

Standard 137, Standard for Examination and Documentation of Footwear and Tire Impression Evidence

5-Apr-21

#	Section	Type of Comment	Comments	Proposed Resolution	Final Resolution
1	4.6.1	E	<p>With its revisions the consensus body has taken the admirable and scientifically sound step of requiring verifications of all source conclusions. But, its failure to do so much as create a path forward towards blind verifications must still change. Cognitive bias is an inextricable threat to subjective pattern matching approaches. Blind verification removes the risk of this threat as regards a second examiner being influenced by the conclusion of a primary examiner and thus has been recommended as a best practice by a myriad of organizations. But in dismissing concerns regarding blind verifications by saying it "is not supported by empirical studies" the consensus body gets the scientific burden at issue confused. If we know that cognitive bias could affect the utility of a verification, and that blind verification eliminates that risk, the burden falls on the discipline to show that a lesser process nonetheless suffices. An absence of empirical studies is therefore a reason to adopt blind verifications rather than omit them. Because such a verification process is resource intensive it may not be appropriate or necessary in all cases. But by refusing even to require it in certain settings, this standard currently fails to move the discipline forward.</p>	<p>Require blind verifications in those scenarios (perhaps single impression cases) where errors are most likely, or require labs to perform some percentage of verifications (set by a documented risk assessment) blind.</p>	<p>Reject with modification: Verification is outside the scope of this document. The full section on Verification has been removed.</p>
2	4.6.1	T	<p>Verification of all conclusions/interpretations will put an undue burden on examiners, particularly when an examiner requires verification from an outside agency source via MOU</p>	<p>Return phrasing to original redlined statement.</p>	<p>Reject with modification: Verification is outside the scope of this document. The full section on Verification has been removed.</p>