

Title: CAS-03 External Technical Reviews**A. PURPOSE:**

To define a means by which a case or a proficiency test that has been analyzed by a Division of Scientific Services (DSS) laboratory Examiner/Analyst within the Chemical Analysis Section (CAS) will be technically reviewed when an internal technical reviewer is not available. An outside entity can be utilized for technical review purposes if the scientist conducting such a review is from a properly accredited laboratory and has been deemed qualified to conduct such technical reviews within the appropriate discipline and category of testing.

B. RESPONSIBILITY:

Analysts/Examiners appropriately qualified within a particular discipline
Analyst/Examiner from an outside entity
Lead Examiner
Deputy Director
Quality Section/Quality Manager
Director

C. DEFINITIONS:

1. External technical reviewer – Short term: When a technical reviewer from an outside agency is needed because another qualified analyst from the section is absent for a limited period of time (e.g., vacation, sick leave).
2. External technical reviewer – Long term: When a technical reviewer from an outside agency is needed because another qualified analyst from the section is not currently available and/or there is no set date for their return (e.g., only one qualified Examiner is employed within the section).

D. PROCEDURE:

A case (or proficiency test) will be sent out of the laboratory for review when there is no available Examiner who is qualified within the specific field that the case encompasses.

External technical review – Short term

1. Analysts will ensure that the Lead Examiner (or section supervisor) is aware when there is no individual available within the section to perform a technical review for a case or for a proficiency test within a particular discipline.
2. The Quality Section and Laboratory Director will be notified that there is a need for an external technical reviewer. They will also be advised of the need to possibly disseminate laboratory policies/procedures to such outside reviewers and/or appropriate agencies.
3. The Lead Examiner, Quality Section, and/or appropriate section supervisor will contact an outside laboratory (or other acceptable entity) in order to find a technical reviewer who is currently qualified and who has casework experience within the applicable discipline/category

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of testing. The outside entity will have the appropriate accreditation to support a technical review which abides by DSS laboratory quality requirements.

4. Analysts will be informed as to who will be the external technical reviewer. They will also be responsible from arranging the technical review to its completion.
5. No additional or formal paperwork should be required for Short Term External Technical reviews.
6. The Unit Lead (or section supervisor) will ensure that updated information of currently-used outside technical reviewers is available upon request.

External Technical review – Long term

1. Analysts will ensure that the Lead Examiner (or section supervisor) is aware when there is no individual available within the DSS laboratory to perform a technical review for a case or for a proficiency test.
2. The Quality Section and the Laboratory Director will be notified about the need for long-term extended reviews. They will also be advised of the need to possibly disseminate laboratory policies/procedures.
3. The Lead Examiner (or section supervisor) will contact an outside laboratory, or other acceptable entity, to find a technical reviewer who is currently qualified and who has casework experience within the applicable discipline/category of testing. The outside entity will have the appropriate accreditation to support a technical review which abides by DSS laboratory quality requirements.
4. Appropriate paperwork (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)) between the DSS laboratory and outside entities should be facilitated by the Deputy Director. Other divisions and units within the Department may be involved (e.g., Legal Affairs Unit). The Laboratory Director will be the approving official for all MOU documents for the DSS laboratory.
5. Analysts will be informed as to who will be their external technical reviewer and will work with the Lead Examiner and/or Deputy Director for long-term use of the outside entity.
6. Once the relationship with outside technical reviewers is established analysts will be responsible for arranging and ensuring that technical reviews are completed according to laboratory policy.
7. A copy of the MOU/contract and technical reviewer's qualifications will be provided to the Quality Section.
8. A copy of the contract is not required to be within each Analytical or Administrative Case File unless it is specifically requested.
9. After the external technical review process has been established, the Quality Section does not need to be notified each time a technical review is required.
10. The Unit Lead (or section supervisor) will ensure that updated information of currently-used outside technical reviewers is available upon request. They will also ensure that any required paperwork (e.g., MOU) will not expire and cause delays in DSS casework.
11. Submitting case files for casework technical reviews will be the responsibility of the analyst.

External Technical review – Both Short Term and Long Term

1. The selection of the outside entity to be used as an external technical reviewer by the DSS Laboratory will be made collectively by the Deputy Director and the Laboratory Director. Final approval of the outside technical reviewing entity, as well as its personnel, will be made by the Laboratory Director.
2. Analysts will be responsible for ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest during technical reviews (e.g., Proficiency Test-taking at the same time between analysts and technical reviewers). Analysts will work with the Quality Section when determining proficiency test scheduling in order to avoid conflicts with outside technical reviewers.
3. If a conflict exists with regards to proficiency testing, analysts will work with a section supervisor and the Quality Section to come up with a viable solution.
4. Approved technical reviewers may come to the DSS laboratory to look at documents and conduct reviews. Outside technical reviewers will be supplied with appropriate documents/information (e.g., External Review form, Draft Copy of report, applicable SOPs, instrument data) and will be given an adequate working environment to conduct reviews.
5. Analytical case file documents (or copies) may be sent to outside entities for technical review purposes. When such documents are mailed a complete number of document pages should be recorded (e.g., Table of Contents) and a trackable carrier/method will be used (e.g., FedEx).
6. Sending of documents electronically is permitted, but a copy of the document transmission will be retained (either hard copy or within JusticeTrax).
7. Outside technical reviewers will conduct reviews according to their own policy and should be willing to follow DSS laboratory-specific requirements.
8. If additions or corrections are necessary on the draft report, the Technical Reviewer will make corrections and add their initials after each edit/addition.
9. Analysts will maintain notes on any technical changes when made via a verbal conversation with technical reviewers. These notes will be documented appropriately (e.g., placed in the case jacket or retained in JusticeTrax).
10. Analysts and technical reviewers may work together to determine the best verbiage for final reports or to determine if additional work may be necessary.
11. Appropriate review forms (both internal and external) will be used during the review process.
12. Administrative reviews will not be done by external entities.
13. When printing the final report on letterhead, technical reviewer's names and titles will be on reports. Technical Reviewer's laboratory affiliation may be listed on reports.
14. Technical reviewers will sign and return original-signed reports and all other documents back to the DSS laboratory analyst. Outside mailings involving the return of documents will be done via trackable carriers (e.g., FedEx) and outside reviewers should be provided pre-paid postage information (e.g., FedEx account number).
15. After receiving documents back from external reviewers, it is the responsibility of analysts to ensure that all pages of documents have been received and that the technical review has been satisfactorily completed.
16. Analysts can provide copies of appropriate documents to technical reviewers if requested (e.g., copy of signed report, copies of review forms, photographs). A 'copy' stamp may be used on documents sent to technical reviewers.

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17. The initials of technical reviewers, along with appropriate dates of technical reviews, can be recorded on case file jackets by the Lead Examiner (or section supervisor). Additionally, setting the milestone within JusticeTrax to reflect the appropriate Technical Reviewer will be done by the Lead Examiner (or section supervisor) through an account set up for the appropriate external technical reviewer.

RETIRE

CAS-03 External Review

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Revision #**Revision History**

- | Revision # | Revision History |
|------------|---|
| 2 | Title change. Modified contents within 'Definitions' section because of redundancy with GL procedures. Added and defined short term and long term technical review. Added steps and modified the 'Procedure' section. Added a revision history section. |
| 3 | Title change (CAS-03 from TR SOP-22) to reflect the SOP is for use within the entire section. Revised sections C and D. Added verbiage throughout document to satisfy FSE3 and/or Assistant Director approvals/functions. Added reference to review worksheets. Added direction regarding updating technical reviewer milestones in JusticeTrax. Included Director in approval of using external Technical Reviewers. |

RETIRE