



## Forensic Quality Services- International

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### FQS-I ISO Accreditation Pricing Guidelines

**ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENTS** – Accreditation assessments are conducted by the FQS-I business unit within Forensic Quality Services. Assessments are performed as described in the FQS-I “General Requirements for Accreditation” (GRA) against the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, FQS-I program policies (FRAP publications), and applicable FQS-I supplemental requirements documents.

The FQS-I accreditation cycle is flexible. The recommended duration of accreditation is two years, but a different period is possible, with a maximum of five years. However, in all cases there must be sufficiently rigorous surveillance to ensure that conformance to standards is maintained.

**SURVEILLANCE** - Continued conformance with accreditation standards is monitored on an annual basis. Where accreditation cycles are two years, surveillance at the mid-point of the cycle is generally achieved through a review at FQS-I of the agency’s proficiency test results, internal and external audit reports, and other selected records that encompass a period of time subsequent to the on-site accreditation assessment. An on-site surveillance audit may be required if FQS-I believes that a records review is insufficient to verify an agency’s continuing adherence to the applicable accreditation standards; for example, at newly accredited agencies where the assessment results indicated that the management system is continuing to mature and stabilize.

Where an accreditation cycle of more than two years is agreed with the customer, surveillance is accomplished with on-site audits or a combination of on-site audits and the FQS-I “office surveillance”. The interval between on-site audits (whether full assessment or surveillance) may not exceed two years.

Maintenance of accreditation for agencies conducting DNA analysis for which the agreed cycle of accreditation is more than two years is conditional upon the agency’s continued conformance with the FRA-2 audit requirements.

**EXTENSION OF SCOPE** – Accredited agencies may request a scope extension (additions to the current scope). If the additional capabilities requested are not a departure from the laboratory’s current activities or are compatible in technique to techniques witnessed at the assessment or reassessment visit, a review of technical documents submitted to FQS-I may provide sufficient evidence upon which to extend the scope. If the requested capabilities represent a change in activity, an on-site visit will be needed. This can be part of a scheduled reassessment or surveillance visit, or interim to scheduled visits.

**FEES** – Annual fees and the costs of accreditation assessments, surveillance, and extension of scope audits, whether conducted on-site at the agency or in the FQS-I office, shall be met by the agency.

**Full assessment fees.** The on-site assessment fee depends upon the size of the agency and the scope of accreditation sought, as this has a direct impact upon the number of “assessor days” required to perform an assessment, including provision for travel time. An initial assessment for a small (<15 staff) agency with one major testing area would generally require two-three days on-site with a team consisting of a lead assessor and a technical assessor. Additional assessors and/or days on-site will be needed for agencies with multiple testing areas in their scope, large staff sizes, or complex operations within a major testing area (e.g., DNA agencies that perform testing in multiple sub-categories, e.g., casework, databasing, and relationship testing, or that utilize a wide variety of analytical techniques or platforms.)

The assessment fee covers assessor preparation for the assessment, on-site assessment, preparation of the assessment report(s), and post-assessment evaluation of corrective actions. In some cases, where a large number of non-conformities or complex non-conformities require more than eight (8) hours of assessor time to review and resolve the corrective actions, an additional fee will be charged.

Item	Fee
Application	\$1000.00 (non-refundable)
Assessment Fee	Contact Manager of Accreditations. The Assessment Fee will depend upon the number of assessors needed and the length of the assessment.
Assessor Travel	Billed at cost
Excess corrective action review	\$750/day; billable in ½ day increments

**Surveillance fees.** On-site surveillance audits have a more limited scope than a full assessment or reassessment, thereby requiring less “assessor days” and resulting in a commensurate decrease in fees. The fees for surveillance conducted via document review in the FQS-I office are dependent upon the size of the agency.

Item/Activity	Fee
FQS-I Office Review of Surveillance Report	<p>≤ 15 technical staff = \$500            &gt;15 technical staff = \$750</p> <p>The per site costs within a multi-site system operating under a centralized management system will be \$500/site, regardless of staff size at the individual sites.</p>
On-site Surveillance Visit	Contact Manager of Accreditations. The Assessment Fee will depend upon the number of assessors needed and the length of the assessment. Assessor travel is billed at cost.

**Extension of scope fees.** The fee for an on-site visit will vary depending upon the change in scope sought and the size of the area(s) of testing subject to evaluation. The fee for extension of scope conducted via the review of technical documents submitted to the FQS-I office will depend upon the complexity of the documents and whether the services of a technical assessor are required for the review. Contact the FQS-I Manager of Accreditations for an estimate.

**Annual fees.** There is no annual fee for the first year of an accreditation cycle (whether for initial accreditation or reaccreditation); however, an annual fee is required to maintain accreditation for each subsequent year of an accreditation cycle. Every year on the accreditation anniversary date, accredited laboratories will be charged the applicable annual fees for the upcoming year, according to the fee schedule in the table below. The annual fee will be included on an invoice with the applicable fee for surveillance activities. The annual fees apply to ongoing operation and maintenance costs related to the delivery of accreditation services including:

- Maintenance and development of infrastructure in support of accreditation
- Attainment and maintenance of Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs)
- Training and recruitment of assessors
- Overhead and administrative costs

Agency Type	Fee
Single laboratory with $\leq$ 15 technical staff	\$500.00
Single laboratory with >15 technical staff	\$1000.00
Laboratory systems operating under a centralized management system	\$500 for sites with $\leq$ 15 technical staff \$750.00 for sites with >15 technical staff

**Other fees.**

Accredited agencies may request a representative of FQS-I to attend a ceremony at which the accreditation certificate is awarded. The agency will be invoiced for the representative's travel costs.

A pre-assessment visit by an assessment team member to an applicant agency may be suggested by FQS-I or requested by the applicant agency. Contact FQS-I for pricing.

On-site, limited scope assessments may occasionally be needed to verify implementation of corrective actions from an assessment or in response to complaints about an accredited agency. Pricing will be calculated prior to any such on-site visit.