



Issue: 16

Date: March 19, 2012

To: FQS-Accredited and Applicant Laboratories

From: Pat Bencivenga, FQS Assistant Accreditation Manager

Re: FBI QAS Audits

This coming September marks a change in how many labs will get their required FBI QAS assessment performed. NFSTC is no longer performing these QAS assessment free of charge and the funding provided by the National Institute of Justice has been redirected. Effective September 2012, each DNA laboratory using the QAS must find an alternative to the free NFSTC assessments.

How does this affect our FQS customers? There is no change in what you have been used to doing. FQS will continue to provide an assessment for the QAS during the on-site surveillance as in the past. There are no additional fees to be paid, only the cost of the assessment team. In fact, you do not need to use another provider for a QAS audit when your current accreditation by FQS already covers these audits. Using another provider for a QAS audit will increase your costs and is unnecessary to meet the QAS requirements. If the QAS audit is performed as part of your regularly scheduled FQS accreditation audit, your costs remain constant under the current FQS accreditation process and you receive a value add by being assessed in the "off-year" by a third party accreditation body that is already required to be on your site. If you have been using NFSTC for the "off-year" audit, then FQS will perform these QAS audits for only the cost of the assessment team.

During an initial assessment or reassessment, the accrediting body is required to perform this QAS audit to comply with ILAC requirements. All ILAC-recognized forensic accrediting bodies have been doing this for many years. The DNA laboratories cannot have NFSTC or any entity other than the accrediting body perform the QAS audit in initial or re-accreditation assessments for DNA to be included in the scope of accreditation.

FQS is dedicated to providing you the best service in your ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation at the most affordable cost. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at 813-443-0517.