



## **RAI Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Practitioner Levels**

This document lays out the criteria for the various levels of Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology (FESA) as defined in the RAI and the Forensic Regulator's Code of Practice and Conduct (CoPC), Ethics and Professional Standards for Forensic Anthropology, and should be read in conjunction with that document as well as the document outlining the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology and aligned professionals.

For the purposes of this document and as defined in the RAI Code of Practice for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology, 'forensic and expert social anthropology' refers to a specific range of activities undertaken by appropriately qualified social anthropologists, which involve the provision of evidence to courts or other legally empowered bodies. Within this range of activities, forensic social anthropology encompasses the conduct of forensic investigation, including either or both fieldwork and/or desktop work, where the purpose of that investigation is the establishment of facts relevant to a matter before a court or other legally empowered body. By contrast, but also within this range of activities, expert social anthropology encompasses the provision of expert opinion to a court or other legally empowered body, based on facts already established. Forensic and expert social anthropology are closely interrelated and Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists (FESAs) may be engaged by a court or other legally empowered body to undertake both activities.

There are three levels of certification for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists providing a means of natural career progression within the field, through a process of continuing professional and learning development within a structured mentoring environment. Applicants do not need to progress through consecutive levels but can apply directly for FESA Level I chartership and FESA Level II certification.

For the purposes of this document, aligned fields such as Forensic and Expert Cultural Anthropology and Forensic and Expert Sociocultural Anthropology, are subsumed under the overarching profession of Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology. It is assumed throughout this document that forensic fieldwork and desktop work presented for examination may be domestic or international, providing it meets the standards and format required for the UK Justice System, or as maybe recognised as an equivalent and required for the justice system within which work is undertaken, if outside the UK.

## 1. FORENSIC AND EXPERT SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST LEVEL III (FESA III)

Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist Level III is the entry level for professional practice and is aimed at appropriately qualified individuals who have begun to develop their skills within the discipline.

Entry into FESA III is conferred by portfolio review. The portfolio must contain evidence of all the following:

- An Honours degree in a relevant social scientific or related field, preferably but not exclusively social anthropology, cultural anthropology or similar, e.g., human geography, sociolegal studies, community development, cultural heritage, cultural studies, etc.
- Attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences post-graduation.
- Fellow (or Student Fellow as appropriate) of the RAI.
- Demonstrable professional experience gained over a period of two years post-graduation.
- Relevant experience must include at least two of the following types of activities from section A) and two from section B) and must be evidenced:

### Section A

- Establishing to the highest degree of specificity possible, the cultural community to which an individual belongs, based on a combination of recorded kinship, linguistic, religious, economic and health practice attributes.
- Collecting basic information and data (which should include fieldwork information and data) in a desktop work setting and can either be done within the framework of a forensic or expert matter (supervised by a mentor) or working directly in the field (supervised by a social anthropologist, cultural anthropologist, etc.).
- Additional fieldwork experience; for example, through volunteer work with community or non-governmental organisations, or assisting in the processing of information and data collected by other FESAs in during fieldwork. These activities can be undertaken in the UK or abroad and be supervised by a social anthropologist, cultural anthropologist, etc.

### Section B

- Keeping appropriate professional desktop work notes or appropriate fieldwork notes if undertaking fieldwork.
- Developing an understanding of forensic and expert social anthropological practice in a professional and legal-administrative practice setting.
- Developing understanding of health and safety for both fieldwork and desktop work settings.

Applicants must have gained this experience after their Honours degree and may have gained it as part of their Masters or PhD studies, or through voluntary or paid work.

And at least one of the following:

- Certificates of attendance at least one CPD activity relevant to forensic and expert social anthropology.
- Evidence of enrolment in a taught postgraduate (Masters Level) or research degree programme (PhD or Masters by research) in a relevant social scientific or related field, preferably but not exclusively social anthropology, cultural anthropology or similar, e.g., human geography, sociolegal studies, community development, cultural heritage, cultural studies, etc.

The portfolio should contain the various certificates and documentary evidence that demonstrates that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. Documentary evidence can include:

- Certificates of attendance/completion
- Letters of reference from head of project/line manager (these should include dates/responsibilities/role, etc.)
- Reports from mentor in relation to the work and responsibilities undertaken in each instance
- Other evidence of attendance and responsibilities
- Application for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist Level III must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a mentor who is a Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist at Level I or II or a subject matter expert, and the second from an academic supervisor or employer. Both referees must be familiar with the candidates work but should not originate from the same institution/organisation as each other.

### 1.1. WORKING PRACTICE

A Level III Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist should work under the supervision of a Level I or II Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist and should have read the Crown Prosecution Service Guidance Booklet for experts (or the relevant guidelines on the provision of expert evidence to legal proceedings as required by the jurisdiction in which they are practicing if outside the UK) before embarking in any forensic or expert work. Their direct responsibilities would include under supervision:

1. Providing forensic investigative services and expert opinion and advice services to courts and other legally and administrative empowered bodies.
2. Collecting basic information and data in both fieldwork and desktop work settings.
3. Undertaking supervised fieldwork and keeping appropriate professional notes.
4. Co-authoring/authoring critically checked reports for legally empowered bodies (excluding the provision of evidence as an expert witness to courts of law)<sup>1</sup>.
5. Assisting a Level I or II Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist.

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<sup>1</sup> A Level III FESA is not certified to provide evidence as an expert witness to courts of law.

## 1.2. PROGRESSION

A Level III Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist is expected to be involved in various activities, including a combination of the following:

1. Engaging in continued scholarly activities related to Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology.
2. Developing knowledge through attendance at relevant CPD activities as outlined in the Continuing Professional Development guidance document.
3. Developing an understanding of health and safety for both fieldwork and desktop work settings.
4. Developing an understanding of forensic and expert social anthropological practice in a professional and legal-administrative practice setting.
5. Work with and be supervised by Level I and/or II Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists.
6. Present papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences, symposia.
7. Engage in research and publish in peer-reviewed journals.

## 2. FORENSIC AND EXPERT SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST LEVEL II (FESA II)

To be eligible for progression to Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Level II, or to apply directly, a candidate must present a portfolio of evidence which must demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. An Honours degree (and preferably a Masters degree) in a relevant social scientific or related field, preferably but not exclusively social anthropology, cultural anthropology or similar, e.g., human geography, sociolegal studies, community development, cultural heritage, cultural studies, etc.
2. Participation in a minimum of five matters involving the duties and responsibilities set out at Section 4 of the RAI's Code of Practice for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology, where ensuing statements and/or reports have been submitted to a court or other legally empowered body.
3. A demonstrable understanding of health and safety for both fieldwork and desktop investigations.
4. A demonstrable knowledge of at least two of the five specialised cultural domains of kinship, language, religion, economy and health.
5. Participation in relevant continuing education and training in Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology or related fields, for example, social anthropology, cultural anthropology, geographic information systems, social and kinship network modelling and analysis, qualitative or quantitative data modelling and analysis technologies, etc. through CPD or research activities including, if applicable, enrolment in a PhD degree program.
6. If the application is not by direct entry, then a minimum of two years' relevant experience after attaining Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist Level III status, including evidence of participation in the activities involved in that role as outlined in the CPD guidance document, is required.

7. Continued attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences which could include, but are not limited to, the RAI, AAA, EASA.
8. Continued membership of at least one relevant professional body/association in addition to fellowship of the RAI.

Application for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Level II must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a Level I Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist and the second from a person of a relevant profession. Both referees must be familiar with your work but should not originate from the same institution/organisation as each other.

The examination for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Level II shall consist of two parts:

#### PART 1 Demonstrating Theoretical Knowledge

- a) The candidate must demonstrate that their existing qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate levels encompasses the knowledge base contained within the RAI Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology curriculum. This should take the form of a mapping exercise which should be submitted to the Examination Committee via [fac@therai.org.uk](mailto:fac@therai.org.uk). Alternatively, the candidate should be able to demonstrate from their fieldwork and desktop work that they have an appropriate knowledge base.

OR

- b) The candidate completes a written examination of two hours' duration which covers the RAI Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology curriculum.

The written examination paper will be in two sections. Section A will assess the candidate's technical knowledge of the discipline according to the published curriculum. Section B will assess the candidate's problem-solving abilities and will include reference to the role of the forensic investigator, expert witness and legal-administrative matters.

#### PART 2 THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

The practical examination consists of two parts:

- c) A practical examination of a collection of fieldwork consultation notes associated with a specific culturally distinct community with which the candidate is familiar, resulting in the identification of key culturally distinct attributes comprising some combination of kinship, language, religion, economy and health as represented by those notes. The examination will run for 3 hours.
- d) Using the same fieldwork consultation notes, the candidate will prepare a formal report on the cultural affiliations documented in the report. The report must be submitted to the Examination Committee within two weeks of the initial evaluation via [fac@therai.org.uk](mailto:fac@therai.org.uk) and should include all contemporaneous notes, supporting literature reviews modelling and any other relevant documentation.

The examination shall be available annually (see Examination Procedures document for dates). Candidates who fail the examination can re-sit at the next available examination.

## 2.1. WORKING PRACTICE

A Level II Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist should work under the direct supervision of a Level I Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist. Their responsibilities would include:

1. Providing forensic investigative and expert opinion and advice services to courts and other legally and administrative empowered bodies.
2. Collecting and interpreting information and data in both fieldwork and desktop work settings.
3. Keeping appropriate professional notes and documentation.
4. Assisting in Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology matters in both fieldwork and desktop work settings.
5. Co-authoring/authoring critically checked reports and potentially providing evidence as an expert witness for courts of law or other legally empowered bodies.
6. Undertaking supervised forensic investigations.
7. Engaging in mentoring activities for Level III Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists.

## 2.2. PROGRESSION

A Level II Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist is expected to be involved in various activities, including a combination of the following:

1. Engaging in continued scholarly activities.
2. Continued maintenance and development of competencies including attendance at relevant CPD activities as outlined in the Continuing Professional Development guidance document.
3. Work with, and be supervised by, a Level I Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist.
4. Provide supervision and mentoring to Level III Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists.
5. Active and on-going engagement in field-based and/or desktop-based investigative work under the instruction and guidance of Level I Forensic and Expert Anthropologists including engagement in critical check processes and potentially delivering evidence as an expert witness for the court.
6. Present papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences, symposia.
7. Engage in research and publish in peer-reviewed journals.
8. Be involved in the development and delivery of training and education (for example through activities in institutions or professional training).

## 3. FORENSIC AND EXPERT SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST LEVEL I (FESA I)

A Level I Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist must have completed a PhD in a relevant social scientific or related field, preferably but not exclusively social anthropology, cultural

anthropology or similar, e.g., human geography, sociolegal studies, community development, cultural heritage, cultural studies, etc. Candidates must have undertaken further training in forensic and expert social anthropology and, have been an active participant in forensic and expert social anthropology work compliant with the requirements of professional practitioners within the UK Justice system (or the relevant guidelines on the provision of expert evidence to legal proceedings as required by the jurisdiction in which they are practicing if outside the UK). Level I FESAs are Chartered Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists.

Fieldwork and desktop work experience must have included work across a range of case types and complexity.

Application for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist Level I chartership is by case review and viva voce examination. Application normally requires a minimum of three years' experience after attaining Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist Level II status including evidence of participation in the activities involved in that role including those outlined in the CPD guidance documentation.

Direct entry is also possible where the candidate presents a portfolio of evidence commensurate with these requirements.

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. A case portfolio documenting a minimum of five co-authored/sole-authored critically checked forensic matters, three of which must satisfy the standards required by the UK justice system or the relevant justice system of the jurisdiction in which the candidate was practicing if outside the UK. These cases must demonstrate a broad range of expertise, complexity and knowledge demonstrating the breadth of knowledge required at this level.
2. Participation in relevant continuing education and training in Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology or related fields (for example, but not limited to, social anthropology, cultural anthropology and least two of the five specialised cultural domains of kinship, language, religion, economy and health), through CPD or postgraduate research activities.
3. Evidence of delivery of scientific evidence as an expert witness to the courts and/or completion of expert witness training.
4. A demonstrable understanding of health and safety in fieldwork and desktop work settings.
5. Continued attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences which could include (but is not limited to) RAI, AAA, EASA.
6. Continued membership of at least one relevant professional body/association in addition to fellowship of the RAI.

Application for chartership at Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Level I must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a mentor and the second from a relevant professional, including legal, administrative or academic. Both

referees must be familiar with the candidates work but should not originate from the same institution/organisation as each other.

The examination for Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology Level I shall consist of an expert witness oral examination. The candidate will supply five forensic matters, three of which must satisfy the requirements of the UK justice system or the relevant justice system of the jurisdiction in which the candidate was practicing if outside the UK, which demonstrate a range of types and complexities, from which the examiners will choose three. The oral examination will relate to these matters as well as a number of core areas, e.g. theoretical aspects of cultural variation and their application to Forensic and Expert Social Anthropology (the cultural profile), including advanced models of idea systems spanning kinship, language, religion, language, economy and health, together with qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches and techniques for collecting information and data, modelling and analysing the instantiation of these idea systems in real-world social interactions.

The examination shall be available annually. Candidates who fail at examination can re-sit at the next available examination.

### 3.1. WORKING PRACTICE

A Level I Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologist is expected to be actively involved in activities 1-3, and in addition to be involved in at least two of the activities 4 to 7:

1. Active and on-going engagement in fieldwork and desktop work related to active matters either as a sole practitioner or as part of a team. This work should include the production of a witness report /statement, and engagement in a full critical check process and delivery of evidence as an expert witness for the UK courts of law or other courts or legally empowered bodies in the jurisdiction where the practitioner is working.
2. Continuing maintenance and development of competence including attendance at relevant CPD events as outlined in the Continuing Professional Development guidance document.
3. Supervising and mentoring Level II and/or III Forensic and Expert Social Anthropologists.
4. Providing leadership in relevant professional organisations such as the RAI, AAA, EASA or in other relevant national and international professional bodies and organisations (for example with the Forensic Science Regulator, Interpol etc.)
5. Presenting papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences or symposia.
6. Leading research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.
7. Be involved in the development and delivery of training and education (for example through activities in higher education establishments or professional training).