5.2 Training and Qualifications of Personnel

5.2.1 New Employees

Employees new to the Forensic Science Division shall be properly oriented utilizing the FS-32, New Employee Onboarding Checklist and the Onboarding the New Employee manual.

5.2.2 Training Programs

All newly assigned personnel shall undergo a documented training program to assure they are adequately trained. The extent of the initial training period is dependent upon the individual's documented previous work experience, educational background, and level of competence. The goal of the training program is to develop an individual who is qualified to perform all tasks, testing activities, and expression of results and opinions to the extent necessary based on job function.

The laboratory shall have written training programs in the following disciplines:

- Biology
- Bloodstain Pattern Analysis
- Crime Scenes
- Seized Drugs (Controlled Substances)
- Document Examination
- Firearms/Toolmarks
- Fire Debris and Explosives
- Footwear and Tire
- Friction Ridge (Latent Prints)
- Materials (Trace)
- Toxicology

5.2.2.1 Technical Leader

Each Technical Leader is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a training program for his/her discipline. This training program will be published as the discipline training manual and will be made available to each examiner in the discipline. The program will be developed based upon the job requirements relating to skills, knowledge, and levels of competency required for satisfactory job performance. The program will include mechanisms for documenting all training received.

Each discipline training program, to the extent necessary based on job function, shall include:

- the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work;
- the process of sampling and use of sampling plans, as applicable; and
- criteria for acceptable performance.

Training in the general knowledge of forensic science and the application of ethical practices in forensic science are detailed in the new employee onboarding program.

Training in criminal law, civil law and testimony will be provided through an annual Expert Witness Testimony training event conducted by Forensic Science Division representatives.

The Forensic Science Division offers training to familiarize personnel with public speaking, offering testimony, and court procedures. This training is generally offered on an annual basis and all personnel who perform laboratory activities are required to complete the applicable course(s), with limited exceptions. The relevant testimony course(s) are independent of the discipline training programs, and casework competence and authorization may be certified prior to completion of the FSD Witness Testimony course(s).

- Forensic Technician trainees shall complete a Technician Witness Testimony training course offered by FSD and based upon the extent of their laboratory activities and roles. Previous testimony training and/or experience may substitute for FSD Technician Witness training on a case by case basis.

- Forensic Scientist trainees, their enlisted counterparts, and any other personnel who will authorize results and opinions in a Laboratory Report shall complete an Expert Witness Testimony training course offered by FSD that is specifically designed for staff members who will provide expert testimony.

- Personnel who promote from a technician role to a scientist role who previously completed the FSD Technician Witness Testimony training shall complete the FSD Expert Witness Testimony training course as part of the Forensic Scientist training program.

- Forensic Scientists (and their enlisted counterparts) who train in an additional discipline must complete all elements for competency in the additional discipline, including testimony. Laboratory staff members participating in Crime Scene Response (CSRT) do not need to complete an additional expert witness course if they have already completed a course specific to their primary discipline. It is not required to re-attend the classroom portion of the FSD Expert Witness course in this instance, but the opportunity for moot court in the training courtroom may be available upon arrangement during an Expert Witness Testimony course.

Provisions for maintenance of skills and expertise are detailed in LOM 5.1 Personnel Development Program, 5.3 Professional Meetings and Training Events, 5.4 Membership in Professional Organizations, and 5.6 Annual Unit Meetings.

Provisions for retraining shall be handled on an individual basis as designed and authorized by the applicable Technical Leader and Quality Assurance Manager.

5.2.2.2 Oversight

The Unit Supervisor, or other individual as agreed upon between the Laboratory Director and Technical Leader, will serve as the trainer and is responsible for ensuring the trainee follows the required training program(s). A Trainee Status and Update workflow shall be initiated by the Unit Supervisor for each trainee per discipline for which they are in a training program. Following initiation of the workflow, it is advanced by the Unit Supervisor to the corresponding Laboratory Director for their approval. The workflow is advanced to the Technical Leader for development of the training plan and scheduling of routine updates. Workflow updates shall be at least monthly and maintained within the workflow instance.

The frequency of the workflow updates shall be increased (e.g. biweekly) in the following circumstances:

1. When the trainee is experiencing difficulty with an aspect of the training, or is not performing to accepted standards.
2. At the request of the Unit Supervisor, Laboratory Director, Technical Leader, or at the discretion of the trainer.
3. When the trainee is accomplishing a high volume of training work and it provides clarity to break the volume of work into multiple, smaller updates for record-keeping purposes.

The update should describe (at a minimum) training objectives that were pursued or completed, external training received, time spent on ancillary duties, time away from the worksite, and any difficulties, problems, or issues encountered in the prior reporting period. Each employee is responsible for maintaining records of their own training for the duration of their employment with FSD. Prior to leaving FSD, each employee may create a copy of their training materials with the original training materials maintained at the laboratory.

The Technical Leader then advances the workflow to a closed status whereby it will expire back to the Unit Supervisor for an update based upon the defined schedule provided by the Technical Leader. The Unit Supervisor shall provide the update in the workflow and advance the workflow instance back to the Technical Leader for a quality assurance review. This cycle shall continue until the trainee has completed the training program. Reports shall be generated monthly for the Laboratory Director and Technical Leader. The reports shall detail those individuals that are in training either in a laboratory or discipline and include all relevant updates over the course of their training program.

5.2.2.3 Trained to Competency and Authorization to Conduct Casework

A competency test shall be satisfactorily completed by achieving the intended results prior to performing testing on a test item or performing specific tasks that create items that could be used for testing. Failure to satisfactorily complete a competency test shall require review and/or retraining and may result in the potential separation from the position.

Documentation of competency and subsequent casework authorization shall be completed using the FSD Competency and Authorization workflow. The workflow may be initiated by the Unit Supervisor or Technical Leader. Determination of competency shall be made by the Technical Leader and include sufficient detail that activities for which an individual is deemed competent are clear (testing activities, equipment use, reporting opinions and interpretations, etc.). Once competency is determined and approved by the Technical Leader, the workflow shall be sent to the applicable Laboratory Director for casework authorization. The closed workflow instance shall be retained in the FSD Documentation Management System.

Note: Competency and authorization(s) are considered specific to the individual. Individuals are therefore authorized to perform testing activities at any FSD laboratory which is accredited to the scope of testing to be performed. Additional competency tests are not required if the testing activities employ methods in which the individual has completed competency testing.

For FSD personnel trained to competency and authorized to conduct casework during a prior accreditation cycle, satisfactory completion of their training programs shall serve as meeting this requirement. Completed FS-33 Trained to Competency and FS-73 Casework Authorization forms for

these employees shall also be maintained in the FSD Documentation Management System. See QM - 5.2 Personnel for additional information and guidance.

5.2.3 Training Manuals

Training manuals shall be kept up to date and revised as needed by the applicable Technical Leader.

5.2.4 Administration of Assessment Tools

A copy of the following excerpt (italics) shall be provided during each assessment tool. This may be accomplished by including the excerpt as a cover sheet to the assessment tool or within the Forensic Advantage Object Repository. Alternatively, documented acknowledgement by the trainee of this policy within the assessment tool is acceptable.

Testing or exams are tools used to assess an employee's understanding of material, and in some circumstances, technical aptitude or capability. These assessment tools are required by forensic laboratory accreditation standards and will become a permanent record of your knowledge and ability in your discipline or sub-discipline.

To ensure a proper assessment is made of an individual's understanding of material, employees are required to complete all tests, examinations, quizzes, pre-tests, competency tests, oral exams, or any assessment tool however named, on their own without assistance from other individuals or external materials. If the trainer or supervisor determines it is appropriate for employees to work jointly to complete an assessment tool or use external materials, that approval must be documented in the assessment tool instructions. Absent any such prior written approval, all work must be performed exclusively by the trainee and free of external materials.

Employees may request clarification on a particular question or concept from the designated trainer or supervisor. The designated trainer or supervisor may provide appropriate guidance in the furtherance of education but must never provide an employee the answer to question(s).

Assessment tools may require the employee to perform case or sample analysis in which a verification or review by another analyst is required. All findings or conclusions must be recorded by the original analyst in the case test/calibration record or project before the second analyst performs the verification or review. Any changes made to the case test/calibration record or project as a result of a Verification, Technical, or Administrative Review must be approved by the trainer ***prior*** *to making the change and documented in the assessment tool for subsequent review. The trainer, supervisor and Technical Leader will evaluate the significance of the change(s) to determine if the original analyst has successfully completed the assessment.*

Employees are prohibited from circulating or sharing prior assessment tools. The use of prior competency or proficiency tests by a designated Trainer in a training setting is permitted. The creation of mock tests as a study tool (by employee(s) or trainers) is permitted, provided the Trainer employs sufficient safeguards to preserve the integrity of the final assessment tool. Employees in possession of any type of an assessment tool must take appropriate measures to preserve the integrity of that assessment tool by not making it available to other staff or storing it in a manner that other staff could access it, such as in common computer drives, devices, or paper files available to others.