TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*1701 North Congress Ave., Suite 6-700*
*Austin, Texas 78701*

# 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 July 30, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.035, Austin, Texas 78701.**

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| **Members Present:** | Katherine Sanchez, Chair<br>Andrew Greenwood<br>Michelle Paulson<br>Ashleigh Berg<br>Celestina Rossi<br>Lauren Woolridge<br>Deion Christophe<br>Jessica Frazier |

**The following Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Michelle Paulson, Andrew Greenwood**

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| **Members Absent:** | Angelica Cogliano |
| **Staff Present:** | Lynn Garcia, General Counsel<br>Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel<br>Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel<br>Robert Smith, Senior Staff Attorney<br>Chelsea Estes, Commission Coordinator<br>Jarrah Kennedy, Scientific Program Coordinator<br>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 10:00 am. Committee members were present as indicated above.

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

2. **Review and adopt minutes from the April 23, 2026 quarterly committee meeting.**

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

3. **Administrative update including, but not limited to, update on the number of licenses issued and renewed; status of the implementation of new license application program (ALiS); and review of committee member terms. (Associate General Counsel Tomlin).**

   Tomlin updated members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of April 8, 2026 (1,392 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 238; provisional, 6; temporary, 6; uncommon, 3; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,139; in addition to renewals processed to date.

   Three members are currently up for reappointment: Frazier, Christophe, and Woolridge. Cogliano's term is ending and she is not eligible for reappointment pursuant to statutory term limits. The Commission will appoint a new committee member at its July 31, 2026 quarterly meeting.

   Staff reported the transfer of licensing data into ALiS, the Commission's newly developed licensing application system. Laboratories are now able to submit forms including the licensee change reporting form, proficiency monitoring form, and de minimis laboratory updates.

4. **Discuss General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam II audit and final corrective action report.**

   Garcia explained that staff discovered an issue with 7 licensee exam grades. To achieve a passing grade on the GFALE II, one must receive a score of at least 70 and reach certain minimums in each of the domain categories. A former employee issued a passing grade for 7 test takers who did not meet the 70-point threshold. Three (3) of these individuals received a license in a mandatory discipline, one (1) of which was not performing criminal case work. Four (4) of the individuals were licensed in voluntary categories. The three mandatory licensees and one voluntary licensee have retaken and passed the exam. The remaining three volunteer licensees will take the exam by December 1, 2026.

   Staff completed a root cause analysis and determined the root cause of the grading errors was in part due to a time intensive, manual grading process. Additionally, there was no second reviewer for the grades. Kennedy developed an automated, Excel-based formula, and all exam grades now receive a second review. The review methodology is split into three levels of rigor, determined by the score that is listed in Blackboard.

   Staff will release a final, updated corrective action report on the matter to the public after the remaining three licensees retake the exam.

5. **Review any outstanding coursework evaluations for license qualification.**

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

6. **Review any requests for criminal history evaluation submitted to the Commission per 37 Texas Administrative Code, Section 651.218, Preliminary Evaluation of License Eligibility Based on Criminal History.**

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

7. **Update on development of a guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs and standard operating procedures in collaboration with Texas Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI), including possibly scheduling additional Crime Scene Investigator Standard Operating Procedure Development Courses in Austin, and establishment of competency exams in connection with voluntary license programs. (Paulson/Rossi/Berg)**

   Committee members Paulson and Rossi provided an update on the working group developing guidance documents for a model intra- and inter-agency proficiency monitoring program, as well as an in-person training on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for crime scene units. The guidance is being developed specifically for small law enforcement agency crime scene units that require assistance in creating first-time SOPs to comply with the Commission's quality requirements for employing laboratories whose personnel seek Commission licensure.

   Members Paulson and Rossi held a standard operating procedure-writing workshop at the Barbara Jordan Conference Center in Austin from March 30, 2026, through April 2, 2026. Paulson and Rossi also reported on their collaboration with members of the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI) to develop competency examinations to satisfy latent print examiner licensure requirements that otherwise would require certification exams, such as the International Association for Identification's Certification Exam for Latent Print Examiners. Paulson and Rossi plan to review the examination to assess difficulty, timing, etc. and will report back to the group. Paulson and Rossi plan to hold additional SOP writing workshops soon.

   Paulson is doing a presentation about licensing at crime scene agencies at the North Texas Forensic Symposium in September.

   Paulson is reviewing the DPS friction ridge exam to evaluate if it is well calibrated for the level of competency the Commission is aiming to assess.

8. **Discuss and vote on recommended rule changes including, but not limited to, amendments to Section 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 reduce the number of work experience years required for firearms/toolmarks examiners to qualify for a waiver of coursework or minimum education requirements from five to three years.**

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

9. **Discuss possible changes to work experience years required for waiver of coursework and/or education requirements for other mandatory forensic disciplines.**

   Staff consulted with the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD) and the Texas Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (TAFQAM) to assess possible changes to work experience required for waived coursework. The groups recommended to leave the requirements as is for the chemistry and forensic biology/DNA licensed disciplines.

10. **Update and discussion regarding Statewide Working Group on Rapid DNA, including June 12, 2026 meeting, and the Licensing Advisory Committee's Rapid DNA Operator License Subcommittee's upcoming September 4, 2026 meeting.**

    Kennedy provided an update on the work of the statewide Rapid DNA Working Group. The group developed a revised version of the FBI's Memorandum of Understanding (between accredited laboratories and law enforcement agencies). The group is also creating guidance on which sample types are suitable for this technology, and well as infographics for end-users. The group intends to work with DPS to develop a curriculum to train Rapid DNA operators. The Committee is considering what level of licensure to require for Rapid DNA operators. The group will meet again on September 4, 2026.

11. **Discuss progress on updating the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam, including the June 23, 2026 content specification review with the contracted psychometrician service, ACS Ventures, and next steps for exam question development by domain subcommittees.**

    All seven domain subcommittees for the updated General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam III (GFALE III) identified and reviewed current and new study materials so that each domain's study materials can be solidified and the subcommittees can begin working on question development with the psychometricians. The expected launch date is January 2027.

    On June 23, 2026, staff conducted a content specification review to assess whether the identified study materials align with the established objectives. Staff finalized the

objectives and full syllabus for the new version of the exam. On August 24, 2026, ACS Ventures will provide an item writing training to the domain subcommittees.

**12. Update regarding Texas Forensic Analyst Apprenticeship Pilot (TFAAPP) Program including, but not limited to, status of program development and applicable interim charge.**

Garcia provided an update on collaborative efforts to establish the TFAAP program in accordance with SB-1620. The group is developing curriculum to support new forensic analysts in the areas of seized drugs, alcohol toxicology and DNA analysis with input from the TACLD, the Center for Human Identification and the Institute for Forensic Research, Training and Innovation. The pilot program will support 18 apprentices during their first two years of employment. Initially, the pilot program will focus on the following forensic disciplines: seized drugs, blood alcohol analysis, and forensic biology/DNA, with firearms planned for future iterations of the program if it is continued beyond the pilot phase.

**13. Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD). (Peter Stout, TACLD President)**

The TACLD will meet on July 30.

**14. Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.**

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

**15. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for October 22, 2026; January 28, 2027; and April 29, 2027, July 29, 2027, and October 21, 2027.**

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

**16. Public comment.**

There were no additional public comments beyond those previously noted.

**17. Adjourn.**

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Rossi moved to adjourn the meeting. Christophe seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.*