



**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS, INC.**

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September 28, 2016

Attn: NCFS - Human Factors Subcommittee

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors represents more than 600 members of crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation. The membership represents both private and public institutions from all 50 states in the U.S. and eighteen countries from across the globe. Our mission is to promote the effectiveness of crime laboratory leaders throughout the world by facilitating communication among members, sharing critical information, providing relevant training, promoting crime laboratory accreditation, and encouraging scientific and managerial excellence in the global forensic science community.

ASCLD is dedicated to advancing forensic science through a multitude of initiatives including the National Commission on Forensic Science. The efforts of the Commission are important and have significant implications for the entire criminal justice community. As a result, the ASCLD Board of Directors offers the following comments, recommendations, and impact statements for consideration by the sub-committee on the *“Views of the Commission – Use of Checklists in Forensic Science”*.

ASCLD remains ready to be a continuing resource to assist the Commission and the Department of Justice in the development of these important work products for the forensic science community so that a broader based acceptance and implementation of these products may be realized.

Regards,

ASCLD Board of Directors



The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

"Excellence Through Leadership in Forensic Science Management"

ASCLD Board Comments

Views of the Commission: Use of Checklists in Forensic Science

The ASCLD Board of Directors thanks the NCFSS for raising the importance of using checklists in the execution of methods and tests in forensic science. Many laboratories and practitioners have implemented these as a standard aspect of the daily execution of their tasks while testing evidence, writing reports, or completing peer reviews of others work. In fact, these are often incorporated as a requirement of the FSSPs quality system to meet accreditation standards and have been adopted due to their benefit. While the benefit is largely anecdotal within the community, their use has widespread support.

The NCFSS raises interesting research questions for the forensic science community and proposes a set of questions that could be answered to the benefit of the criminal justice system. The Board requests the NCFSS include in the following in the Views document.

1. Include the cited literature review (p. 1 last paragraph) as an appendix of similar types of research which provides the foundation for the NCFSS view. While the NCFSS has cited two references, it would be instructional to the community and to researchers to have a broader base for the research being proposed within the views document.
2. Include in the statement of issue that checklists are commonly used in the practice of forensic science, but that there is little known from a qualitative or quantitative perspective as to their benefit or impact on the overall quality of the work product. It is advised that any research in this arena take into account an assessment of what is already being used and their overall benefit to the quality of the work product.

ASCLD recognizes the importance of research in this area of quality assurance and supports these endeavors. However when developing national research strategies, ASCLD would advise the Attorney General that there are other areas of research that have been identified by the NCFSS, OSAC, NIJ, and others which are of a higher priority for our members including those specifically within the scientific arena such as black/white box studies, development of statistical models for feature comparison disciplines, etc.¹

¹ OSAC has published research needs in each of the disciplines that are recognized by the subject matter experts as a priority for forensic science. (<https://www.nist.gov/topics/forensic-science/osac-research-development-needs>)