



## **Forensic Quality Services - International**

### **Forensic Requirements for Accreditation Policy**

#### **FRAP-5 Use of Accreditation Symbols and Claims of Accreditation**

***FQS-I Policy Based on ILAC-P8:07/2006, Supplementary  
Requirements and Guidelines for the Use of Accreditation Symbols and for  
Claims of Accreditation Status by Accredited Laboratories***

## REVISION LOG

Version	Issued	Changes
May 2004	May 2004	First issue of document
2006/1	June 27, 2006	Added revision log; updated document footers; change term “logo” to “accreditation symbol” throughout the document for conformance with ISO 17011; changed document number to FRAP-“5” for conformance with other FQS-I policy documents
2008/1	January 24, 2008	Deleted contact information from cover sheet.
2008/2	May 31, 2008	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.

## **Introduction**

The use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol by FQS-I-accredited organizations 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. Accredited organizations may use the "FQS-I Accreditation Symbol" and/or make narrative reference to their FQS-I accreditation, but may not use the FQS-I logo in those references.



**The FQS-I Accreditation Symbol**



**The FQS-I Logo**

The following requirements pertain to the use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol and claims of FQS-I accreditation.

### **1. General Requirements :**

- a) The accreditation symbol shall not be used by an organization's non-accredited subcontractor;
- b) The accreditation symbol shall not be used by applicants for accreditation;
- c) The accreditation symbol may be used by an accredited organization only under the name and location in which it holds accreditation and for the activities that come under the organization's scope of accreditation;
- d) The FQS-I accreditation symbol shall not be placed on the products or items which an organization has tested or intends to test;
- e) It is the responsibility of the accredited organization to communicate the requirements of this policy to the corporate/marketing representatives within its organization.

### **2. Reproduction of Accreditation Symbols**

- a) The FQS-I accreditation symbol is available upon request to FQS-I-accredited organizations. It is provided to requestors as an electronic graphic image. The proportion, shape, and form of the symbol must be maintained by the accredited organization in any printed or electronic reproduction of the symbol. There are no restrictions on the size and color of reproductions.

b) An accredited organization shall not provide a copy of the FQS-I accreditation symbol to any party external to the accredited organization except to facilitate advertising and public relations activities. See Section 6 for requirements related to claims of accreditation in advertising and publicity.

### 3. Use of the FQS-I Accreditation Symbol on Reports

a) When used to endorse reports, the FQS-I accreditation symbol must always be accompanied by the organization's FQS-I certificate number as shown below:



Certificate #XX-FQS-I-XX

b) The FQS-I accreditation symbol may be used on reports that contain results, opinions, and/or interpretations exclusively from the accredited organization and that fall within the organization's scope of accreditation.

c) The FQS-I accreditation symbol may be used on reports that contain both accredited and non-accredited results of the accredited organization; however, the non-accredited results must be clearly identified. This can be done, for example, by placing an asterisk after each non-accredited test result and including a statement in the body of the report or in a footnote such as: *"The test result is not covered by our current FQS-I accreditation."*

d) An endorsed report that includes statements of opinion and interpretations outside the scope of accreditation must include a disclaimer close to the expression of opinion, such as *"The opinion/interpretation expressed is outside the scope of this organization's FQS-I accreditation."*

**Note.** It is preferable to express opinions and interpretations which are outside the scope of accreditation on a separate letter which is not part of the endorsed report and which does not carry the accreditation symbol.

e) The FQS-I accreditation symbol must not be used on reports where none of the results, opinions, or interpretations are from activities within the organization's scope of accreditation.

f) The use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or other claim of accredited status on reports issued by an accredited organization is permitted only for reports signed by laboratory-authorized signatories that encompass activities within the scope of the accreditation;

- the use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or other claim of accredited status on reports in the absence of authorized signatories is prohibited.

g) There must be nothing in the reports or any attachments or other materials that implies, or may lead any user of the results or any interested party to believe, that the work is covered by the scope of accreditation when it is not.

#### **4. Subcontracted Activities**

An accredited organization is permitted to include the results of subcontracted activities in its report endorsed with the FQS-I accreditation symbol subject to the following provisions:

- a) The accredited organization takes full responsibility for the subcontracted tests and, unless it is an accredited branch of the same organization, has informed the customer in writing of the proposed subcontracting, and has obtained prior approval;
- b) Approval has been obtained from the subcontractor for the accredited organization to report excerpts from the subcontractor's report;
- c) The subcontractor is accredited by FQS-I or an accrediting body recognized as competent by FQS-I (for example, a member of the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement) for the specific tests concerned, and the results have been included in the subcontracting organization's endorsed test report;
- d) Subcontracted test results incorporated into the endorsed report are clearly identified. If the subcontractor is not accredited for the specific tests and the results have been included in the accredited organization's report, the statement that identifies the subcontractor's results must also clearly indicate that the results are outside the accredited organization's scope of accreditation.
- e) When all tests were conducted by a subcontractor which was not accredited, i.e., the accredited organization did not do any of the work, the FQS-I accreditation symbol shall not be used on any reports issued by the accredited organization. Furthermore, stationery relating to the report shall not include any reference to, or implication of, its accreditation.

#### **5. Advertising and publicity**

Accredited laboratories and their parent companies may wish to incorporate in publicity and/or advertising material statements concerning their FQS-I accreditation, with or without an accreditation symbol. Materials may include, for example, brochures and organization publications, technical literature, business reports; web sites; and quotations or proposals for work.

- a) The accreditation claim must be related only to the activity which is covered by the scope of accreditation, and not with any other activities in which the organization or its parent organization may be involved.
- b) Accreditation is site-specific. The accreditation claim shall be clearly related only to the specific accredited location that is covered under the FQS-I certificate and scope of accreditation;
- c) In proposals or quotations, the accredited organization must distinguish activities that are covered by the scope of accreditation from those that are not.

- d) An accreditation symbol or accreditation claim may not be affixed to a material, item, or product (or any related part, including packaging) or used to imply that an item or product has been certified;
- e) If the FQS-I accreditation symbol is included in literature relating to a product, the symbol must appear directly adjacent to the reference to the accredited organization and it must be clearly stated that inclusion of the symbol does not imply certification of the product.
- f) The FQS-I accreditation body symbol or accreditation claim may not be used in any manner which gives the impression that FQS-I accepts responsibility for test results, or for any opinion or interpretation derived from those results, or that FQS-I approves a tested product or item;
- g) Corporate stationary that contains the FQS-I accreditation symbol must not be used for work proposals or quotes, or for reporting test results that are exclusively outside the scope of the accreditation, or for certifying a product or item.
- h) The FQS-I accreditation symbol shall not be used on business cards in a manner that might imply personnel certification.

## **6. Agreements with Other Accreditation Bodies**

Where FQS-I has a recognition agreement with another accreditation body, the organizations accredited by that AB may not claim FQS-I accreditation on their reports or in other materials unless specifically permitted by the agreement. Similarly, reports and other materials issued by FQS-I accredited organizations may not contain claims of accreditation by the another accreditation body unless allowed by the agreement between FQS-I and the other AB.

## **7. Misuse of the FQS-I Accreditation Symbol or Claims of Accreditation Status**

- a) An organization has the ethical responsibility to accurately describe their accredited status and scope of accreditation in all reports or other materials. Misuse of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or accreditation status by anyone is treated seriously. It could significantly undermine the credibility of the whole international conformity assessment process.
- b) FQS-I occasionally conducts activities, such as internet web site searches, to determine whether inappropriate claims of accreditation exist. Accredited organizations or others are encouraged to advise FQS-I when they discover violations of FRAP-5.
- c) 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.
- FQS-I may impose sanctions on an accredited organization that fails to come into compliance with this policy after notification. Sanctions could include suspension, withdrawal, or termination of an organization's accreditation. Organizations whose

accreditations have been suspended, withdrawn, or terminated must discontinue immediately the use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or any reference to accreditation status in reports, web sites, promotional material, stationery, etc.

- In some situations, particularly those where misuse is by an organization that is not accredited, legal sanctions under copyright or fair trading or other laws of the land may be necessary.

d) Accredited organizations that are uncertain about the appropriate use of the FQS-I accreditation symbol or claims of FQS-I accreditation should submit the intended uses of the symbol or claims of accreditation to FQS-I for advance review.

## **8. Conclusion**

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.