

## 4. GUIDANCE FOR PARTIES INTERESTED IN ACCREDITATION

### **PURPOSE**

The Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) intends this document as guidance for interactions between the FSAB and parties showing interest in accreditation of forensic specialty certifying organizations. Information is provided in the following sections:

- Seeking Accreditation: An overview of Eligibility and Initial Accreditation
- General Guidelines for submitting FSAB Accreditation Applications
- Checklist and Timeline for Organizations Seeking FSAB Accreditation
- FSAB Fees
- Reaccreditation
- Other Information

### **Seeking Accreditation: An overview of Eligibility and Initial Accreditation**

Organizations that offer certification to individuals in a specialty are known as Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). The FSAB was formed in June 2000 to assess objectively, recognize, and monitor those CABs that are forensic specialty boards seeking accreditation.

The FSAB accepts applications from qualifying forensic specialty certification bodies. The application can be found on the website at [www.thefsab.org](http://www.thefsab.org) The FSAB has developed a program to review and evaluate the procedures and standards of those applicant certification bodies or CABs to confirm that they meet or exceed the FSAB Standards.

The FSAB follows *ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity Assessment-General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*. The FSAB evaluates the CAB applicants based on *ISO/IEC 17024:2012 Conformity Assessment-General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons* along with additional requirements that consider the special nature of forensic specialties. Successful applicant CABs are awarded an initial five-year accreditation.

### **General Guidelines for Submitting FSAB Accreditation Applications**

Organizations considering seeking accreditation by the FSAB should access and review the *Standards for Accrediting Forensic Specialty Certification Boards* and the *Application for Accreditation/Re-accreditation*. These can be found on the website: [www.thefsab.org](http://www.thefsab.org)

The information in these documents should inform interested parties of the scope and details of requirements for their organizations to seek and attain FSAB accreditation. An inquiry can then be made to any Director who shall inform the President and Secretary. The inquiry should include pertinent information about the organization that is considering seeking accreditation. After reviewing the information in the inquiry, the FSAB leadership may provide a point of contact, usually a Director or Affiliate.

**Checklist and Timeline for Organizations Seeking FSAB Accreditation**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
1. Letter, email, or telephone inquiry	To any Director who informs President or Secretary	At any time
2. Inquiry response	With FSAB contact or appointed advisor	As soon as practicable
3. Formal application for Accreditation	Application form to Secretary with all associated information	By May 1 for accreditation consideration in the following year
4. Accreditation Review Committee (ARC)	ARC appointed by President	As soon as practicable
5. Initial review of application	ARC reviews application for completeness	ARC reports completeness to applicant by June 1
6. Application and/or supporting document deficiencies (if any)	Reported by ARC Chair to applicant CAB representative	By December 1
7. Site Visit	Site ARC review of CAB's organization, management, and records	By January 1
8. Remediation of all application or on-site visit deficiencies	Reported by applicant CAB representative to ARC Chair	By January 15
9. ARC report to President and Directors	Recommendation on accreditation	By February 1
10. Directors consider ARC report	Directors vote on ARC recommendation at annual meeting	Annually (February)
11. Accreditation report to applicant CAB	FSAB reports decision to applicant CAB	By March 1

**FSAB Fees**

Application fee:

- Applicants for accreditation pay a fee of \$2000
- Applicants for reaccreditation pay a fee of \$500

All accredited organizations pay an annual fee based on the organization's number of certificants:

- Up to 1000 certificants: \$500 plus \$3 per certificant
- 1001 to 2500 certificants: \$3500 plus \$2 per certificant in excess of 1000
- 2501 or more certificants: \$6500 plus \$1 per certificant in excess of 2500

Fee notices for the following calendar year are distributed by October 1 of each year and are due and payable by December 31. Penalties may be assessed and accreditation may be revoked for failure to pay fees. Details can be found in Appendix A of the Policy Manual.

### **Reaccreditation**

The accreditation period is five years. To maintain accreditation status, all accredited organizations are required to reaccredit every five years. The FSAB shall also conduct additional surveillance of accredited organizations during accreditation periods. Organizations applying for reaccreditation must meet all current accreditation standards. Reaccreditation applications and fees shall be received by May 1 of the year prior to the expiration of the current accreditation period.

### **Other Information**

For other information, consult the website: [www.thefsab.org](http://www.thefsab.org). The website lists the Officers and Directors. Clicking on a listed name will hyperlink you to that person's email address.

A list of FSAB accredited organizations can be found under the Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) tab. Clicking on an organization's name will take you to that organization's website.

The Downloads and Links tab allows access to FSAB documents and also has links to other forensic sites.

The Login tab is for the private use of Officers, Directors, and Affiliates.