



## Questioned Documents Section - 2015

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### **J31 The Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC) and the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Process**

*Ted M. Burkes, BS\*, FBI Laboratory, 2501 Investigation Parkway, Rm 2174, Quantico, VA 22135; and F.L. Jim Lee, Jr., MS\*, PO Box 207, Eden, UT 84310*

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The goal of this presentation is to educate forensic document examiners on the future of standards development.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating it on the future of standards development. Courts of law are relying more on the use of standards in an expert's examinations. Lack of this knowledge may impact a practitioner's allowance to testify as an expert witness.

SWGDOC has been in existence, under different names, since 1997. With the genesis of OSAC by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Scientific Working Groups (SWGs) will be both replaced and combined. There will be five Scientific Area Committees (SAC), each with several subcommittees representing what have up to now been the SWGs. The subcommittee for Questioned Documents (QD) will be under the Physics/Pattern SAC. At the time of this abstract, the members of the Physics/Pattern SAC (other than the chair) and the QD subcommittee have not been publicized.

This study will present an up-to-date analysis of the OSAC process and the conversion from the SWGDOC business model to the OSAC business model. This presentation will include the members of the QD subcommittee and their backgrounds, as well as the members of the Physics/Pattern SAC and their backgrounds. The membership of each subcommittee is currently planned for a maximum of 20 voting members, broken down with a distribution goal as follows: 70% (14) practitioner (20% (four) federal, 30% (six) state and local, 20% (four) civil or other; 20% (four) researchers (including statisticians, epidemiologists, etc.); and, 10% (one) Research and Development (R&D) technology partners and providers. There is also a plan to allow up to five invited guests per meeting. The plan is for the subcommittees to meet in person once per year, with virtual meetings occurring more often. It is the understanding of the presenters that membership will be for a specific period of time (perhaps three years) and there will possibly be term limits on the number of times an individual can hold consecutive memberships. As a point of reference, SWGDOC currently has 38 members, all practitioners, with a balance of federal, state and local, and private practitioners. SWGDOC also has two international members. It is unknown at this time if there will be any international members involved in the OSAC process.

The OSAC process for drafting, vetting, and publishing standards, guidelines, and best practices will also be presented. This process, depending on the type of document being considered, also includes reviews for Human Factors, Legal Analysis, and Quality Infrastructure. The Forensic Science Standards Board will give the final blessing on documents that are intended to be labeled as "standards" under the OSAC process. Those that will be labeled as guidelines and best practices need only be approved at the Physics/Pattern SAC level.

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#### **SWGDOC, OSAC, Questioned Documents**