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STANDARDS FOR MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING TO COMPETENCY FOR FRICTION RIDGE EXAMINER TRAINEES (LATENT/TENPRINT)

Preamble

This outline provides the recommended training program to achieve competency as a friction ridge examiner trainee. A friction ridge examiner conducts analysis, comparison, and evaluation on impressions from the raised portion of the epidermis on the palmar or plantar skin. Complex friction ridge examinations occur in latent print and tenprint environments.¹

The friction ridge examiner trainee must demonstrate knowledge of the required objectives by successfully completing written tests and practical exercises. The trainee must also communicate an understanding of the objectives and underlying principles. It is also strongly recommended that trainees demonstrate knowledge of the supplemental objectives listed in this document.

Prior to becoming a friction ridge examiner, candidates shall possess a bachelor's degree. The degree shall be from an accredited institution and shall include science-related coursework. This degree requirement is not intended to apply to friction ridge examiners who are already trained to competency.

In addition to the objectives listed below, the examiner must achieve competency in the objectives outlined in SWGFAST's document *Friction Ridge Examination Methodology for Latent Print Examiners*.

Instructors and mentors must have demonstrated competency in the topic areas they instruct.

The training period for a new trainee in the field of friction ridge examination shall consist of thorough instruction (e.g., mentor sessions, research and papers, presentations, moot courts), continued testing, and apprenticeship (supervised casework) for the following duration:

¹ See the International Association for Identification *Resolution 2009-10*

Latent Print

Minimum: One year of full-time latent print work with the majority of the time spent on the analysis, comparison, and evaluation of impressions.

Recommended: Two or more years of full-time latent print work with the majority of the time spent on the analysis, comparison, and evaluation of impressions.

Tenprint

Minimum: Six months of full-time tenprint work with the majority of the time spent on the analysis, comparison, and evaluation of impressions.

Recommended: One or more years of full-time tenprint work with the majority of the time spent on the analysis, comparison, and evaluation of impressions.

1 Required Objectives

1.1 Performance and time requirements (e.g., minimum passing score, minimum or maximum completion time requirement)

1.2 Principles and foundations

1.2.1 Understand the basic foundations for friction ridge examination (persistence and uniqueness) as a means of identifying the source of an impression

1.2.2 Understand the biology and physiology of friction ridge skin

1.2.3 Knowledge of the history of fingerprints

1.2.4 Understand the use of fingerprints, palmprints, and footprints in criminal and civil applications

1.3 Friction ridge pattern recognition and interpretation

1.3.1 Understand common terminology (e.g., arch, loop, and whorl) and definitions associated with friction ridge pattern recognition

1.3.2 Understand pattern recognition and interpretation associated with operational needs of the individual agency

1.3.3 Understand friction ridge formations as they relate to recognition, interpretation, and individualization

1.3.4 Awareness of classification systems (e.g., Henry, American, Vucetich, NCIC), based on the operational needs of the individual agency

1.4 Friction ridge examination (analysis, comparison, evaluation, and verification)

1.4.1 Understand the individual friction ridge structure (e.g., continuity, texture, pore, and edge definition) for determining the existence of individualizing details

1.4.2 Ability to analyze friction ridge details to determine the value for comparison

- 1.4.3 Ability to recognize and utilize friction ridge flow, scars, creases, and other friction ridge details for supporting the examination
- 1.4.4 Ability to recognize and properly determine, when possible, the area from which the friction ridges originated
- 1.4.5 Knowledge of how to properly analyze friction ridge impressions and understand effects such as processing technique, color reversal, pressure distortion, slippage, and overlays
- 1.4.6 Ability to properly conduct a comparison
- 1.4.7 Ability to render a proper and accurate conclusion
- 1.4.8 Understand the practice and purpose of verification by another competent friction ridge examiner
- 1.4.9 Understand the role of quality assurance measures in friction ridge examination
- 1.4.10 Knowledge of various methods used to record known friction ridge impressions and the ability to properly evaluate ridge structure based on each method
- 1.4.11 Knowledge of alteration and mutilation of friction ridge skin
- 1.4.12 Knowledge of genetic abnormalities of friction ridge skin (e.g., dysplasia, cuspal patterns, dissociated ridges)
- 1.4.13 Knowledge of the benefits associated with obtaining elimination prints and complete friction ridge exemplars
- 1.4.14 Knowledge of simultaneous or adjacent friction ridge impressions and their value for examination
- 1.4.15 Awareness that different policies and standards exist in the United States and other countries regarding friction ridge identification (individualization)
- 1.4.16 Awareness of the impact(s) resulting from an erroneous conclusion
- 1.5 Friction ridge detection and preservation (required for latent print and recommended for tenprint, based on the operational needs of the individual agency)
 - 1.5.1 Knowledge of the generally accepted techniques for the detection and visualization of friction ridge impressions
 - 1.5.2 Ability to assess the effectiveness and results of applied processing techniques
 - 1.5.3 Understand generally accepted preservation methods for friction ridge impressions
- 1.6 Documentation of examination

Understand the level of documentation (required for latent print and recommended for tenprint, based on the operational needs of the individual agency)

 - 1.6.1 Case records

1.6.2 Chain of custody of the evidence

1.6.3 Latent print processing

1.6.4 The examination process

1.6.5 Evidence marking

1.6.6 Report writing

1.7 Communication

Ability to accurately explain friction ridge examinations and conclusions in written and verbal form

1.8 Legal issues

1.8.1 Understand the role of expert witness testimony

1.8.2 Knowledge of factors regarding the admissibility of evidence

1.8.3 Knowledge of relevant court cases and case histories

1.8.4 Understand the rules of discovery and evidence

1.8.5 Knowledge of applicable legal challenges to admissibility

1.8.6 Understand critical challenges to the discipline

1.9 Demonstration of competency

Ability to demonstrate all phases of training through practical exercises

1.10 Professional development

1.10.1 Participate in continuing education

1.10.2 Awareness of relevant professional organizations and publications

1.10.3 Adherence to a code(s) of professional conduct

2 Supplemental Objectives

2.1 Principles and foundations

2.1.1 Understand early methods of personal identification (e.g., scars, marks, tattoos, Bertillon system)

2.1.2 Awareness of personal identification methods other than friction ridge skin (e.g., iris scan, face identification)

2.1.3 Understand the applications of friction ridge impressions for manual or automated repositories for “single print” and “unidentified friction ridge impressions”

2.1.4 Understand the objectives outlined in the SWGFAST *Standard for Friction Ridge Automation Training (Latent/Tenprint)*

2.2 Professional development goals

2.2.1 Continued formal education

2.2.2 Contribute to educational opportunities (e.g., seminars, conferences, schools, lectures)

2.2.3 Membership in relevant professional organizations

2.2.4 Achieve International Association for Identification (IAI) or equivalent professional certification in tenprint or latent print examination, as applicable