



Australasian Forensic Science
Assessment Body



AFSAB CRIME SCENE CANDIDATE GUIDE

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PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for candidates preparing to undergo the AFSAB assessment in Crime Scene Investigation. Details are provided regarding core and discipline competencies to be assessed, assessment structure and recommended resources.

BACKGROUND

AFSAB is committed to enhancing confidence in forensic science service delivery by certifying individuals to an agreed professional standard. The AFSAB assessment process is used to determine competency, focusing on demonstrable ability around eight core competencies. Each component of the assessment will examine the candidate's skills, knowledge, reasoning and abilities in tasks relevant to the operational requirements and practices, standards and contemporary issues relevant to the discipline. Core competencies that will be assessed are:

- ▶ Decision making
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Critical thinking
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Sequencing of examinations
- ▶ Technical knowledge
- ▶ Uncertainty
- ▶ Understanding limitations

These core competencies will be assessed in light of the discipline specific competencies, which represent the knowledge and skills required for a crime scene expert to meet competency requirements to perform their day-to-day role. A focus will be placed on both underpinning knowledge and principles, as well as jurisdictional processes where applicable and appropriate.

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

The AFSAB Crime Scene assessment will consist of the following:

Assessment Component	Maximum Length	Format	Total Available Marks
Written	3 hours	30 x multiple choice 20 x short answer 2 x long answer	105
Practical	2-3 days	Virtual crime scene examination – evidence collection to reporting	TBA
Oral	3 hours	Panel discussion based on 3 x casefiles submitted by the candidate	TBA



It is expected that candidates will sit each assessment in the order presented in the table above. Candidates must achieve at least 75% in the written and oral component and deemed competent* in the practical component to pass, and must pass each component before progressing to the next assessment. Each component will be assessed by a panel of three (3) assessors – two (2) from the candidate's own jurisdiction and one (1) external to the jurisdiction. In the event a candidate fails a component, they may apply to re-sit that component, and do not have to re-sit previously passed components if all assessments are completed within a two-year period. For further information on unsuccessful certification attempts refer to the AFSAB Policy and Processes for Certification (<http://www.anzpaa.org.au/forensic-science/resources/afsab>).

* The pass mark for the practical component is currently being reviewed.

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

Eight (8) discipline specific competencies will be assessed over the written, practical and oral assessments. The weighting of competencies across each assessment component is determined by how the knowledge or skills would be presented or used by the candidate when performing their day to day role. A breakdown of each discipline specific competency is provided below:

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SCENE

Understanding of scene parameters, examination planning and scene co-ordination.

CONTROL OF THE SCENE

Knowledge of crime scene control and preservation.

EXAMINATION OF THE SCENE

Principles and techniques related to incident, crime scene and laboratory based examination. This includes (but is not limited to) the specific topics of deceased persons, the identification and interpretation of potential evidence, presumptive and confirmatory testing and the sequencing of examinations.

RECORDING THE SCENE

Knowledge of the specialised forensic techniques available to crime scene investigators to capture and preserve evidence from a crime scene. Quality and sufficiency of information may also need to be considered by the candidate.

EXHIBIT COLLECTION

Knowledge of exhibit collection, packaging, storage and management. Important considerations by crime scene investigators such as contamination minimisation, degradation and loss of evidence will also form part of the assessment(s).

INTERPRETATION OF THE CRIME SCENE

Scene reconstruction to establish a sequence of events and hypotheses development and assessments, including appropriate weighting of evidence and consideration of alternate hypotheses. The candidate's knowledge and skills relevant to communicating examination findings will also be examined.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Knowledge of the legal framework pertaining to a crime scene investigator giving evidence in court, including both factual and opinion evidence.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Knowledge and awareness of contemporary issues relating to the crime scene discipline, or which have an impact on forensic science as a whole.

Candidates are encouraged to read the recommended resources listed at the end of this document to aid in preparation for their AFSAB assessments.

WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

Core and discipline specific competencies will be assessed in a three (3) hour written assessment which will be supervised by one (1) of the candidate's internal assessors. Questions will be presented in three forms:

Multiple choice

Each multiple choice question will be worth 1 mark. They will be presented as a question followed by four possible answers (A, B, C or D). Unless otherwise stated, candidates should select a single response.

Short answer

Short answer questions will consist of a brief prompt that requires a written response varying in length from one sentence (minimum) to several sentences. Short answer questions will be clearly marked as being worth either 2 or 5 marks depending on the complexity of the question and answer.

Long answer

Long answer questions will consist of a complex prompt that requires a written response that can vary in length, but should be no longer than one (1) page. All long answer questions will be worth 10 marks.

Question Style	Marks Available	Discipline Specific Competencies
Multiple Choice	1 mark	Initial Assessment of the Scene
		Control of the Scene
		Examination of the Scene
		Recording the Scene
		Exhibit Collection
		Interpretation of the Crime Scene
		Legal Framework
Short Answer	2 marks	Contemporary Issues
		Initial Assessment of the Scene
		Control of the Scene
		Examination of the Scene
		Recording the Scene
		Exhibit Collection
		Interpretation of the Crime Scene
Short Answer	5 marks	Legal Framework
		Contemporary Issues
		Initial Assessment of the Scene
Long Answer	10 marks	Examination of the Scene
		Initial Assessment of the Scene
		Interpretation of the Crime Scene

PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the practical component is to assess a candidate's knowledge, scene examination, interpretation and management skills. The practical assessment will be conducted over two (2) days and be supervised by one (1) of the candidate's internal assessors. A third day may be available in some circumstances, upon request to AFSAB.

DAY 1

The candidate will navigate through a computer based, interactive scene in a similar format to the After the Fact proficiency test. Candidates will be given 4 hours to work through the interactive scene, identify and record:

- ▶ all actions you would undertake at the scene
- ▶ the evidence you would collect and the corresponding tests that you would perform or request
- ▶ assessment and interpretations of the evidence
- ▶ assessment and interpretation of the crime scene.

Candidates are expected to complete full examination notes, as well as detailing decisions made and reasoning for actions using provided pro formas. Results of scene-based tests, such as presumptive screening tests, will be provided during the examination, if requested by the candidate. Following completion of the examination, any remaining time can be used to finalise examination notes.

DAY 2

The second day of the practical assessment will focus on a candidates' ability to interpret evidence, to construct and evaluate scenarios/hypotheses and reconstruct scenes. Candidates will be provided with instructions and tasks to complete a paper-based assessment, with written responses to be provided at the end of day 2.

ORAL ASSESSMENT

The oral assessment will take the form of a panel discussion assessed by two (2) internal and one (1) external assessors. The candidate will be required to submit copies of three (3) finalised cases that are of a complex nature, covering work undertaken by them relating to major/serious crime or incidents. The cases must be submitted to the internal jurisdictional contact no less than two (2) weeks prior to the confirmed oral assessment date. The panel may assess the candidate on any aspect of all three (3) cases. The applicant should only submit the forensic examination component of the brief of evidence, and the assessment will be limited to this component only.

1. Collectively, the three (3) casefiles shall demonstrate experience in the following areas:

- ▶ Leading forensic investigations
- ▶ Management of multi-disciplinary crime scene(s)
- ▶ Sequence of evidence collection and examination
- ▶ Handling of deceased person(s)
- ▶ Processing at least five (5) additional evidence types (e.g. impression evidence, bloodstain pattern analysis, biological evidence, firearms, non-biological trace evidence, vehicles)
- ▶ Provision of opinion evidence in the form of scene reconstruction or interpretation. If this unavailable, a sub-class casefile (e.g. bloodstain pattern analysis, impression evidence) may be used as an alternative.

2. Each casefile shall include:

- ▶ A selection of photographs (maximum 30) that best represent the examination of the crime scene
- ▶ A copy of the examination notes
- ▶ Exhibit list
- ▶ Results of crime scene examination(s)
- ▶ Examination results or reports from other disciplines (if appropriate)
- ▶ Statement or technical report
- ▶ Peer review details

3. The case does not need to be finalised in court, however all case examinations must be complete.



The oral assessment will be run over a maximum of three (3) hours, and will be marked by the three (3) assessors according to the following rubric:

Mark	Criteria
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates advanced technical knowledge• Succinctly communicated all details• Displayed exceptional ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate• Comprehensive ability to apply established theories to the specifics of their discipline
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates sound technical knowledge• Communicated key details• Displayed sound ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate• Adeptly applies established theories to the specifics of their discipline
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates basic technical knowledge• Communicated some detail• Displayed some ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate• Some ability to apply established theories to the specifics of their discipline
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates limited technical knowledge• Communicated limited detail• Displayed little ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate• Minimal ability to apply established theories to the specifics of their discipline

Candidates may be asked questions on any or all of the core discipline competencies, as they relate to the collective case file contents.



NOTIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

All assessment will be reviewed by all three (3) assessors. Candidates will be provided with their assessment results and feedback within ten (10) business days of completing each assessment. A feedback mechanism is currently in development.

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 (contained with the *AFSAB Policy and Processes for Certification*).

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Candidates may find the following information useful to review prior to undergoing their assessment. The material is focused on expanding a candidate's knowledge of legal factors and contemporary issues.

1. Code of conduct/ rules of expert evidence relevant to your jurisdiction
2. Forensic Science Regulator. 2015. Cognitive Bias Effects Relevant to Forensic Science Examinations. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510147/217_FSR-G-217_Cognitive_bias_appendix.pdf. Sections 1, 2, 3 and 6 recommended as a minimum
3. van den Eeden CAJ, de Poot CJ, van Koppen PJ. 2016. Forensic expectations: Investigating a crime scene with prior information. *Science and Justice* 56: 475-481
4. van den Eeden CAJ, de Poot CJ, van Koppen PJ. 2019. The forensic confirmation bias: A comparison between experts and novices. *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 64: 120-126
5. Baber C, Butler M. 2012. Expertise in Crime Scene Examination: Comparing search strategies of expert and novice crime scene examiners in simulated crime scenes. *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society* 54:413-424
6. Wyatt D. 2014. Practising Crime Scene Investigation: Trace and contamination in routine work. *Policing and Society An International Journal of Research and Policy* 24:443-458