

AQR: Technical Review of Case Records

Technical review

Technical review of case records is conducted in order to ensure that the reported conclusions are reasonable and supported by sufficient scientific data.

5.9.4.1

Technical reviews will be conducted on all cases prior to the administrative review and release of the case report.

4.13.2.1

5.9.4

Technical review will be conducted by someone other than the author of the laboratory report.

5.9.4.3

4.1.5.a

For Toxicology reports: If the Technical Reviewer also performs work on the case, the Administrative Reviewer will also technically review the case.

5.9.4.2

Technical review is conducted by an analyst or supervisor authorized by laboratory management who has expertise in the relevant discipline gained through training and casework experience and has knowledge of the relevant technical procedures. Authorization to perform technical review is documented on the *Authorization to Perform Technical Review* form, which is retained in the employee's training file.

Completion of examination records

Prior to technical review of the case record, the examination records must meet the guidelines set forth in *CQR: Examination Records Guidelines* in the *Quality Manual*. At this stage, the examination record is considered completed and the report has been placed in the "draft complete" milestone in the Case Management system.

4.13.2.3.2

Any changes, amendments, additions, or corrections must be initialed and dated and the original examination record must be retained in the case record.

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Technical review process

This table gives the general process for technical review of case records.

5.9.4
 5.9.4.1

4.13.2.2
 5.10.5

Stage	Description
1	The case file is given by the analyst to a technical reviewer.
2	<p>The reviewer performs a technical review. The reviewer should look at such issues as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriateness of the tests used • adherence to technical procedures and appropriate laboratory policies and procedures • use of proper blanks and controls • quality of instrumental work • accuracy of calculations • adequacy of records • objectivity of and support for conclusions, opinions, and interpretations • associations properly qualified in report • correctness, readability, and completeness of the report <p>For Biology (DNA and Serology except for Preservation and CODIS Hit Notification reports), Firearms/Toolmarks, Trace Evidence, and Crime Scene disciplines, the reviewer fills out a <i>Technical Review Checklist</i> (see the Quality Assurance folder in each discipline's technical manual). These checklists are included with the case report file.</p>
3	<p>If the reviewer notes any technical problems then the file is returned to the analyst for action.</p> <p>NOTE: Serious or repeated technical problems need to be brought to the attention of the supervisor and appropriately recorded (see <i>Departures, Technical Problems and Corrective Actions, DPC: Problems with Casework</i>).</p>
4	The file with amended casework records is returned to the reviewer with the reviewer's original notes for verification of the revisions.

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Technical review process
(continued)

Stage	Description
5	If all is in order, the reviewer initials and dates the summary page or the first page of the notes and indicates the numbers of the pages reviewed.
6	The reviewer records the completion of the technical review in the case management system and a draft report is printed with signatures.

Technical review dispute resolution process

There may be times when the analyst and reviewer do not agree as to the form or extent of the recommended revisions. If this occurs, the supervisor should attempt to facilitate a resolution. The supervisor will consult peer group members for technical advice as needed.

Disputes that cannot be settled are brought by the supervisor to the Laboratory Director for resolution.

NOTE: For disputes in DNA casework, issues are presented to the DNA Technical Lead to resolve.

Responsibility

The technical review does not shift the responsibility for the analysis and conclusions expressed in the report from the analyst to the reviewer. The analyst presents sworn testimony on the analysis and conclusions.

Technical review for court testimony
[5.10.3.4](#)

In the absence of the case report's author and original technical reviewer, analysts or supervisors who have technically reviewed a case record for the purposes of providing testimony must record the technical review in the examination records.
