

FORENSIC BIOLOGY ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

DNA Technical Leader		
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DNA Technical Leader

1 Guiding Principles and Scope

- 1.1 The Department shall have experienced and qualified individuals serving as DNA Technical Leaders. While a single individual can serve as the DNA Technical Leader for all technologies in which the Department conducts DNA casework (Autosomal STR, Y-STR, and Mitochondrial DNA Testing), it is possible that more than one individual can be appointed to serve as a DNA Technical Leader for different technologies.
- 1.2 This section defines the job duties of a DNA Technical Leader and the education and experience required to be appointed as a DNA Technical Leader. This section also defines a contingency plan in case the position of the DNA Technical Leader has been suddenly vacated.

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 The DNA Technical Leader, as applicable to the operations they oversee:
 - 2.1.1 Is accountable for the technical operations of the laboratory and is responsible for technical problem solving.
 - 2.1.2 Has the authority to initiate, suspend, and resume DNA analytical operations for the laboratory or an individual.
 - 2.1.3 Evaluates all DNA validation and methods, and **reviews and approves** the training, quality assurance, and proficiency testing programs.
 - 2.1.4 Is responsible for reviewing the academic transcripts and training records for newly qualified analysts and approves their qualifications prior to their conducting independent casework analysis to ensure that they are in compliance with accreditation guidelines.
 - 2.1.5 Approves the technical specifications for outsourcing agreements.
 - 2.1.6 Review internal and external DNA Audit documents and, if applicable, approve corrective action(s).
 - 2.1.7 Conducts an annual review of the procedures of the laboratory as applicable to the operations they oversee.
 - 2.1.8 **Review potential conflicts of interest when contract employees are employed by multiple NDIS participating and/or vendor laboratories.**

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3 Education and Experience

- 3.1 The DNA Technical Leader shall have a minimum of a Master's degree in biology-, chemistry-, or forensic science-related area. He/She must have twelve (12) semester hours or equivalent credit hours, including at a minimum, one graduate level class registering three (3) or more semester hours or equivalent credit hours, covering the subject areas of biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, and statistics and/or population genetics.
- 3.2 The DNA Technical Leader must have at least three years of human-DNA experience as a qualified analyst of forensic samples. This experience must be obtained at a laboratory where forensic DNA testing was conducted for the identification and evaluation of biological evidence in criminal matters.
- 3.3 These qualifications are required for an Assistant DNA Technical Leader as well.

4 DNA Technical Leader Contingency Plan

- 4.1 The Department currently has two (2) DNA Technical Leaders: one responsible for nuclear DNA technical operations (which includes autosomal DNA testing and Y-STR testing) and one responsible for mitochondrial DNA technical operations.
- 4.2 The Assistant DNA Technical Leader for nuclear DNA technical operations shall serve as the Deputy Nuclear DNA Technical Leader within the laboratory for which the Nuclear DNA Technical Leader has been appointed. Therefore, if the Nuclear DNA Technical Leader is on leave and cannot be contacted for a matter requiring immediate attention, the Nuclear Assistant DNA Technical Leader may make decisions on his/her behalf. In the unlikely event that the Nuclear DNA Technical Leader and their Assistant DNA Technical Leader cannot be contacted for an immediate matter, the Deputy Director shall have the authority to make decisions on their behalf.
- 4.3 If the Nuclear DNA Technical Leader position becomes vacant, the Nuclear Assistant DNA Technical Leader within the Department may serve as the interim Nuclear DNA Technical Leader. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the vacancy, the Director or his/her designee shall appoint a qualified individual within the laboratory to assume the Nuclear DNA Technical Leader position on a permanent basis.
- 4.4 If the Mitochondrial DNA Technical Leader is on leave and cannot be contacted as needed for operational purposes, mitochondrial DNA casework within the laboratory will cease until the Mitochondrial DNA Technical Leader is available for consultation. If the Mitochondrial DNA Technical Leader position is vacated, the mitochondrial operations within the laboratory will be suspended. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the vacancy, the Director or his/her designee shall appoint a qualified individual within the laboratory to assume the Mitochondrial DNA Technical Leader position and mitochondrial casework can resume.

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- 4.5 The Director must ensure that the newly appointed DNA Technical Leader, **for nuclear or mitochondrial operations**, meets or exceeds the education and experience requirements in this document and the FBI's Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic STR Analysis.

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5 Requirements of New DNA Technical Leaders

- 5.1 A newly appointed permanent DNA Technical Leader must review all validation studies and methodologies currently used by the laboratory in their area of responsibility and must review and approve the qualifications of currently qualified analysts. Completion of these reviews must be documented no more than one calendar year after appointment.