

A. PURPOSE:

The Division of Scientific Services encourages employees to stay current in their respective fields as part of the professional development program. DSS encourages the participation in professional organizations and outside training opportunities. The goal of Professional Development is to improve the laboratory as a whole through the advancement of the employees.

B. RESPONSIBILITY:

Director and Deputy Directors: support the professional development of employees.

Assistant Directors: support the professional development of employees.

Scientific Services Administrative Manager: support the professional development of employees.

Quality Section: aids in encouraging the Professional Development Program.

FSE III, II, I, (and other analysts however titled): are responsible to stay current in their discipline. Additionally analysts are responsible for supplying the Quality Section with documentation of professional development (i.e. course certificates, updated CVs, records of involvement in professional organizations).

C. PROCEDURE:**1. Professional Development Files:**

Professional Development files are maintained for all analytical personnel by the Quality Section. Professional Development files may be paper or electronic through Qualtrax. These files consist of, at a minimum:

- a. Curriculum vitae: Analysts need to keep CVs as these are often required for discoveries. Analysts should attach updated CVs to their Personnel File in Qualtrax.
- b. Documentation of Educational Background Training: all analysts must supply a copy of their diploma(s) and for DNA a copy of their transcripts. The documentation must be such that it meets the minimum educational requirement of the analysts title, or for those in DNA to meet the FBI QAS requirements.
- c. Training Records: Full records of the training and competency testing are maintained by the Section/Unit Deputy Director or designee. The Section Deputy Director (or designee) is responsible to maintain the supporting training documentation (or TL in DNA).
- d. Competency Records: Deputy Directors or Assistant Directors (TL in DNA) are responsible to document competency as outlined within section specific training procedures. The technical Lead or Supervisor of the specific unit will be involved in the documentation of competency. The memo that is used to document competency is to be forwarded to the Quality Section for storage in the Professional Development Files, although a transition to maintaining all personnel documents of this kind in Qualtrax is in process. This memo can be used to request authorization by the Director. A copy of the competency memo should be supplied to the analyst for their training binder.

- e. Authorization: Authorizations are required for all analysts (however titled) performing testing. Tasks that can influence results require authorization. Task requiring authorization include (but may not be limited to):
- i. Development, Modification, Verification & Validation of Methods
 - ii. Performance of laboratory activities such as:
 - (a) Performing testing
 - (b) Sampling
 - (c) Use of instrumentation
 - iii. Analysis of results
 - iv. Review of results - relating to review for trends or issues
 - v. Authorizing results
 - vi. Verifying results
 - vii. Expressing Opinions or Interpretations (such as written through case reports or verbal such as for testimony)
 - viii. Reporting results or Authorizing reports (such as part of an administrative review)

Requests for authorizations should be specific to document what authorization is requested.

f. Authorization Letters:

Deputy Directors or Assistant Directors are responsible to obtain a letter of Authorization from the Director. This may be a letter requesting authorization that is initialed/signed by the Director or entered into Qualtrax to obtain authorization. This letter should detail the discipline and method or service the analyst is authorized to perform work.

This can be a letter or memo signed or initialed by the Director or can be a certificate generated through Qualtrax.

The 'Personnel Authorization' workflow in Qualtrax can be used to obtain an authorization letter. This should be initiated by the Supervisor, Assistant Director or Deputy Director. Documentation of competency (competency memo or similar) will be attached in the workflow to allow for review.

The competency record is attached, requesting authorization to the Director from the Technical Lead or Supervisor of the Unit and the Deputy or Assistant Director.

The signed documentation by the Director is to be forwarded to the Quality Section for storage in the Professional Development Files. A copy of the authorization should be supplied to the analyst for their training binder.

Note: A transition to maintaining all personnel documents in Qualtrax is in process. There is a workflow in Qualtrax for Personnel Authorization that may be used as the transition continues.

Note: A copy of current job descriptions are maintained in Qualtrax in the Quality folder in the document tree.

Note: As stated above, while in transition to electronic record keeping, parts of analysts' Professional Development Files may be kept in Qualtrax.

2. Professional Organizations:

- a. All employees are encouraged to join professional organizations pertinent to their field. The following is a partial list of appropriate organizations available:
 - i. American Academy of Forensic Scientists
 - ii. American Board of Criminalities
 - iii. American Society of Question Document Examiners
 - iv. American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
 - v. Association of Forensic DNA Analysts and Administrators
 - vi. Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers
 - vii. Canadian Association of Forensic Science
 - viii. International Association for Identification
 - ix. Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists
 - x. International Association for Chemical Testing
 - xi. International Association for Property and Evidence
 - xii. Society of Forensic Toxicologists
 - xiii. The Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners
- b. When funding is available, DSS will pay for the annual membership in one organization per employee (maximum amount for each employee will be decided based on available funds). Employees joining professional organizations are asked to submit a copy of their membership certificate to the Quality Section to be added to their Professional Development File or may attach to their Personnel file in Qualtrax on their own.

3. Training Opportunities:

- a. Training is available from multiple sources. When training opportunities are known to a particular section, management will work to disseminate the information as appropriate. Any employee finding possible sources of training are encouraged to bring them to their Supervisor or Manager or the Quality Section.
- b. Training Opportunities may include:
 - i. FBI Courses: when available a list is released annually of courses scheduled to be offered. These cover a variety of disciplines from DNA to Auditing to Crime Scene and instrumentation. The cost of these courses are usually covered by the FBI.

- ii. Markle Symposium: Presented through the University of New Haven; this symposium offers different topics related to the forensic sciences each year.
 - iii. The Borkenstein Alcohol Course: Effects of Alcohol on Driving seminar and the Effects of Drugs on Driving seminar. These are week long courses.
 - iv. RTI: offers on-line courses in topics ranging from Toxicology to Ethics to Court Testimony. These courses range in time and many are free through the NIJ.
 - v. Vendors: Many vendors offer training in their specific instrumentation. These courses vary per company.
 - vi. Courses offered through Professional Organizations may include:
 - (a) NEAFS; offers short courses through Cedar Crest College. The courses offered vary each year. Partial cost of these course are usually covered through NEAFS.
 - (b) NEAFS; offers short courses during their annual meeting
 - (c) AAFS: offers short courses during their annual meeting
 - (d) AFQAM: offers short courses during their annual meeting
 - (e) IAI: offers short courses during the year
 - vii. Funding sources for training may include grant and union funds. Employees interested in attending a course should discuss with their Supervisor to determine if funding is available. Supervisors, Assistant Directors, Deputy Directors, the Director and the Quality Section may suggest training to individuals as appropriate opportunities arise.
 - viii. Analysts taking ‘outside’ training should attach copies of the training certificate to their personnel folder in Qualtrax.
4. Scientific Articles and References:
- a. Employees that are members in professional organization receive Journals through the various organizations. Journals obtained as part of the membership to organizations that are funded by the DSS (through re-imbursement of annual dues) will be made available to the DSS. Journals and References are available on the shared drive, online and/or in the Laboratory Library. Supervisors will distribute copies of pertinent articles as appropriate. The Quality Section may suggest articles to sections through the Assistant or Deputy Director.
 - b. All employees are encouraged to share Scientific Articles that pertain to the Laboratory.
 - c. On-line Journals/articles are also available, these include:
 - i. Microgram – distributed by the DEA for drug chemistry

- ii. Forensic Science Communications (archived publications)

www.fbi.gov/about.us/lab/forensic-science-communications

- iii. The Internet Journal of Forensic Science <http://ispub.com/IJFS>

5. Presentations/Publications:

Analysts (however titled) may have the opportunity to give presentations at organized meetings. Analysts (however named) may have the opportunity to author or coauthor publications. These presentations and publications will be pre-approved by the Director and documented on form: "Presentation/Publication Approval" found in the "General Laboratory Forms" folder in Qualtrax. The completed form will be maintained by the Quality Section.

6. Travel Authorizations

When an employee has approval to submit the training request, the employee must complete the Travel Authorization Worksheet and attach the supporting documentation on the training information. This documentation will be forwarded to administration and then forwarded to DESPP for final approval and funding allocation.

If an employee is requesting time only, which may occur when traveling as part of DSS representative to an OSAC or SWGDAM meeting, the Travel Authorization Worksheet must be completed along with a copy of the invitation email/letter.

A copy of the DSS Travel Authorization Worksheet can be found in Qualtrax under General Laboratory Forms. When possible travel authorizations should be completed and forwarded a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the date of travel.