

TPD: Professional Certification Bodies

Certification Professional certification is a designation earned by a person to assure that he or she has the minimum qualifications deemed necessary by the certifying body to perform a job or task.

Certification of forensic scientists is available to qualified forensic practitioners but is not required by California or federal law.

Recommendation The Sacramento County District Attorney Laboratory of Forensic Services recommends that all persons who practice in a forensic science discipline or testify as a forensic science analyst/examiner should become certified by a reputable certifying body and have access to a certification process.

Components of a certification program Professional forensic science certifying bodies must include the following essential components in their program in order to be approved by management to be available to staff:

- Minimum educational requirements
- Minimum experience requirements
- Written or practical competency tests to evaluate knowledge base
- Participation in proficiency testing
- Participation in continuing education
- Active participation in the profession through publication, presentation, and/or membership in professional organizations
- Regular re-certification
- Adherence to a Code of Ethics or rules of professional conduct
- Enforcement procedure for compliance with the Code of Ethics or rules of professional conduct

Certification bodies that do not require all of these components cannot be considered appropriate for establishing the credentials of a forensic scientist.

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TPD: Professional Certification Bodies, Continued

Certificates Certification of forensic practitioners must not be confused with certificates offered by educational institutions.

Certificates issued by educational institutions are specific to their program. Certificates indicate only satisfactory completion and do not contain the components of certification, as previously listed.

Forensic science certification organizations Laboratory management currently recognizes the following approved forensic science certification organizations which are available to the laboratory's staff:

- American Board of Criminalistics
- American Board of Forensic Toxicology
- International Association for Identification
- Association of Firearms and Toolmark Examiners.

Qualifications, requirements, and application procedures for certification can be obtained from the respective organization.

Laboratory support for certification The laboratory management strongly encourages certification for laboratory staff. To that end, the laboratory provides the following support to staff seeking certification by an approved organization:

- Sitting fee for written or practical competency tests paid by the laboratory
 - On-duty study time not to exceed 10% of the employee's regular weekly work schedule.
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