

Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods

QAS Clarification Document



Additional Guidance for the Application of the Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories and Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories

The Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods, better known by its acronym of SWGDAM, is a group of approximately 50 scientists representing Federal, State and Local forensic DNA laboratories in the United States and Canada. During meetings, which are held twice a year, Committees discuss topics of interest to the forensic DNA community and often develop documents to provide direction and guidance for the community. This document was first presented to the Executive Board of SWGDAM and received approval on May 6, 2013; the approval of subsequent clarifications will be noted in the Table under “Date Posted”.

This guidance document contains topics related to the application, intent, and/or interpretation of the Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories (effective September 1, 2011) and Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories (effective September 1, 2011) that have arisen as a part of the auditing process. This document provides supplemental guidance for specific standards and is intended to assist laboratories and auditors to better understand the objective of a given requirement and its application to the specific situation(s) described.

**Additional Guidance for the QAS for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories and QAS for
DNA Databasing Laboratories – Approved 03/09/2015**

Issue	Requirement/Source	Application, Guidance or Interpretation	Date Posted
Is it necessary to have a separate reagent blank and a negative amplification control for direct amplification?	Forensic 9.5.2, 9.5.3 Database 9.5.2, 9.5.3	<p>No. The laboratory shall meet the requirements in both 9.5.2 and 9.5.3. This can be accomplished with either a combined reagent blank/negative amplification control or separate reagent blank and negative amplification controls.</p> <p>If a lab chooses a combined control, Standard 9.5.3.1 shall be marked N/A only if no reagents or water are added, in addition to the direct amplification reagents.</p> <p>If a lab chooses a combined control and reagents or water are added, in addition to the direct amplification reagents, Standard 9.5.3.1 shall be evaluated and marked Yes or No, as appropriate.</p>	05/06/2013
Does the differential extraction need two reagent blank controls: epithelial and sperm fraction?	Forensic 9.5.3	Yes. The discussion under 9.5 requires that the reagent blank control be treated the same as, and parallel to, the forensic sample. The intent is for the blank to monitor for contamination and be a manipulation control.	05/06/2013

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Does a qualified analyst that is regularly proficiency-tested need to do a technical review on a proficiency test?	Forensic 13.1 Database 13.1	Refer to the discussion under Standards 12.1 and 12.1.1. A qualified analyst proficiency tested in the specific DNA methodology is qualified to serve as a technical reviewer without needing to serve as a technical reviewer on a proficiency test.	03/09/2015