



TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 445
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 24, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.035, Austin, Texas 78701.

Members Present:

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

The following Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Deion Christophe, Kelly Wouters, and Jessica Frazier.

Members Absent: None

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 10:00 am. Committee members were present as indicated above.

2. Review and adopt minutes from the April 10, 2025 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Greenwood moved to adopt the minutes as drafted. Paulson 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 June 30, 2025 (1,339 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 251; provisional, 5; temporary, 5; uncommon, 3; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,075; 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), another agency within the Commission's parent agency, the Office of Court Administration (OCA), 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 through JBCC. OCA decided to transition the application process for all OCA licensing programs to ALiS for efficiency, and because the platform is a dedicated application system. Staff continues to work 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 later next month. The target date for completion is August 31, 2025. The State of Texas is transitioning to a new payment system through its Texas.gov payment platform. To integrate the new system, the developers are working on a separate programming project that will incorporate the new licensing platform. The transition to the new payment system takes place on July 31, 2025. In the interim, staff will provide instructions for license registration and renewal fees.

4. Review any outstanding coursework evaluations.

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

6. 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); discussion

regarding establishment of competency in connection with voluntary license programs. (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 gave a presentation at the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI) June 2025 annual conference that included topics such as the Commission's role in forensic oversight, requirements for voluntary licensing, and fulfillment of forensic service provider quality requirements. Paulson and Rossi are working with TDIAI members to discuss potential options for competency exams hosted by TDIAI for fulfillment of licensure requirements that require certification exams. The group is also developing guidance for small law enforcement agency crime scene units who need guidance in developing standard operating procedures that comply with the Commission's quality requirements for employing laboratories who have employee's seeking licensure by the Commission.

7. **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.**

MOTION AND VOTE: *Rommel 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. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

8. **Discuss and vote on recommended rule changes including, but not limited to, amendments to § 651.222, Voluntary Licensure Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Requirements to 1) permit latent print analysts working in unaccredited laboratories to fulfill the certification requirement for licensure through a competency exam administered by the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification or proctor approved by the Commission; and 2) qualify crime scene reconstruction analysts with a high school diploma or equivalent degree for licensure.**

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson 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 discussion from the Commission's April 17, 2025 and June 27, 2025 statewide task force on rapid DNA meetings.**

The group will recommence meetings in the Fall of 2025. Rommel shared the three deliverables currently in development by the Commission's Statewide Task Force on Rapid DNA:

1. Develop statement regarding the types of samples that are best suited for Rapid DNA based on existing technology and research;
2. Develop an accreditation umbrella MOU that may be adopted by laboratories accredited by ANAB or A2LA in partnership with LE agencies (FBI soon to release model); and
3. Develop Rapid DNA Operator licensing program parameters.

10. Discuss development of updates to the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam, including assignments for 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 roles for the development of the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam have been established and divided into the seven key domains tested on the exam: Root Cause Analysis, Human Factors, Statistics, Expert Testimony, Brady/Michael Morton Act, Professional Responsibility, and Evidence Handling. The working group will be as a group in the couple weeks for an introduction by staff and guidance on evaluating the current exam objectives and study materials. Thereafter, each domain group will meet to discuss any revisions and/or additions to the objectives and study materials for the new version of the exam. The General Forensic Analyst Licensing Exam III will focus on the same subject areas with updated materials and question scenarios related to the disciplines eligible for voluntary licensure in addition to the current mandatory licensed disciplines.

11. Discussion of obstacles and solutions for fulfilling quality assurance requirements of voluntary licensure program including technical review for smaller agencies and policy regarding departing analysts.

The Committee discussed obstacles and solutions for fulfilling quality assurance requirements. Currently, analysts with voluntary licenses at smaller agencies do not always have access to adequate competency testing, proficiency testing, and adequate staff to fulfill technical review requirements for licensure by the Commission. For technical review, Rossi suggested that technicians partner with another expert to review reports before they are shared with clients. The TDIAl is working to assist agencies in fulfilling these quality requirements including the development of model standard operating procedures and proficiency monitoring schedule and policies.

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

There was no update from TACLD this quarter.

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

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

14. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for October 23, 2025, January 29, 2026, April 23, 2026, July 30, 2026, and October 22, 2026.

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

15. Public comment.

There was no public comment other than that noted above.

16. Adjourn.

Sanchez adjourned the meeting at 11:26 am.