FQS-I accreditation symbol is not to be confused with the FQS-I logo. The "FQS-I logo" may be used only by FQS-I. FQS-I accredited organizations may use the "FQS-I Accreditation Sym-

bol" and/or make narrative reference to their FQS-I accreditation, but may not use the FQS-I logo in those references.



FQS-I Accreditation Symbol



FQS-I Logo

The FQS-I Accreditation Symbol is available as an electronic image upon request to FQS-I by an FQS-I accredited organization.

FQS-I accredited agencies are required to comply with all FQS-I policies, including FRAP-5, as a condition of their accreditation. FQS-I occasionally conducts activities such as internet web site searches to determine whether inappropriate claims of accreditation exist, either by FQS-I accredited agencies or non-accredited bodies. Accredited organizations or others are encouraged to advise FQS-I when they discover violations of FRAP-5.

FQS-I notifies organizations in writing that are found to be in violation of FRAP-5. The subsequent actions taken by FQS-I depend upon whether or not the organization is FQS-I accredited, the seriousness of the violation, and the response of the organization when notified by FQS-I of the violation.

The integrity of accreditation as a conformity assessment tool depends on FQS-I and its accredited laboratories taking joint responsibility for the proper use of accreditation status and of accreditation symbols, and for improving the reputation and value of accreditation for the benefit of all accredited organizations, their customers, and other users of the test results.

Don't "mix up" these ISO 17025 concepts

Internal Audit and Management Review. Internal audits are the self-evaluation process used by a laboratory to verify the laboratory's conformance with the management system it has put in place and that the management system continues to conform with the requirements of ISO 17025. Internal audits provide evidence that the laboratory is "doing things right."

Management review is a broader and higher level look at the effectiveness of the management system. Management review must be conducted by "top management" and is an evaluation to determine whether the laboratory is "doing the right things" Many different types of information must be considered during management review, including—but not limited to—the results of internal audits, customer feedback, and corrective actions. The list of required factors is listed in clause 4.15.1 and 4.2.2.

Documents and Records. A document is anything that defines and describes the operations in the management system. This includes written policies and procedures, regulations, standards, instruction manuals, and so on. A laboratory's management system documents can be either internally generated or from external sources.

A record provides evidence of activities that have been carried out in conformance with the requirements of a laboratory's management system. Technical records include, for example, case notes, worksheets, and instrument maintenance logs. Quality records include such things as internal audit reports, management review reports, and corrective action reviews.

Confusion between what is a "document" and what is a "record" may stem in part from the common use of the word "documentation" to describe records.

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Forensic Quality Services (FQS) provides a range of organizational assistance and training/education services to support Forensic Science delivery.

Forensic Quality Services-International (FQS-I) is the country's longest established provider of ISO 17025 accreditation to forensic testing agencies in the U.S. It is one of the accrediting bodies recognized by the NDIS Procedures Board and the only one that has successfully completed the rigorous scrutiny of operations required for recognition by the National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA).

Achievements in accreditation

Congratulations to the following agencies that achieved FQS-I ISO 17025 accreditation, reaccreditation, or expansion of scope of accreditation in the 2nd quarter of 2008:

Georgia Bureau of Investigation—8 laboratories (reaccreditation)

Orchid Cellmark—Nashville (reaccreditation)

Bode Technology (reaccreditation)

Delaware Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (reaccreditation)



Submit an article to “the fqs update”

“The FQS Update” is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December by Forensic Quality Services.

FQS welcomes submissions to this newsletter and will evaluate all such submissions with regard to their general interest to the readership. FQS reserves the right to edit submissions for length and editorial correctness. **Deadlines for submissions are March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.** Please send your submissions to pcw@forquality.org

Rates for ad space are as follows:

One-eighth page: \$75/issue, \$200/yr (4 issues)

One-quarter page: \$100/issue, \$300/yr (4 issues)

One-half page: \$125/issue, \$400/yr (4 issues)

Ads should be in an electronic format such as jpeg. Color or black-and-white are acceptable.

Submissions should be sent to pcw@forquality.org