



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

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INFORMATION FOR OSAC PARTICIPANTS: ACADEMY STANDARDS BOARD

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences Standards Board (known as the Academy Standards Board – ASB) is a Standards Development Organization accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The ASB is a wholly owned subsidiary of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), which was established in 1948, and has over 7,000 members in all 50 states and over 70 countries around the world.

In 2016, the ASB will begin developing standards, technical reports and best practice recommendations in the field of forensics. All such documents will be made available to the public for free on the website <http://asb.aafs.org/>. The ASB has no membership fees for participation in a Consensus Body (which develops the standards) or in working groups (which report to Consensus Bodies). All voting on documents occurs in the Consensus Body, but working groups may be designated to develop certain materials for presentation to a Consensus Body. Membership in a Consensus Body is by appointment by the Academy Standards Board based upon specific criteria to ensure balance and non-dominance. A Consensus Body is comprised of 7 to 25 persons. All meetings of Consensus Bodies are open to interested parties, so any OSAC member can attend, even if not a member of the Consensus Body. However, only members may vote. There is no requirement to be a member of the Consensus Body to participate in a working group. The designation of members of working groups is a decision of the particular Consensus Body. (This is done to encourage as much expert participation as possible). Membership in the AAFS or any other organization is not required to participate in the standards development process. To become a member of a Consensus Body, a person applies to the ASB Secretariat, BWing@aafs.org, with his/her qualifications and interest category stated, as well as the Consensus Body that he/she wishes to join.

When selecting members of a Consensus Body, the ASB tries to ensure balance among the following interest categories:

- a) User/government (federal, state and local)
- b) User/industry – private sector industries or companies that use products impacted by the standards activity; includes industry laboratories and testing facilities such as product testing laboratories or developmental testing facilities not covered under d) below;
- c) Producers - industries or companies that design, manufacture or otherwise produce products impacted by the standards activity;
- d) Laboratories and/or testing facilities – laboratories and other testing facilities that do forensic-related analyses especially those that perform analyses at the request of law enforcement or government; excludes government and industry laboratories and testing facilities;
- e) Consumer groups – groups, individuals and agencies representing consumer interests including safety, health, and environment;
- f) Academia – accredited institutions of learning, especially those with curricula or programs relating to forensic sciences;
- g) Subject matter experts - subject matter specialists or specialists from discipline specific organizations shall have qualifications based on the completion of an educational and/or training program commensurate with current nationally recognized standards for the specific discipline if available; and
- h) General interest

A New Work Item (standard, technical report or best practice recommendation) can be proposed within an existing Consensus Body or proposed by an outside source. In the latter case, if there is not an existing Consensus Body covering that subject area, the ASB will form a new Body. Once a base document has been generated (by a working group or provided by an outside source), then the Consensus Body works to finalize its contents and conform to formatting requirements. A simple majority approves edits during the development process. Final approval is by a 2/3 majority. Like all ANSI standards, there is an opportunity for public review and comments received by ASB must be addressed. Once the comments have been resolved, and if there is still a 2/3 majority approving of the document, it becomes an ASB standard. It is then published and if OSAC so wishes it can be listed on the OSAC Registry.

Any suggestions for New Work Items (standards, technical reports or best practice recommendations) should be directed to the Secretariat, Brad Wing. He is reached at BWing@aafs.org and at (202) 203-9202. Any questions about the process and / or procedures should also be addressed to him. The website <http://asb.aafs.org/> is also a resource for information about the ASB and its processes and procedures.