

TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Licensing Advisory Committee (Committee) of the Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) met in person and via videoconference on April 10, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.007, Austin, Texas 78701.

Members Present:

- Andrew Greenwood
- Michelle Paulson
- Katherine Sanchez, Chair
- Kelly Wouters
- Carina Haynes
- Megan Rommel
- Deion Christophe
- Jessica Frazier

The following Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Andrew Greenwood, Kelly Wouters.

Members Absent: Angelica Cogliano

Staff Present:

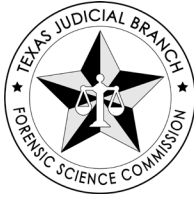
- Lynn Garcia, General Counsel
- Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel
- Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel
- Robert Smith, Senior Staff Attorney
- Chelsea Estes, Commission Coordinator
- Rodney Soward, Program Specialist
- Maggie Sowatzka, Program Specialist
- Steve Miller, Multimedia Producer

Members conducted this meeting of the Committee as a videoconference and in-person meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code section 551.127. Members of the Committee and Staff appeared remotely and at the physical location set forth in these minutes.

1. Call meeting to order. Roll call for members. Excuse any absent committee members.

Sanchez called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. Committee members were present as indicated above.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to excuse Cogliano's absence. Cristophe seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*



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2. Review and adopt minutes from the January 31, 2025 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to adopt the minutes as drafted. Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

3. Administrative update, including the number of licenses issued and renewed. Discuss status of the implementation of new license application management program (ALiS). (General Counsel Garcia/Associate General Counsel Tomlin/Program Specialist Soward).

Licensing Program Specialist Soward updated members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of March 21, 2025 (1,339 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 239; provisional, 4; temporary, 4; uncommon, 3; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,088; in addition to renewals processed to date.

The Commission currently utilizes a learning management system called TopClass customized to be an application portal for forensic licensing, while the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) uses an application system called ALiS to process applications for court interpreters, court reporters, process servers, and guardians, all of whom must apply for some form of certification, registration, or licensure from JBCC. The Office of Court Administration (OCA), which is the parent agency for both the JBCC and the Commission, decided to transition the application process for all OCA licensing programs to ALiS for efficiency and budgeting purposes, and because the platform is a dedicated application system. Staff will continue working with ALiS developers to fully customize the licensing platform and landing pages for the Commission's use and will eventually transition all Commission applicants to ALiS. The core will be developed by May 31, 2025. The target date for completion is August 31, 2025.

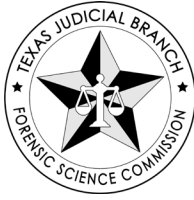
4. Review any outstanding coursework evaluations.

There were no outstanding coursework evaluations reviews for the Committee this quarter.

5. Review any outstanding criminal history evaluations and/or licensee conduct reports from licensing applications.

There were no outstanding criminal history evaluations or licensee conduct reports reviews for the Committee this quarter.

6. Update on development of a guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs and standard operating procedures, including discussion and update on collaboration with the Texas Division of the International Association for



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Identification (TDIAI) and hosting of licensing exam at TDIAI's annual conference, June 10-14, 2025, in League City, Texas. (Paulson)

Committee member Paulson updated members on the working group developing guidance documents for a model intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring program and standard operating procedures. Celestina Rossi, Crime Scene Analyst from Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, agreed to teach a course at the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI) June 2025 annual conference that will include topics such as the Commission's role in forensic oversight, requirements for voluntary licensing, and fulfillment of forensic service provider quality requirements. Garcia added that at least one Commission staff member will be available after Rossi's TDIAI presentation for questions from attendees.

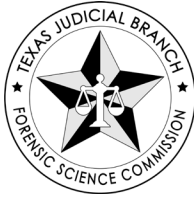
Paulson explained the working group (in collaboration with TDIAI) also plans to pilot a proficiency monitoring program at the June 2025 TDIAI annual conference. The proficiency test will consist of one crime scene room with a checklist of all the different elements of crime scenes, including photography, evidence collection, and processing. Before entering the staged crime scene, participants will identify the topics applicable to them and complete components applicable to their discipline. Paulson provided a draft of the proficiency monitoring document and a checklist for the Committee to review. Commissioners provided positive feedback to the mock proficiency monitoring program for crime scene analysts.

7. Discuss the issue of the lack of available accredited firearms experts and possible resources for smaller laboratories to achieve accreditation in firearms through the Texas Indigent Defense Commission.

Garcia explained the the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) funds regional or county public defender services. There is no statewide public defender service in Texas. The Harris County Public Defender's Office is likely the most equipped to support a forensic laboratory. Garcia will discuss the development of a possible program with TDIC during the next Texas legislative session.

8. Discuss and vote on recommended rule changes including, but not limited to, amendments to § 651.207, Forensic Analyst and Forensic Technician Licensing Requirements, Including Initial License Term and Fee, Minimum Education and Coursework, General Forensic Examination, Proficiency Monitoring and Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility Training, to require forensic biology/DNA analyst compliance with current coursework requirements of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing rather than the older, 2011 requirements.

The Committee discussed changing the current licensing requirements to reflect the recent changes to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Quality Assurance Standards. The



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FBI expanded the courses that will qualify analysts under the standards by removing specific course names from the requirements. In the previous version of the document, the specific course names presented difficulties in evaluating the syllabi of courses without the specific names to determine equivalency. Rommel shared her concerns about potential inconsistencies under the older standard. Haynes suggested implementing the FBI standards for simplicity.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Rommel moved to recommend that the Commission propose changes to the rules discussed, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and Commission staff. Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

9. Update and discuss the Commission's upcoming April 17, 2025 statewide task force on Rapid DNA meeting.

Garcia gave an update on the statewide Rapid DNA task force. At the meeting, Brady Mills, from Texas Department of Public Safety, will give a summary on the development of Rapid DNA technology in the State. The group will discuss the needs from the perspective of law enforcement as well as the possibility of a Rapid DNA license. Funding for Rapid DNA programs is currently being discussed by the Legislature.

10. Discuss development of updates to the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam (GFALE), including a review of the seven domains and corresponding reading materials and development of an updated version of the required Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility course content.

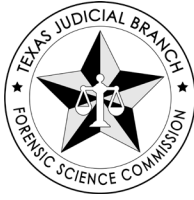
Garcia explained that the GFALE is periodically updated to provide new questions and study materials to potential licensees. The current iteration is the GFALE II. Staff will send out a survey to Committee members to determine which Committee members will assist with which domain.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to direct staff to form a working group to review the current domains and reading materials for the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam and to review the current content for the Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility Course. Rommel seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

11. Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD). (Stout)

There was no update from TACLD this quarter.

12. Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.



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There were no additional agenda items suggested for the next quarterly committee meeting other than that noted above.

13. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for July 24, 2025, October 23, 2025, January 29, 2026, and April 23, 2026.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Christophe moved to instruct staff to schedule these meetings. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

14. Public comment.

There was no public comment other than that noted above.

15. Adjourn.

Sanchez adjourned the meeting at 11:18 am.