



Physical Anthropology Section - 2014

H26 The Development of Professional Standards and Accreditation by the British Association for Forensic Anthropology (BAFA)

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the rationale behind the development of the United Kingdom accreditation system for forensic anthropologists and have an understanding of how the process works, how it complements the requirements of the criminal justice system, and how it supports the professionalization of the discipline.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by communicating the development and rationale of the accreditation system for forensic anthropologists in the United Kingdom which has been developed to support the professionalization of the discipline, provide a career pathway for future forensic anthropology practitioners, and ensure that end-users understand the skill levels of the professional they are employing to undertake casework.

Accreditation of forensic practitioners in the United Kingdom has gained momentum in recent years and has been driven by a series of high-profile miscarriages of justice. While large forensic science service providers have established means by which they can demonstrate and maintain accreditation, this has proven more difficult to achieve for the independent practitioner, including the practicing forensic anthropologist.

As a result, the British Association for Forensic Anthropologists was formed and has undergone an intensive period of standard setting and validation under the auspices of our professional body, the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (RAI). This has included the development of a Code of Practice, Ethics, and Professional Standards, establishing Forensic Anthropology Practitioner Guidelines and a Continuing Professional Development and examination process based on a robust curriculum. These documents have been written by forensic anthropologists who are currently undertaking and presenting their case-work before the United Kingdom judiciary.

This presentation will describe the development and rationale of the practitioner accreditation process which has now been fully ratified by the RAI and put into practice. The BAFA accreditation process aims to provide two things; a transparent, fit-for-purpose guide to end-users on the skills and experience of the forensic anthropologist that they are employing and a definitive career pathway for the forensic anthropology practitioners of the future. The accreditation process and its development will be discussed within the framework of appropriate scientific quality standards now being demanded by the Forensic Science Regulator and the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom.

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