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Title: Proficiency Testing	Control No. QM-003	Revision: 0
Approved by: Forensic Anthropology Director		Effective Date: 29 January 2018

1. Policy

The Forensic Anthropology Unit (FAU) shall perform annual proficiency testing to verify that all personnel involved in anthropological analyses have maintained sufficient knowledge and skills to perform the tasks they are assigned.

2. Scope

This Quality Manual document applies to all FAU personnel that will be performing anthropological casework analysis.

3. Definitions

Proficiency Test: A proficiency test is a quality assurance measure involving an examination administered to an analyst who has previously demonstrated competency in a specialized job skill. Proficiency tests shall assess the individual’s anthropological analytical skills and their understanding of the FAU laboratory procedures.

4. Proficiency Testing

Each FAU analyst must successfully complete at least one proficiency test annually covering a category of analysis appearing in the FAU’s Laboratory Scope of Accreditation.

Note: Proficiency tests are not required for non-routine procedures that are not outlined in the FAU’s Standard Operating Procedures.

4.1 Proficiency Testing Planning: The Quality Assurance (QA) Specialist is responsible for creating and maintaining a 4-year proficiency testing plan that covers the current cycle of accreditation. The QA Specialist shall ensure that there are always four years of proficiency tests planned in advance. Over the four-year period, proficiency tests shall cover a representative sample of the types of anthropological analyses performed within the FAU’s Laboratory Scope of Accreditation.

4.2 Proficiency Test Provider: Currently there are no proficiency test providers accredited to the ISO/IEC 17043 standards that have tests specific to Anthropology. Therefore, the FAU shall seek approval from ANAB to use alternate proficiency test providers as needed.

4.2.1 Alternate Proficiency Test Provider Approval: The FAU shall fill out the appropriate section(s) of the ANAB Form “FM 3041: Proficiency Testing Alternative Approval” and submit the form with any supplemental documents (if needed) to QualityMatters@anab.org for review.

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4.3 **Proficiency Test Format:** The proficiency test shall be administered as a hands-on practical for specific anthropological analyses (e.g., estimation of age, sex, ancestry, trauma analysis, human/non-human) that are scored as either pass or fail (see section 4.6 Grading Proficiency Tests).

4.4 **Administering a Proficiency Test:** The QA Specialist is responsible for scheduling the annual proficiency tests for all FAU personnel. The QA Specialist shall give the examinee(s) prior notice as to when the test will be administered.

The external proficiency test provider will either personally administer the test or he/she will provide the QA Specialist with the test questions and any associated instructions.

4.5 **Taking a Proficiency Test:** The examinee shall write his/her answers on the appropriate analytical form(s). For example, if the proficiency test is covering age estimation the examinee shall use the age estimation form.

The examinee may consult the FAU Standard Operating Procedures, written notes, and other appropriate references and reference materials during examination. Appropriate references and reference materials are those that would typically be available when performing the analytical tasks. The analyst may not get assistance from other personnel during the test.

4.6 **Grading Proficiency Tests:** The proficiency test shall be graded by the external proficiency test provider or the OCME Quality Director. If the external proficiency test provider is not available he/she will supply an answer key and instructions for grading to the OCME Quality Director.

Note: Some proficiency tests will assess the individual's anthropological analytical skills and assess their adherence to the FAU laboratory procedures. When the proficiency test involves both areas of assessment, analytical skills and adherence to FAU laboratory procedures will be graded separately.

4.6.1 **Passing Grade:** An examinee shall receive a passing grade when they successfully complete the anthropological analysis (i.e., fulfill the test requirements) and have followed the appropriate SOPs. The requirements for passing a proficiency test shall be identified at the time the proficiency test is created and clearly stated to the examinee.

4.6.2 **Failing Grade:** An examinee shall receive a failing grade if one or more test requirements have not been achieved or if several minor nonconformities are identified.

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- **Failing Analytical Proficiency:** Proficiency test failure due to a lack of individual proficiency in the analytical skill shall result in the appropriate remedial training for specific SOPs, analytical methods, equipment, and/or software. After the examinee has completed the required retraining he/she will retake the proficiency test. The examinee must receive a passing grade in order to successfully complete the proficiency test requirement.

Failing Laboratory Procedure Proficiency: Proficiency test failure due to a lack of individual understanding of the FAU laboratory procedural documents shall result in the appropriate remedial training (e.g., reviewing appropriate SOPs or other FAU procedural documents). An examinee will receive a failing grade if he/she has three or more procedural mistakes in their proficiency test.

All proficiency test failures related to procedural, technical or other systematic problems will be reported to the QA Director. The QA Director will review the issue and decide whether or not a corrective action is required (see QM-008: Corrective Action).

- 4.7 **Documentation:** Proficiency test records shall be retained for a minimum of one complete accreditation cycle. The QA Specialist is responsible for maintaining the appropriate documentation for all proficiency tests in each employee's personnel binder. The following information should be retained:

- Examinee's name.
- Date of proficiency test.
- Name of proficiency test provider.
- Name of test grader.
- Original or copies of data and notes that support the conclusions.
- Indication of pass/fail.
- Any feedback, remediation/corrective action taken, if required.

Additionally, the QA Specialist shall maintain an up-to-date electronic database for all proficiency test records. This database will allow the QA Specialist to schedule future proficiency tests.

5. References:

AR 3055, ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Forensic Inspection Bodies Accreditation Requirements.

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6. Revision History

REV.	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
0	January 2018	New document.

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