



Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body

Policy and Processes for Certification

January 2024

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References in this notice to ANZPAA are references to the Members of ANZPAA.

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ANZPAA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's first peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work. ANZPAA is committed to fulfilling the principles of New Zealand's founding document The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). Central to the principles is a common understanding that all parties will relate and participate with each other in good faith with mutual respect, co-operation and trust. This Policy is committed to fulfilling the intent of international treaties and human rights legislation applicable to the various jurisdictions in which we operate, our obligations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the principles of the New Zealand (Aotearoa) Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

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Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body

Background

1. The Australasian Police Professional Standards Council (APPSC) comprised of the Australia New Zealand Police Commissioners, the president of the Police Federation of Australia and the president of the New Zealand Police Association, established the National Fingerprint Accreditation Board (NFAB) in 2001. Operating under the Council, NFAB conducted competency assessments and accredited Fingerprint Examiners with 'expert' status.
2. Following increasing interest in professional accreditation generally, it was proposed to replace NFAB with an umbrella body capable of accrediting a broader range of professionals. Consequently, the Australasian Forensic Field Sciences Accreditation Board (AFFSAB) was established in 2003.
3. AFFSAB operated under the auspices of APPSC until it was amalgamated into the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) in 2007. In 2008, the National Institute of Forensic Science (NIFS) was integrated into ANZPAA. ANZPAA NIFS assumed management and secretariat functions of AFFSAB in 2009.
4. A major review of AFFSAB was conducted between 2017 and 2019. As part of this review, in September 2018, AFFSAB was renamed the Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body (AFSAB), providing a better reflection of the program as a certification and assessment body.
5. AFSAB certifies Fingerprint Examiners, Firearm Examiners and Crime Scene Investigators in Australia.

Mission

6. AFSAB is committed to enhancing professionalism for forensic practitioners and promoting confidence in forensic science practice throughout Australasia. This is achieved by:
 - 6.1. assessing and certifying competent forensic practitioners
 - 6.2. ensuring through periodic recertification that practitioners maintain competence
 - 6.3. reviewing the certification of practitioners failing to comply with established professional standards.

Purpose and Function

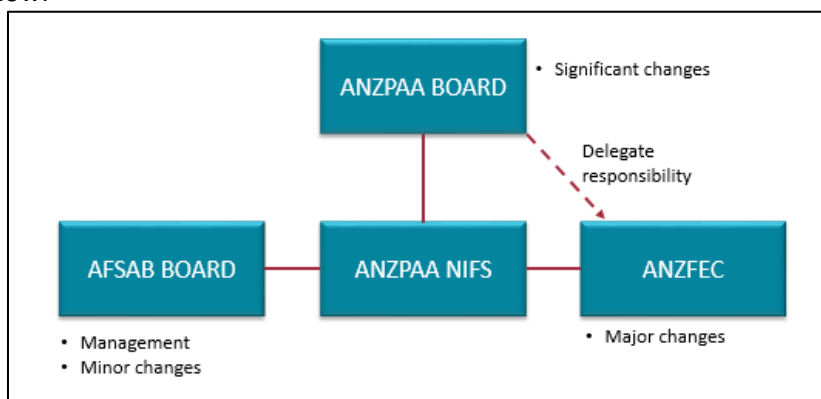
7. AFSAB is an independent body that certifies individuals to an agreed professional standard. The AFSAB assessment process is used to determine competency to the AFSAB requirements and is separate to any jurisdictional education and training program or competency determination.
8. AFSAB promotes and enhances professionalism in forensic science disciplines by determining standards of practice/performance as requisites for certification (and recognition as 'experts') within a policy framework endorsed by the Australia New Zealand Police Commissioners. Within this remit AFSAB:
 - 8.1. establishes certification policy and processes
 - 8.2. determines outcomes of applications received
 - 8.3. maintains a register of certified practitioners and determines policy on its content, publication, and access

- 8.4. considers policy matters including certification or decertification of practitioners, quality equivalences, grievances and appeals
- 8.5. promotes an ethical standard of practice for certified practitioners (see AFSAB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct)
- 8.6. maintains a communication strategy to keep Australasian forensic practitioners apprised of AFSAB related developments
- 8.7. provides status reports to the Australia New Zealand Forensic Executive Committee (ANZFEC)
- 8.8. provides yearly updates to the relevant Specialist Advisory Groups (SAG).
9. AFSAB has been aligned to the International Organization of Standardization 17024:2012, *Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certifications of persons*, where possible.
10. Where the term competency is used in this document, it refers to the requirements set by the AFSAB certification process established through demonstrable experience and a standardised assessment process.

Organisation and Management

Governance

11. AFSAB is overseen by the ANZPAA Board consisting of the Police Commissioners of Australia and New Zealand and the ACT Chief Police Officer, the Australia New Zealand Forensic Executive Committee (ANZFEC) and the AFSAB Board (the Board). The functions and reporting lines of these groups are outlined below:



12. The ANZPAA Board is responsible for significant changes to AFSAB, in particular those changes that have a potential to create industrial issues, are high risk, or impact policing.
13. The expansion or reduction in scope of certification is an authority held by the ANZPAA Board.
14. ANZFEC are responsible for approving major changes and providing formal endorsement of significant changes for consideration by the ANZPAA Board. Major changes may include policy changes affecting certification or recertification criteria.
15. The AFSAB Board is responsible for decisions relating to certification, including certification, recertification and decertification, as well as minor changes to processes.
16. The management of AFSAB is the remit of the AFSAB Board.
17. An update on the activities of AFSAB is contained in the ANZPAA NIFS Status Report which is provided to ANZFEC and the ANZPAA Board.

ANZFEC Member Responsibilities

18. ANZFEC members are responsible for governing the use of AFSAB certification in their jurisdiction. This includes providing recommendations and support for AFSAB activities, certification, and recertification.
19. ANZFEC members may delegate their AFSAB responsibilities to no more than two appropriate individuals within their organisation. Delegation shall not be to multiple people for one discipline.
20. Where relevant, non-ANZFEC member agencies shall delegate an appropriate member of their organisation to assume the responsibilities of ANZFEC members for their agency.
21. All requests to delegate responsibilities shall be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent by the nominating ANZFEC member to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
22. Where the term ANZFEC member is used in this policy or AFSAB related forms, it also refers to the ANZFEC members, AFSAB approved delegate, or where relevant the non-ANZFEC agencies approved delegate.

AFSAB Board

23. The Board is comprised of eight members as outlined below:

Member	Tenure
AFSAB Board Chair	Permanent to position of Director, ANZPAA NIFS
Legal representative	Permanent to position of Executive Director Legal Services, Victoria Police, or their delegate
Education representative	Three-year appointment (eligible for further terms)
ANZFEC representative	Three-year appointment (eligible for second term)
Crime Scene representative	Three-year appointment (eligible for second term)
Fingerprint representative	Three-year appointment (eligible for second term)
Firearm representative	Three-year appointment (eligible for second term)
ANZPAA NIFS representative (ex officio)	Three-year appointment (eligible for further terms)

24. Other than the positions of the Board Chair, Legal representative, Education representative and ANZPAA NIFS representative, the Board members are elected by their respective group for a period of three years.
25. An Education representative with the appropriate credentials from an appropriate institution (such as ANZPAA), as determined by the Board, is appointed for a period of three years.
26. The ANZPAA NIFS representative is an ex officio member of the AFSAB Board and does not hold voting rights.
27. The *AFSAB Board Terms of Reference* (TOR) defines the structure and purpose of the Board and addresses elements including:
 - 27.1. governance and accountability
 - 27.2. role

- 27.3. code of ethics and declaration of interests
- 27.4. membership and responsibilities
- 27.5. protocols and procedures.

Quality Equivalency – Training Programs

- 28. When required, the Board may convene a subcommittee to make recommendations on:
 - 28.1. the equivalency of an organisation's education and training programs against the current pre-requisite criteria at clauses 59-60.
- 29. The subcommittee shall be comprised of:
 - 29.1. the AFSAB Board Education representative (to assess educational equivalency)
 - 29.2. the relevant AFSAB Board discipline representative (to assess discipline technical requirements and standards)
 - 29.3. another AFSAB Board discipline representative (to assess equivalency of technical requirements and standards between disciplines).
- 30. In the event that an AFSAB Board discipline representative has been involved in the development or delivery of the program which is being assessed for equivalency, an appropriate AFSAB certified individual will be appointed to the subcommittee by the AFSAB Chair, in their place.
- 31. Applications for equivalency assessment may be submitted by an ANZFEC member or a representative of the ANZFEC member's jurisdiction. The application should be addressed to the AFSAB Board Chair and sent to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
- 32. The Quality Equivalency Panel (QEP) may request clarification or further information from the ANZFEC member or jurisdictional representative, if required.
- 33. The subcommittee members shall assess the application (paper based or via an assessment visit) within 60 business days of receiving all relevant documentation.
- 34. The subcommittee will develop a report detailing their opinion and assessment. If equivalency is not supported, specific reasons and actions required to reach equivalency, should be provided.
- 35. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached by the subcommittee members, ANZFEC member or jurisdictional representative shall be notified and provided with an opportunity to submit further information for consideration.
- 36. The AFSAB Chair is responsible for reviewing the report and approving the subcommittee recommendation.
- 37. The ANZFEC member or jurisdictional representative will be notified of the outcome within 10 business days of a decision being reached.

Quality Equivalency – Individual

- 38. An organisation may put forward a candidate with a minimum science degree (or VET Sector equivalent) for AFSAB certification along with an acknowledgement from the responsible ANZFEC member that the organisation considers the candidate's education, training, and experience commensurate with the competencies, skills, and knowledge outlined in the ANZPAA Education and Training Guidelines.

39. Under this circumstance, the candidate may apply for certification without having completed the pre-requisite Police Training Package (POLTP) course.
40. The education and training equivalency acknowledgement will replace the need to convene an equivalency panel to assess the individual's education and training.

Administration

41. The management and secretariat functions of AFSAB shall be undertaken by ANZPAA NIFS.
42. This policy (*Policy and Processes for Certification*), and associated AFSAB forms, are available on the ANZPAA NIFS website (<https://www.anzpaa.org.au/forensic-science/services/afsab>). They shall be reviewed yearly to ensure they are current and fit-for-purpose. Additional reviews may be completed if deemed necessary by the Board. Significant changes or updates shall be approved by the AFSAB Board. Minor updates may be approved by the AFSAB Chair.
43. The use of obsolete documents will not be accepted.
44. All time frames listed in this document may be extended, if necessary, by the AFSAB Chair.
45. The AFSAB Chair may delegate minor administrative responsibilities to the ANZPAA NIFS Assistant Director (e.g., approving candidate applications and certificates where the Chair is absent)
 - 45.1. A person acting in the ANZPAA NIFS Director role assumes the role of AFSAB Chair for that acting period.
 - 45.2. The ANZPAA NIFS Director may also request an ANZPAA NIFS staff member to act as AFSAB Chair where they cannot carry out the role's duties for reasons such as overlapping commitments (e.g., attending an overseas conference).

Confidentiality

46. The AFSAB certification process is confidential.
47. AFSAB information that is not publicly available through the ANZPAA NIFS website (<https://www.anzpaa.org.au/forensic-science/services/afsab>) is restricted and covered by a Deed of Confidentiality. This includes, but is not limited to policies, documents and assessment tools (e.g., question sheets, marking criteria, practical assessment) related to the Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body (AFSAB), or its previously named entity, Australasian Forensic Field Sciences Accreditation Board (AFFSAB) and national or jurisdictional training guidelines, procedures or methods.
48. All individuals involved in AFSAB processes, including but not limited to AFSAB Board members, candidates, assessors, observers and nominated jurisdictional contacts, shall sign the Deed of Confidentiality before being provided with AFSAB Information.

Record Retention

49. All records relating to AFSAB are confidential.
50. All official records related to a candidate's certification will be included in the candidate's file and retained by AFSAB.

Communication

51. AFSAB communication occurs via the following channels:
 - 51.1. ANZPAA NIFS website
 - 51.2. The Forensic Exhibit Newsletter
 - 51.3. SAG meetings
 - 51.4. Email distribution lists.
52. AFSAB announcements are published in *The Forensic Exhibit*, the ANZPAA NIFS newsletter. Requests for receipt of this newsletter should be sent to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
53. An AFSAB update is a standing agenda item for all relevant SAG face-to-face meetings. The update will be provided by the SAG endorsed discipline representative. In the event that the representative is unavailable, an ANZPAA NIFS representative shall provide the update. Updates may also be provided via teleconference.
54. The SAG endorsed discipline representatives are responsible for providing updates and feedback from the SAG to the Board and changes from the Board to the SAG.
55. AFSAB groups (Board Members, Assessors and Experts) may communicate via the appropriate email distribution list. Access to the distribution list is provided upon certification, recognition as an AFSAB Board Approved Assessor or appointment to the Board.
56. Each jurisdiction will nominate one individual to be the primary AFSAB contact. A jurisdiction may also nominate discipline specific contacts, who may be contacted for discipline specific technical issues, if required.
57. Communication with candidates, supervisors, ANZFEC members and nominated jurisdiction regarding certification and recertification will occur via email.
58. Should contact need to be made with AFSAB via mail, the correspondence should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent to the following address:

Chair - Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body
C/O ANZPAA NIFS
Victoria Police Centre Level 24
GPO BOX 913
Melbourne VIC 3001

AFSAB Initial Certification

Pre-requisite Criteria for AFSAB Certification

59. Candidates from all disciplines must satisfy the following criteria before applying for AFSAB certification:
 - 59.1. demonstrated experience in analysing major, serious, or complex incidents
 - 59.2. completion of a Police Training Package (POLTP) Graduate Certificate relevant to the discipline or equivalent¹ (refer **Appendix B**) OR relevant science degree with an ANZFEC acknowledgement
 - 59.3. provision of a supporting statement from their supervisor outlining the candidate's experience, training, and competence in the relevant discipline
 - 59.4. recommendation for AFSAB assessment by their ANZFEC member by way of signature on *Form 1: Application for AFSAB Certification*.
60. Crime Scene Investigators who, by way of job description, are not authorised to lead major, serious or complex incidents as the responsible reporting forensic case officer (including homicide, sexual assaults, suspicious deaths and clandestine laboratory/drug investigations), or only examine volume crime scenes, are not included within the definition of 'crime scene investigator' for the purposes of AFSAB certification.

AFSAB Certification Application Process

61. Candidates seeking certification shall meet the AFSAB pre-requisite criteria prior to submitting their application.
62. Applications for AFSAB Assessment (*Form 1*) should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent by the candidate or nominated jurisdiction contact to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au, along with any relevant documentation, no less than three months prior to the proposed assessment dates.
63. AFSAB may request clarification or further information from the candidate, nominated jurisdiction contact or the relevant ANZFEC member, if required.
64. AFSAB will review the application and relevant documentation to ensure it meets AFSAB requirements within fifteen business days of receipt of the information. If all requirements are met, an information pack containing the following will be sent to the candidate:
 - 64.1. discipline specific candidate guide
 - 64.2. current Policy and Processes for Certification, including Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
 - 64.3. Deed of Confidentiality.
65. If the candidate does not meet the requirements for certification, their application will be denied, and notification will be provided to the submitting individual within five business days of the decision being made.
66. The candidate may re-apply as soon as the AFSAB requirements for certification have been achieved.

¹ Equivalence shall be assessed by the AFSAB Quality Equivalency Panel and is considered as:

1. Training developed in line with the relevant ANZPAA Education and Training Guideline or Graduate Certificate
2. Relevant degree and workplace training mapped to the relevant Graduate Certificate or ANZPAA Education and Training Guideline

67. To obtain certification the candidate must pass the relevant discipline specific written, practical, and oral assessment (in that order).
68. AFSAB requires that the written and practical assessment be conducted at least two weeks apart and the oral assessment be scheduled at least six weeks after the practical assessment (see *Form 1*) if the assessment is a face-to-face meeting.
69. The relevant jurisdiction shall nominate two discipline specific AFSAB Board approved assessors from their agency to act as internal assessors and provide the names of these assessors on the AFSAB application (*Form 1*).
70. AFSAB shall appoint an appropriate AFSAB Board approved discipline specific assessor from a different jurisdiction to the candidate to act as an external assessor. Their details will be provided to the nominated jurisdiction contact. If an appropriate external assessor is not available on the requested assessment date(s), AFSAB will liaise with the nominated jurisdiction contact and the external assessor to identify a suitable alternative.
71. In the event a jurisdiction has one or no AFSAB Board approved assessors available for an AFSAB assessment, they shall either:
 - 71.1. nominate the one discipline specific AFSAB Board approved assessor from their agency. AFSAB shall appoint two appropriate AFSAB Board approved discipline specific assessors
OR
 - 71.2. nominate the one discipline specific AFSAB Board approved assessor from their agency, and one certified practitioner that meets the AFSAB assessor eligibility criteria, but who is not approved as an assessor by AFSAB
OR
 - 71.3. AFSAB shall appoint three appropriate AFSAB Board approved discipline specific assessors from external agencies. The relevant jurisdiction may nominate one individual from their agency who has completed the discipline specific jurisdictional education and training program to observe the assessment process and provide advice to the AFSAB Board approved assessors.
72. The same panel of three AFSAB Board approved assessors should assess a candidate's AFSAB written, practical and oral assessments (including in the event of a candidate needing to resit an assessment component).
73. Assessment documents (including the assessment questions) will be provided to the nominated jurisdiction contact within three business days prior to each assessment.
74. The nominated jurisdiction contact is responsible for returning the completed assessment documents to AFSAB within 24 hours following the completion of each assessment.
75. Assessment marking documents (including the candidate's completed assessments, marking criteria, benchmarked answers, and feedback forms) will be provided by AFSAB directly to the appointed AFSAB Board approved assessors for each candidate. AFSAB will provide the assessors with the assessment marking documents within three business days of receiving the completed assessments.
76. Each AFSAB Board approved assessor is responsible for independently assessing the candidate's completed assessment and returning it to AFSAB within five business days of receiving the assessment marking documents.
77. If the difference between the highest and lowest mark for an assessment differs by 10 or more marks, and results in the apparent failure of the candidate, the assessment will undergo further review. In the first instance, any outlying result will be first reviewed by the relevant assessor. If the marking difference remains at 10 or more marks, a fourth external assessor will be utilised to provide a further

independent assessment of the candidate's competency. The original panel of three assessors will be required to convene and come to an agreement regarding the candidate's competency. The result of the fourth assessment will be supplied to the original panel of assessors as further evidence for consideration. Once the result for the candidate is agreed upon, the panel of assessors is to provide notification to AFSAB via secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.

78. The nominated jurisdiction contact shall provide candidates with their assessment results and feedback within 10 business days of completing each assessment.
79. At any stage during the AFSAB assessment process, the nominated jurisdiction contact, assessors or relevant ANZFEC member, are able to provide feedback on the AFSAB process and or a candidate undergoing assessment (*Form 6*). The feedback form should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
80. At the completion of the AFSAB assessment process (or partial process in the event of unsuccessful attempts), the AFSAB Chair will review the assessment results and any feedback received regarding the relevant candidate and determine a certification recommendation (*Form 2*). The AFSAB Chair will notify the jurisdiction contact and relevant ANZFEC member of the certification outcome within five business days of a certification decision. The ANZFEC member is to provide acknowledgement of the certification decision by signing *Form 2* within five business days of receiving the notification of results. *Form 2* should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
81. All three assessments shall be completed within a two-year period. If the certification process is not completed within this time frame, the candidate will be required to re-sit all components of the assessment. Exceptions may be approved by the Board in extenuating circumstances. A formal request for special consideration, supported by the relevant ANZFEC member, should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
82. A maximum of three certification attempts per assessment (written, practical and oral) is permitted per candidate within a two-year period.
83. If a candidate does not agree with an assessment result or certification recommendation, they are permitted to lodge an appeal or grievance in accordance with the *AFSAB Certification Appeals and Grievance Process*.

AFSAB Assessment Process

84. There are eight core AFSAB competencies:
 - 84.1. Decision making
 - 84.2. Communication
 - 84.3. Critical thinking
 - 84.4. Problem solving
 - 84.5. Sequencing of examinations
 - 84.6. Technical knowledge
 - 84.7. Uncertainty
 - 84.8. Understanding limitations.
85. The AFSAB assessment process utilises the core AFSAB competencies as a basis for candidates to demonstrate the foundational knowledge, skills, reasoning, and abilities in tasks relevant to the operational requirements and practices, standards, and contemporary issues relevant to their specific discipline.

86. These core competencies are assessed in light of discipline specific competencies, which represent the knowledge and skills required of an 'expert' to perform their day-to-day role (in their discipline).
87. The assessments incorporate both underpinning knowledge and principles and jurisdictional processes, where applicable and appropriate.

Assessment Structure

88. AFSAB assessments consist of the following:

Assessment Component	Maximum Length
Written	3 hours
Practical	3 days
Oral	3 hours

89. Candidates should sit each assessment in the order presented in the table above.
90. Each assessment component shall be assessed by a panel of three assessors. Refer to clauses 70-72 for information regarding assessor panel requirements.
91. Further information on the assessment process can be found in the discipline specific candidate guides which are available from the ANZPAA NIFS website (<https://www.anzpaa.org.au/forensic-science/services/afsab>).

Unsuccessful Assessments

92. Failure by a candidate to demonstrate the required standard for certification in any of the three assessments (written, practical or oral) will result in a failed certification attempt.
93. Candidates shall not attempt the next assessment in the certification process once they have failed to demonstrate competency in any one assessment.
94. The results of any failed assessment shall be reviewed by the AFSAB Chair in determining a certification decision (*Form 2*). The AFSAB Chair will notify the jurisdiction contact and relevant ANZFEC member of the unsuccessful certification outcome within five business days of a certification decision. The ANZFEC member is to provide acknowledgement of the failed certification attempt by completing the return receipt (*Form 2*) within five business days of receiving the notification of results. The receipt of *Form 2* should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.
95. A candidate may re-apply for certification, at the discretion of the relevant jurisdiction, but no sooner than one month after receiving notification from AFSAB of a failed certification attempt. The application should be submitted as per the *AFSAB Application Process (Form 1)*. The three-month minimal notification period required by AFSAB on initial application may be waived in this instance. The date of the final assessment should be within two years of the original application date.
96. On re-applying, recognition of previous partial assessment completion may be sought by the candidate for any assessment passed during the previous failed certification attempt.

Recognition of Certification by a Body other than AFSAB

97. A candidate that is certified by another equivalent independent certification board other than AFSAB may submit a request to have the assessments undertaken to obtain their certification recognised as equivalent to one or more of the AFSAB assessments.
98. The certification body should be aligned to ISO 17024, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*. Completion of an in-house training program is not considered equivalent to AFSAB.
99. Requests for equivalency should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and include written evidence of the assessments completed in obtaining their certification and submitted with the candidate's application.
100. Assessments of equivalency shall be based on determining whether achievement of the AFSAB learning outcomes and assessment requirements have been demonstrated.
101. If a candidate is unable to produce evidence of an assessment deemed to be of AFSAB standard, equivalency will not be granted, and the candidate will be required to sit the full AFSAB certification program relevant to their discipline.
102. The candidate, supervisor and ANZFEC member will be notified of the equivalency assessment outcome within 60 business days of AFSAB receiving the application.
103. The Board holds authority for approving equivalency requests. The decision of the Board is final and is not subject to further appeals.

Fees

104. AFSAB does not charge a fee for certification or recertification.
105. Fees may be charged by an external assessor for the provision of flights and accommodation associated with attending AFSAB assessments. Payment of these fees are the responsibility of the requesting jurisdiction.

Assessment Observation

Observer Attendance at Oral Assessments

106. An ANZFEC member may, in consultation with the AFSAB Board Chair and any other relevant organisation, request for a member of their agency or another appropriate agency to attend an oral assessment as an observer.
107. An invitation to attend an oral assessment may be sent to an appropriate individual, as determined by the AFSAB Board Chair, for the reasons outlined below. All requests for attendance shall be made in consultation with all relevant jurisdictions.
108. An individual may attend an oral assessment as an observer for the following purposes:
 - 108.1. identifying process improvements
 - 108.2. ensuring standardised processes are adopted across disciplines and jurisdictions
 - 108.3. training and professional development
 - 108.4. auditing.
109. Observer attendance at oral assessments is limited to the following individuals:

- 109.1. AFSAB Board Approved Assessors
 - 109.2. Board Member
 - 109.3. ANZPAA NIFS representatives
 - 109.4. other persons as approved by the candidate's ANZFEC member.
110. An observer shall not influence the assessment process or outcome.
111. Observers shall provide feedback to AFSAB within 20 business days of attending an oral assessment. Observers attending for the purpose of training and development are not required to give feedback but may opt to provide feedback if they identify an area of improvement.
112. A maximum of three observers are permitted per oral assessment.
113. A candidate shall be notified, prior to commencing their assessment, that an observer will be present at their oral assessment. The details of the observer and reason for their attendance should also be provided. Any concerns regarding the attendance of an observer shall be raised by the candidate with the relevant ANZFEC member.

Conflict of interest

114. Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed to AFSAB when considering whether to participate in an assessment.

Confidentiality

115. Observers will strive to maintain confidentiality for all assessment processes and outcomes. Any breaches of confidentiality will be referred to the AFSAB Board.

Fees

116. AFSAB will fund the flights and accommodation associated with an ANZPAA NIFS or Board representative attending AFSAB assessments.
117. Costs associated with the attendance of any individual not stated above will be at the expense of the requesting jurisdiction.

AFSAB Recertification

118. Certified experts are eligible for recertification if their employment is with an ANZFEC agency; or their employer is a Commonwealth or International law enforcement agency; or at the discretion of the AFSAB Board. An expert's primary role must be involved with evidentiary casework for policing (or other government identification) purposes.

Annual Recertification

119. Each jurisdiction shall on an annual basis submit their applications for recertification of each of their practitioners (*Form 3*). Recertification is due on 1 January of the year recertification is being sought.
120. Applications for yearly recertification (*Form 3*) should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au no later than 31 January each year.

121. The Board may request clarification or further information from the candidate, nominated jurisdiction contact or the relevant ANZFEC member, if required.
122. Certification shall be maintained by verification from the relevant ANZFEC member that each certified practitioner has maintained relevant competency, contemporary subject knowledge and successfully completed an internal or external proficiency test.
123. A new proficiency test shall be completed each year. Proficiency tests submitted for the purpose of annual recertification shall have been completed in the 12 months prior to the date of submission, with exception of career breaks. Any request for an exception shall be made with the support of the candidate's ANZFEC member.
124. The proficiency test for Firearm Examiners shall be either a fired cartridge case or fired bullet proficiency test.
125. The proficiency test for Fingerprint Examiners is one Fingerprint proficiency test.
126. The proficiency test for Crime Scene Investigators is After the Fact. Crime Scene Investigators involved in the development of the current After the Fact are required to complete an alternate internal proficiency test (refer to clause 128).
127. External proficiency tests for Fingerprint and Firearm Examiners should be from a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) recognised provider.
128. Internal proficiency tests, where the ground truth is known may be used as an alternative.
129. The nature and results of proficiency tests shall be provided to AFSAB upon applying for recertification. This includes copies of proficiency test results for practitioners.
130. Where a certified practitioner is not applying for recertification, AFSAB shall be notified (*Form 3*) and details of the circumstances provided. Notification shall include the relevant ANZFEC member's approval.
131. The AFSAB Chair is responsible for reviewing AFSAB recertification applications and will determine the suitability of an application for AFSAB recertification within 40 business days of receiving the application.
132. The AFSAB certified practitioner and nominated jurisdiction contact will be notified of the outcome within 10 business days of a decision being reached. The ANZFEC member will be notified once all yearly recertification's for their organisation have been processed.
133. AFSAB will notify nominated jurisdiction contacts on 1 March of each year if all the jurisdiction's recertification applications have not been received. The letter will allow for a one-month response time.
134. Individuals that received their initial certification in the 6 months prior to 1 January (i.e., after 1 July of the previous year), are not required to apply for annual recertification the following year.

Five-yearly Recertification

135. Every five years, certified practitioners are required to undergo a more rigorous assessment to ensure they remain contemporary within their area of expertise for the short, medium and long term. In addition to the normal annual requirements, the candidate must demonstrate currency and professional development in their discipline by accumulating 100 points of discipline duties and professional development as outlined in *Form 4: Application for Five-Yearly Recertification*.
136. Evidence provided to demonstrate currency and professional development for five-yearly recertification shall have been completed in the five years preceding the year that recertification is being sought.

137. Certified practitioners are not required to provide supporting documentation for the points claimed as part of five-yearly recertification. On an ad hoc basis, AFSAB may call for this documentation to be submitted by the candidate for auditing purposes and to ensure robustness of the process.
138. AFSAB will notify all nominated jurisdiction contacts in September of each year which AFSAB certified practitioners will be due for five-yearly recertification in the following year. Notification will also be sent to the certified practitioners.
139. Recertification is due on 1 January of the year recertification is being sought.
140. Applications for five-yearly recertification (*Form 4*) should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent by the certified practitioner to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au no later than 31 January of the relevant year.
141. The Board may request clarification or further information from the certified practitioner, nominated jurisdiction contact or the relevant ANZFEC member, if required.
142. Proficiency tests submitted for the Fingerprint Examination and Crime Scene Investigation for the purpose of five-yearly recertification shall have been completed in the 12 months prior to the date of submission, with exception of career breaks. Any request for an exception shall be made with the support of the candidate's ANZFEC member.
143. The proficiency test for Fingerprint Examiners is one Fingerprint proficiency test.
144. The proficiency test for Crime Scene Investigators is After the Fact. Crime Scene Investigators involved in the development of the current After the Fact are required to complete an alternate internal proficiency test (refer to section 143).
145. The proficiency test for Firearm Examiners shall be one fired bullet proficiency test, one fired cartridge case proficiency test and one serial number restoration proficiency test. The fired bullet or fired cartridge case proficiency test shall have been completed in the 12 months prior to the date of submission. The remaining two proficiency tests shall have been completed in the five years preceding the year that recertification is being sought.
146. External proficiency tests for Fingerprint and Firearm Examiners should be from a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) recognised provider.
147. Internal proficiency tests, where the ground truth is known may be used as an alternative.
148. The nature and results of proficiency tests shall be provided to AFSAB upon applying for recertification. This includes copies of proficiency test results for practitioners.
149. Where a certified practitioner is not applying for recertification, AFSAB shall be notified (*Form 3*) and details of the circumstances provided. Notification shall include the relevant ANZFEC member's approval.
150. The AFSAB Chair is responsible for reviewing AFSAB recertification applications and will determine the suitability of an application for AFSAB recertification within 40 business days of receiving the application.
151. The AFSAB certified practitioner and nominated jurisdiction contact will be notified of the outcome within 10 business days of a decision being reached. The ANZFEC member will be notified once all yearly recertification's for their organisation have been processed.
152. AFSAB will notify all nominated jurisdiction contacts on 1 March of each year if all recertification's applications have not been received. The letter will allow for a one-month response time.

Professional Breaks and Certification

153. For certified practitioners who have extended periods of absence from the workplace, the table below outlines the requirements for retaining or regaining their AFSAB certification.

Period of Absence	Policy
Retaining Certification	
Less than two-years absence	<p>If the practitioner has had a period of absence but returns within the year that they have already completed and submitted a successful proficiency test, their certification remains current. Should an annual recertification period have lapsed, the practitioner shall immediately sit an approved proficiency test and provide the results to AFSAB.</p> <p>The practitioner is not required to acknowledge a lapse in certification.</p>
Between two- and five-years absence	<p>It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to evaluate the practitioner's skills and knowledge, particularly relating to changes in practices, processes, and procedures during the period of absence. The jurisdiction shall as a minimum, identify any deficiencies, develop a training program to address these deficiencies, and then arrange for the practitioner to sit an approved proficiency test. The results shall be provided to AFSAB along with a report detailing the period of absence and the training undertaken by the practitioner on their return.</p> <p>Should the practitioner have been certified for a total of five, or a multiple of five, years on return from their career break, they shall complete an <i>Application for Five-Yearly Recertification (Form 4)</i> at the beginning of the following year.</p> <p>The practitioner is not required to acknowledge a lapse in certification.</p> <p>For the purposes of AFSAB reporting, if an expert does not recertify for two or more consecutive years, they will be considered inactive. However, will be made active again on completion of the above.</p>
Regaining Certification	
Greater than five-years absence	<p>AFSAB certification lapses after a five-year period of absence. To regain certification, the individual shall re-sit the full AFSAB assessment process relevant to their discipline. The person must meet all the eligibility criteria that normally applies for a new candidate.</p> <p>The practitioner's certification will re-commence from the date the re-assessment is processed by AFSAB and the practitioner is required to acknowledge a lapse in certification.</p>

Notification regarding Certification

154. Where a jurisdiction conducts an investigation and makes a finding against a practitioner regarding their suitability to obtain or retain AFSAB certification, the jurisdiction is to provide a copy of the finding to the Board within seven days of the date of the finding.
155. The Board may also receive written advice from a practitioner's ANZFEC member regarding their suitability to obtain or retain AFSAB certification.

Rejection and Revocation of Certification

156. The Board may reject a practitioner's application for certification or revoke a practitioner's certification on the ground that they:
 - 156.1. do not meet the requirements of certification pursuant to this Policy;
 - 156.2. failed to maintain any necessary competency because they are no longer engaged in study or work consistent with their certification; or
 - 156.3. failed to adhere to the AFSAB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct as contained in this Policy.
157. If the Board considers that an application for certification should be rejected or a practitioner's certification revoked, it will, by notice in writing to the practitioner:
 - 157.1. state that it proposes to take that action and the ground or grounds for the proposed action; and
 - 157.2. invite the practitioner to respond to the Board to show cause as to why their application should not be rejected or their certification should not be revoked within a specified period (not being less than seven days nor more than 28 days after the notice is given).

Such action will be in full consultation with the relevant ANZFEC member.

158. If the Board:
 - a) has given notice under paragraph 152 to the practitioner; and
 - b) the time specified in the notice for a response has expired –it may, after considering any response from the practitioner, by notice in writing to the practitioner, take the proposed action or take any other action that it considers appropriate.

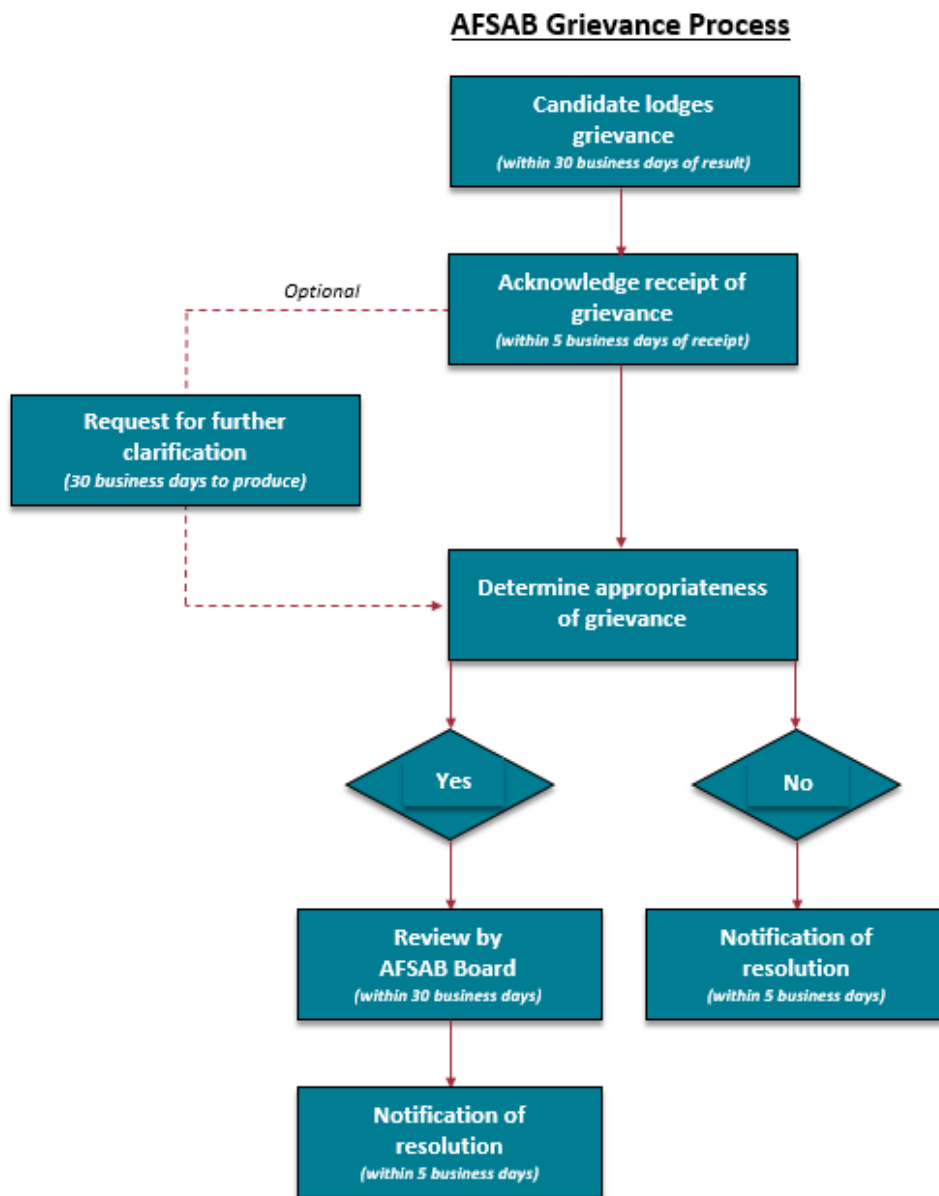
Certification Appeals and Grievance Process

159. AFSAB will accept requests for reconsideration, challenge, or appeal in relation to certification, recertification or assessor status and is committed to resolving these matters in a fair, accurate and timely manner. The submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in discriminatory action against the candidate from the Board.

General Considerations

160. The grievance process provides candidates with the ability to:
- 160.1. request re-scoring of assessments
 - 160.2. request reconsideration of certification or assessor status
 - 160.3. challenge or appeal assessment questions, scores, or procedure
 - 160.4. evaluate the accuracy of Proficiency Tests
 - 160.5. challenge one or more assessors' credentials, impartiality, or conflict of interest management
 - 160.6. seek special considerations.
161. Notice of a candidate's opportunity to lodge a grievance is provided in writing or verbally at the beginning of each assessment.
162. The Board are responsible for addressing all grievances related to certification, recertification, or recognition as an assessor.
163. The Board will strive to maintain confidentiality for all grievance processes and outcomes. All individuals involved in a grievance, including the candidate, will also maintain confidentiality. If necessary, the candidate may engage a support person to assist them throughout the process however, the support person is also required to maintain confidentiality. Any breaches of confidentiality will be referred to the AFSAB Board.
164. Jurisdictional policies such as termination or promotion cannot be used as grounds for an AFSAB appeal.
165. Any opportunities for improvement observed during the grievance process may inform subsequent iterations of the certification process.
166. A grievance may be withdrawn at any stage shall the candidate gain additional information and no longer wish to proceed with their request.

Grievance/Appeal Procedure



167. All grievances shall be addressed in writing to the AFSAB Chair and sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au along with any supporting evidence or documentation.
168. All requests must be received by AFSAB within 30 business days of the date the candidate obtained written confirmation of their certification result. Grievances received after this date will not be considered.
169. The candidate must clearly articulate their point of challenge so that the Board can fully investigate their request.
170. The Board will acknowledge receipt of a grievance via email within 10 business days of receiving the request.
171. The Board may request clarification or further information from the candidate, if required, to make an informed decision. The candidate will have 30 business days from the date of request to produce the information. If the requested information is not provided within the specific time frame, the request will be denied.

172. The AFSAB Chair will initially determine whether the grievance is suitable for progression to the Board for consideration.
173. If a Board Member is involved in a grievance, or a conflict of interest arises during the review process, they will be withdrawn from any further involvement.
174. In the event the grievance relates to the assessment process, an external assessor from a different jurisdiction (to the original assessment) will be appointed by the Board to review and re-score the assessment. The results of the re-assessment will be provided to the Board for review.
175. The Board will review the case and come to a resolution within 30 business days of them receiving the grievance and any further supporting documentation. Previous grievance resolutions may be used to inform current or future cases.
176. The candidate will be notified of the resolution within five business days of the Board reaching a resolution.
177. During the grievance process, the original certification or revocation decision will remain in place. If the appeal is successful, the certification status will be reinstated.
178. The decisions of the Board are final and are not subject to further appeals.

AFSAB Assessors

Application and Approval Process

179. AFSAB Certified Practitioners seeking recognition as an AFSAB Board Approved Assessor are required to meet the eligibility criteria prior to submitting their application.
180. Applications for recognition as an AFSAB assessor (*Form 5*) should be addressed to the AFSAB Chair and sent by the certified practitioner to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au along with any supporting documentation.
181. The Board may request clarification or further information from the practitioner, nominated jurisdiction contact or the relevant ANZFEC member, if required.
182. The AFSAB Chair will review the application and relevant documentation to ensure it meets AFSAB requirements within 10 business days of receiving the information. If all requirements are met, an assessor pack containing the following will be sent to the candidate:
 - 182.1. discipline specific assessor guide
 - 182.2. current Policy and Processes for Certification, including Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
 - 182.3. Deed of Confidentiality.
183. If the candidate doesn't meet the eligibility criteria for recognition as an AFSAB assessor, their application will be denied and notification will be provided to the practitioner, nominated jurisdiction contact and the relevant ANZFEC member within five business days of the decision being reached.
184. The candidate may re-apply as soon as the eligibility criteria for recognition as an AFSAB assessor has been met.
185. AFSAB Board approved assessors shall conduct one internal AFSAB assessment under the supervision of an experienced AFSAB Board Approved Assessor from their jurisdiction prior to being eligible to perform external AFSAB assessments. Details of these assessments, including the marking sheets and assessor comment shall be retained by AFSAB.

- 185.1. If the jurisdiction does not have an upcoming candidate within three months of an expert becoming an AFSAB Board Approved Assessor, the new assessor may sit on an external assessment as an observer in the first instance in order to gain the required experience. Thereafter they may sit as an assessor on an external assessment.
186. To maintain knowledge of the AFSAB assessment process, AFSAB assessors shall conduct at least one AFSAB assessment every five years, as either an internal or external assessor. Exceptions may be approved by the Board in circumstances where the assessor has been on extended leave or insufficient assessments have been conducted by AFSAB over the five-year period. A formal request for special considerations, supported by the relevant organisational head, should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.

Eligibility Criteria

187. To be eligible to apply for recognition as an AFSAB assessor, practitioners shall:
- 187.1. hold AFSAB certification and have held this certification for a minimum of two years, in the discipline that they are requesting recognition as an AFSAB assessor
- 187.2. hold as a minimum the current Assessor Skill Set qualification (refer **Appendix C**)
- 187.3. complete any ongoing or refresher training as determined by AFSAB
- 187.4. maintain competency and complete any ongoing AFSAB certification requirements for their discipline.

Revocation of AFSAB Assessor Status

188. The Board can revoke an individual's status as an AFSAB Board Approved Assessor if they fail to complete any ongoing AFSAB certification requirements for their discipline.
189. The Board may also revoke an individual's status as an AFSAB Board Approved Assessor on written advice from the individual's ANZFEC Member.
190. If the Board considers that an individual's status should be revoked, it will, by notice in writing, to an AFSAB assessor:
- 190.1. state that it proposes to take that action and the ground or grounds for the proposed action: and
- 190.2. invite the AFSAB assessor to respond to the Board to show cause as to why their recognition as an assessor should not be revoked within a specified period (not being less than seven days nor more than 28 days after the notice is given).

Such action will be in full consultation with the relevant ANZFEC member.

191. If the Board:
- a) has given notice under paragraph 185 to the AFSAB assessor; and
- b) the time specified in the notice for a response has expired –
- it may, after considering any response from the AFSAB assessor, by notice in writing to the AFSAB assessor, take the proposed action or take any other action that it considers appropriate.
192. An AFSAB assessor may at any time choose to have their status as AFSAB Board Approved Assessor revoked. A request, approved by the individual's ANZFEC member, should be sent via email to secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au.

Conflict of interest

193. Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed to ANZPAA NIFS secretariat when considering whether to accept an invitation to participate in an assessment.

Confidentiality

194. Assessors are required to maintain confidentiality for all assessment processes and outcomes. Any breaches of confidentiality will be referred to the AFSAB Board.

AFSAB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

195. In order to promote professional conduct by its Candidates, Certified Practitioners and Assessors, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct which must be adhered to in order to apply for, obtain and maintain AFSAB certification. The code encompasses work completed by the above individuals, as well as to the extent possible, work supervised by them. Any violations of the code will be referred to the Board and the relevant organisational head.

AFSAB Candidates, Certified Practitioners Experts and Assessors shall:

1. comply with any workplace standards, code of conducts or legislation relevant to their jurisdiction
2. act professionally and impartially without unlawful discrimination
3. not engage in fraudulent, dishonest behaviour or professional misconduct
4. not disclose any confidential information without specific consent from the appropriate parties
5. disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest
6. conduct examination and analysis in a manner appropriate to the nature of the case ensuring evidential integrity
7. not knowingly or deliberately misrepresent, exaggerate, or embellish their qualifications, training, experience, or certification status
8. continue to engage in professional development and actively assist and encourage their colleagues and peers to do likewise
9. not disclose particulars of the certification assessment outside official communication with the Board, Assessors or their organisational head
10. report any known breaches of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct by another Candidate, Expert or Assessor to the Board
11. immediately notify the Board of any matter which may impact an individual's ability to fulfil certification of professional conduct requirements
12. discontinue use of all claims to AFSAB certification upon certification suspension or withdrawal and return any AFSAB issued certificates
13. refrain from issuing public statements that may appear to represent the position of AFSAB without obtaining specific authority from the Board
14. not use the AFSAB logo without prior authorisation by the Board
15. not use certification in a manner which may bring AFSAB into disrepute or make misleading or false statements regarding certification.

Appendix A – Schedule of Forms

AFSAB Form Name	Form Number
Application for AFSAB Certification	Form 1
Notification of AFSAB Assessment Results and Recommendation for Certification	Form 2
Application for Annual Recertification	Form 3
Application for Five-Yearly Recertification	Form 4
Application for Recognition as an AFSAB Assessor	Form 5
AFSAB Feedback Form	Form 6

Appendix B – Pre-requisite Education and Training Requirements

Discipline	Education Standard	PRE-REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS <i>(qualification and equivalency)</i>	APPROVED EQUIVALENT TRAINING PROGRAMS* <i>(deemed equivalent to the Education Standard)</i>		<u>Individual</u> education and training or relevant experience
		Police Training Package (POLTP)	National Training Program	Jurisdictional Training Program	
Crime Scene Investigation	ANZPAA Education and Training Guideline for Crime Scene Investigation	Graduate Certificate in Crime Scene Investigation (POL 84315)	Nil	Nil	Relevant science degree with ANZFEC acknowledgement
Fingerprint Examination	ANZPAA Education and Training Guideline for Forensic Fingerprint Examination	Graduate Certificate in Forensic Fingerprint Investigation (POL 84215)	Nil	Queensland Police Service and Griffith University's Graduate Certificate of Forensic Fingerprint Investigation Western Australia Police Force Fingerprint Training Curriculum Australian Federal Police Fingerprint Training Framework	
Firearm Examination	ANZPAA Education and Training Guideline for Forensic Firearm Examination	Graduate Certificate in Forensic Firearm Examination (POL 84115)	National Training Curriculum (NTC) for Firearm Examiners (2015)	Nil	

Appendix C – AFSAB Board Approved Assessor Accepted Qualifications

AFSAB Board Approved Assessor Accepted Qualifications

- ▶ TAESS00011 Assessor Skill Set or its successor
- ▶ TAESS00001 Assessor Skill Set, plus TAEASS502 (or its successor) or TAEASS502A or TAEASS502B
- ▶ TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or its successor
- ▶ TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment plus TAEASS502 (or its successor) or TAEASS502A or TAEASS502B
- ▶ A diploma or higher-level qualification in adult education.



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Email: secretariat.nifs@anzpaa.org.au

ANZPAA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's first peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work. ANZPAA is committed to fulfilling the principles of New Zealand's founding document The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi). Central to the principles is a common understanding that all parties will relate and participate with each other in good faith with mutual respect, co-operation and trust. This Policy is committed to fulfilling the intent of international treaties and human rights legislation applicable to the various jurisdictions in which we operate, our obligations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the principles of the New Zealand (Aotearoa) Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

AFSAB is facilitated and managed by ANZPAA NIFS.