



# **Forensic Quality Services – International**

## **Forensic Requirements for Accreditation**

### **FQS-I Policy Based on Guidance Documents**

#### **FRAP-1: Control of Records**

## REVISION LOG

Version	Issued	Changes
May 2004	May 2004	Initial document with FQS-I references
2006/1	June 26, 2006	Formatting changes; clause number change for consistency with FRA-1; remove NFSTC logo from footer
2006/2	November 6, 2006	Add language under FRA-1 4.13.2.1 to discuss the use of permanent media as a way to ensure the integrity of records.
2008/1	January 24, 2008	Deleted FQS-I address and phone numbers from cover sheet

## Control of records

### FRA-1 4.13.2.1

a) The forensic science laboratory should have documented procedures to ensure that it maintains a coordinated record relating to each case under investigation. The information that is to be included in case records should be documented and may include records of telephone conversations, evidence receipts, descriptions of evidence packaging and seals, subpoenas, records of observations and test/examination results, reference to procedures used, diagrams, print-outs, autoradiographs, photographs, etc. In general, the records required to support conclusions should be such that in the absence of the analyst/examiner, another competent analyst/examiner could evaluate what had been performed and interpret the data.

*Guidance: It is for the laboratory to set its own procedures on what is to be included. However, assessors will expect that the procedures reflect generally accepted practices, and will pay particular attention to the requirement that another competent analyst could evaluate what has been done and interpret the data.*

*One way to ensure the long-term integrity of the records is to use “permanent” media when creating the required documentation. For handwritten notes this means using ink to record the data. Under limited circumstances, such as recording rough sketches at a crime scene, it may be appropriate to use a weather-resistant medium such as pencil; however, for the permanent record the notes should be transferred to a tamper-proof final version, for example, by a computerized drawing or by scanning the pencil notes.*

b) Where instrumental analyses are conducted, operating parameters should be recorded.

*Guidance: The parameters may be recorded in notes, instrument print outs or in the instrument data base.*

c) Where appropriate, observations or test results should be preserved by photography or electronic scanning (e.g., electrophoretic runs, physical matches). Photocopies, tracings or hand-drawn facsimiles may also be suitable (eg thin-layer chromatography results, questioned documents).

*Guidance: This clause should be interpreted in the light of the guidance to clause a) above.*

f) Each page of every document in the case record should be traceable to the analyst/examiner and where appropriate, to a uniquely identified case or evidence. It should be clear from the case record who has performed all stages of the analysis/examination and when each stage of the analysis/examination was performed

(eg relevant date(s)).

*Guidance: The objective of this clause is to establish accountability for test results. Assessors must be satisfied that the records provided a reasonable basis to associate testing and personnel involved. A record in the form of a bound book satisfies this if the work in the book, or an identified section within it, shows the identity of the case, the Evidence, and the examiner(s) to which the records refers. A more detailed accountability may be required in the case of loose leaf records.*

g) Laboratory generated examination records should be paginated using a page numbering system which indicates the total number of pages.

*Guidance: The objective is to assure the integrity of the examination records. The requirement for indicating total number of pages can be satisfied in many ways, for example, by a statement that the record consists of "X" pages. Such a statement may be an effective way of satisfying the requirement for records in the form of a bound book and for records where there may be additional work conducted at a later date.*