



Forensic Quality Services – International

Forensic Requirements for Accreditation

FRA 6--Forensic Requirements for Agencies that Perform Digital and Multimedia Evidence Testing

REVISION LOG

Version	Issued	Changes
2007/1	June 5, 2007	Original document
2008/1	January 24, 2008	Delete FQS-I address and phone numbers

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide amplification for the application of ISO/IEC 17025 and FQS-I's FRA-1 with regard to digital and multimedia evidence examination.

The document was developed by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of three (3) subject matter experts and two (2) representatives of FQS-I.

The TAC developed the material in the context of a program directed to public and private sector agencies whose personnel perform digital and multimedia evidence examination, either as their sole responsibility or as part of broader testing responsibilities.

4.5 and 5.10.6 Subcontracting

An agency may use the services of an outside party to perform aspects of digital and multimedia examination, but the agency must exercise caution in how the test results are reported so that accreditation is not incorrectly inferred for the tests in question.

The requirements of the International Standard regarding subcontractors apply when work that falls within the agency's Scope of Accreditation is performed by outside parties and is included in the agency's own test report. However, an agency is not responsible for the content of test reports issued directly by the outside party.

5.2.5 Personnel

In circumstances where examiners attend classes, seminars or conferences to learn new analytical techniques, agencies shall take measures to assure themselves of the competency of the examiners prior to authorizing them to apply these techniques to case work.

5.3.4 a) (FRA-1) Access Control and Evidence Integrity

Much of the work in digital and multimedia evidence examination can be conducted at the examiner's desk. Any area where there is evidence being actively worked or where evidence is kept to permit ready access for examination is considered to be an operational area. Access to the area or to the evidence must be controlled such that evidence cannot be lost or compromised. This may be achieved by restricted access to the whole area – for example, a laboratory; by providing secure local storage with restricted access - for example, locked filing cabinets at the examiner's desk; and/or by protection of equipment used in examination- for example, an auto-locking password-protected computer.

5.4.5.1 Validation of Methods

Because of the rapidly changing nature of technology, an agency's existing, validated methods may be ineffective for the examination of some digital and multimedia evidence

encountered in casework. The agency shall have a protocol to describe its general approach to the examination of unusual or unique evidence that may require the use of previously untested methods.

- Where time permits, the method validation requirements of the International Standard and FRA-1 apply.
- In extraordinary cases, where evidence might be compromised if analysis is not attempted in a timely fashion, methods may be employed without prior performance verification if the examiner uses due caution to maintain the integrity of the evidence. The circumstances of the case and the analytical processes employed must be fully documented. The agency may not claim accredited status for test results obtained through the use of non-validated procedures.

5.4.7.2 a) Validation of Computer Software

Specialized commercial off-the-shelf software and software developed under contract for the agency by a third party must be validated/verified prior to use on evidence.

5.5 Equipment

Work stations employed for digital and multimedia evidence examination should not be used for non-compatible functions.

5.5.1 Use of non-agency equipment

An agency that uses equipment owned and maintained by second agency must conduct and document performance verification of the equipment prior to its use on evidence.

5.9.1 and FQS-I FRAP-2 Proficiency Testing

Each examiner trained to competency must successfully complete annually at least one suitable proficiency test. A suitable proficiency test is one that meets the requirements of ISO Guide 43 or is approved by FQS-I.

Sub-categories of testing include:

- Computer Forensics
- Forensic Audio
- Image Analysis
- Video Analysis

Assessors shall evaluate the adequacy of the proficiency test performance of an agency in light of its overall quality assurance procedures and performance. These shall include internal procedures for competency monitoring and the effectiveness of corrective action policies and procedures.