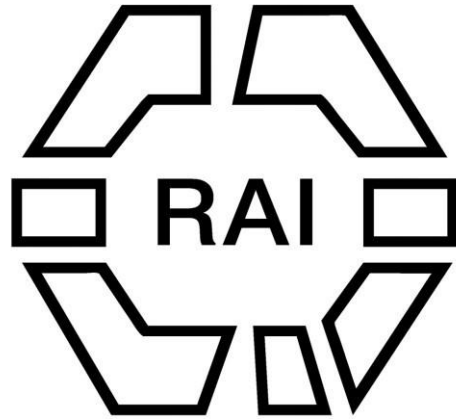




Royal Anthropological Institute

Code of Practice for Forensic Anthropology

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This document has been developed by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) of Great Britain and Ireland (the professional body for forensic anthropology in the UK).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this document is to establish the professional standard of performance within the field of forensic anthropology in the UK. It details the standards of practice which are expected for forensic anthropologists undertaking Criminal, Civil, and Coronial/Fatal Accident Inquiry casework within the legal jurisdictions of the UK, and who are certified by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

2 Scope

- 2.1.1 This document is directly applicable to all practicing forensic anthropologists who are certified by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 2.1.2 This document acts as a guide to all operating within the field of forensic anthropology.
- 2.1.3 This guidance defines the purpose of the forensic anthropology examination and reporting process and the series of steps that must be followed from the time a forensic anthropologist (FA) is notified of a request for involvement in a case until the presentation of findings, whether by report alone or through the provision of evidence in relevant court.
- 2.1.4 This code of practice for forensic anthropology does not specify a compliance mechanism or standard that should be applied to forensic anthropology activities being conducted, although it has been aligned with ILAC G19:08/2014, Modules in a Forensic Science Process, where possible and applicable.
- 2.1.5 For practice of forensic anthropology within England and Wales, it should be noted that the Criminal Practice Directions (CPD) Section 7.2 para 13 makes it a requirement for expert witnesses to declare adherence to the code of conduct of their discipline, thus within those jurisdictions, FA should state they have adhered to the current version of this code of practice.
- 2.1.6 This document excludes teaching or research in forensic anthropology.

3 Terms and Definitions

This section provides the definitions for terminology.

3.1.1 Competence

Competence is the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills and, where relevant, demonstrated personal attributes.

3.1.2 Contamination

Contamination is the undesirable introduction of substances or trace materials to exhibits/productions at any point within the forensic process.

3.1.3 Contract

A contract may be any written or oral agreement to provide forensic services. Note a contract does not necessarily involve payment for the services, may be mandated by law and may require to be in accordance with local, regional or national legal requirements.

3.1.4 Court Statement

A court statement is a written report of the results and interpretations of forensic tests/examinations submitted to the relevant court. A written report may be in a format prescribed in legislation (a witness statement or report) and may be provided electronically.

3.1.5 Critical Findings

Observations and results that may have significant impact on the conclusion reached and the interpretation and opinion provided.

3.1.6 Equipment

Equipment refers to all tools, instruments, software, reagents and chemicals that are used as part of the forensic anthropology process.

3.1.7 Examination/Test

Examination/test refers to sampling, analysis, visual inspections, comparisons and interpretations.

3.1.8 Exhibit/Production

An exhibit (known as a 'Production' in Scotland) is an item or sample recovered as part of an investigation. This includes everything recovered in the forensic process including swabs, whole objects and debris. Exhibits/productions may sometimes be referred to as 'physical evidence'. Human remains, including the deceased, are considered as an exhibit/Production.

3.1.9 Investigator

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A person, however titled, who is trained to perform scenes of crime examinations and/or investigations and may include police officers and/or forensic sciences personnel. Examples of investigators are: Scenes of Crime Officer (SOCO), Crime Scene Investigator (CSI), Scenes of Crime Investigator, Scenes of Crime Examiner, Crime Scene Manager (CSM), Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or Officer in Charge (OIC) amongst others.

3.1.10 Reference Collection

Reference collection is a collection of stable materials, substances, objects or artefacts of known properties or origin that may be used in the determination of the properties or origins of unknown items.

3.1.11 Scene

The term 'scene' (known as a locus in Scotland) is used to identify a place of incident prior to establishing whether a criminal or illegal action has taken place. The scene/locus is not solely restricted to the location of the incident but also includes areas where relevant acts were carried out before or after the incident. Where applicable, a victim may also be considered as a scene/locus.

3.1.12 Terms of Reference (ToR)/Purpose

The ToR/Purpose refer to the exact tasks or aims of examination that the Forensic Anthropologist has been asked to undertake in relation to a case and should be agreed with the relevant instructing authority prior to the commencement of work. The terms of reference/purpose will define the role of the FA within the broader forensic strategy(ies). These may be provided in written or oral format. If ToR/Purpose instructed verbally, these should be confirmed in writing.

3.1.13 Validation

Validation is the confirmation by examination and the provision of objective evidence that the particular requirements for a specific use are fulfilled.

4 Duties and Responsibilities

This section describes the remit of a Forensic Anthropologist (FA) which will generally, although not exclusively, fall into the following categories.

4.1.1 To assess whether an item is animal tissue

4.1.2 To assess whether an item, element or fragment of organic tissue is human.

4.1.3 To identify human skeletal remains and assess which parts or

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elements (if any) of a skeleton are missing.

- 4.1.4 To establish if there are human remains from more than one individual represented, and if more than one, seek to establish the minimum number of individuals or the most likely number of individuals represented.
- 4.1.5 To assess biological profile and assist with identification of the remains, for example by estimating age-at-death, biological sex, stature and population affinity and any personal traits such as skeletal pathological changes or trauma. Methods employed must include reference to statistical parameters such as the standard error *etc.* related to each of these components.
- 4.1.6 To comment on any post-mortem (taphonomic) modification of the bone including (but not limited to) burning, dismemberment and/or scavenging.
- 4.1.7 To assess and record traumatic injuries and damage to remains in order to interpret ante- and peri-mortem traumatic injuries, and post-mortem damage.
- 4.1.8 To reconstruct fragmented bones to facilitate, for example, traumatic injury analysis.
- 4.1.9 To comment on the post-mortem interval where possible.
- 4.1.10 To undertake or assist in the examination, recording, and recovery of human remains at a scene and where required to aid in the search for human remains.
- 4.1.11 To provide interpretation of human remains within a scene to assist with understanding the circumstances of the death and deposition.
- 4.1.12 To assist a Disaster Victim Identification team in situations of mass fatalities which may include one or more of the following, dependent on circumstances: the identification, location and recording of human remains (including disparate body parts) at scenes of multiple fatalities and assist in the reconstruction of fragmentary and disrupted human remains for the purposes of reconciliation and identification.
- 4.1.13 To write statements and reports, and attend court to give evidence as an expert witness when required.
- 4.1.14 To provide awareness to the investigating authority of other specialties that might be considered in the identification process and are not within the expertise of the practitioner including e.g. DNA,

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forensic odontology, etc.

- 4.1.15 Some FAs will carry out case reviews for Defence solicitors. Practitioners should ensure that any Defence casework lies within their area and level of competency.
- 4.1.16 Some FAs will be competent to advise on the use of other investigative tools/experts to assist in the case (e.g., stable isotope analysis, post-mortem interval/radiocarbon dating, ecology and environment evidence gathering) and undertake sampling if appropriate and within their professional competence.
- 4.1.17 Some FAs will be competent in examining radiographs, Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) which may be used for the confirmation and/or assessment of traumatic injuries, estimation of biological profile information on deceased persons or, for example, when assessing age from living individuals for legal purposes.
- 4.1.18 Some FAs will be qualified to undertake craniofacial analysis and approximation.

5 Professional Competency

- 5.1.1 FAs must demonstrate competency and maintenance of competency for each of the categories in which they practice (section 4), for example, through relevant certification and recertification (by an appropriate professional body for example the Royal Anthropological Institute) and by engaging in and keeping a record of continuous professional development and current practice within the field.
- 5.1.2 FAs must have systems in place to enable peer review/critical conclusions check for all casework reports prior to providing them to the instructing authority, see section 7.3.
- 5.1.3 The Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) has developed a professional certification and continued professional development programme which includes 5-yearly recertification. The certified FA within this framework must adhere to this requirement to maintain their competency and certification with the RAI. All employing organisations should have processes in place to address complaints associated with professional practice or conduct concerning RAI certified FAs.
- 5.1.4 It should be noted that in England and Wales, under the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) Act 2021, Forensic Anthropology is not a defined Forensic Science Activity, thus the Forensic Science Regulator's formal enforcement powers are limited, but the FSR can

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still handle concerns if they pose a significant threat to the integrity of the criminal justice system. Therefore, cases where forensic anthropology work has been undertaken could still be referred to the FSR and the complaint might be referred to relevant professional bodies or the courts to deal with the competence of the individual and the admissibility of the evidence, respectively.

- 5.1.5 The FA must ensure that the potential for cognitive bias is mitigated wherever possible by having appropriate processes in place.

6 General Forensic Activities

This section identifies the different activities across the forensic process. Whilst the procedures described here may seem to form a timeline, this is not necessarily the case in practice and the order in which activities are performed will vary depending on the circumstances.

6.1 Initial Discussion

- 6.1.1 The FA will take principal responsibility for the relevant services provided to the case once they have been contacted and have agreed to progress with the investigation. All decisions and information must be recorded in the FA's contemporaneous notes and records must be continuously updated throughout the investigation.
- 6.1.2 The FA must ensure that they have processes in place to monitor and review their assignments regularly in relation to each case to ensure that they fulfil the Terms of Reference (ToR) correctly and fully as agreed.
- 6.1.3. On initial contact the FA must:
1. Initiate accurate and contemporaneous record keeping.
 2. Clarify the scope of an assignment and establish clear ToR/Purpose.
 3. Agree the ToR/Purpose and ensure that any work that they agree to undertake is within their area of competence and expertise. They must at this stage raise any potential conflicts of interest and any aspects of the work that do not fall within their area of competence, or that they are not being supervised by a person with that competence.
 4. If ToR were initially provided verbally, these should be confirmed in writing in contemporaneous notes/email/ or by other written means.
 5. Ensure all necessary information is gathered in relation to the extent and particular conditions of the examination, whilst

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taking steps to avoid unnecessary information that could potentially contribute to cognitive bias. Information likely to be required includes:

- a. current location and integrity of remains/scene including the size of the scene, the resource implications and number of scenes if more than one,
- b. the name/contact details of the person responsible for the scene/scenes and how these are to be coordinated,
- c. nature of the incident,
- d. any health and safety issues at the scene and/or related to the remains or environment conditions,
- e. requirement for any special equipment or competencies,
- f. required timescales for attendance,
- g. whether it is necessary for the FA to attend any briefings or forensic strategy meetings,
- h. the client's perceived requirement from the FA at that stage.

6. Inform the instructing party about the expertise and technical knowledge of the FA and the ways in which they can and are unable to support the specific investigation.
7. Agree any anticipated costs in relation to their work and ensure that authorisation is obtained from the appropriate budget holder prior to the commencement of any work.
8. Ensure that appropriate security clearance or vetting has been obtained (necessary to work with certain police forces and other agencies).
9. Identify the required resources, facilities and equipment to undertake the role requested of the FA and ensure that there is access to these.
10. Inform the instructing party about any potential work, logistical requirements and other recommendations which could be actioned whilst awaiting the arrival of the FA. This may include activities which might preserve the scene from the weather for example.
11. Seek approval in advance should any other persons be required to attend the scene with the lead FA (e.g. second FA or scientist from another discipline).

6.1.4 The FA may be responsible for subcontracting other specialists. If this is not the case, the organisation of these specialists would then lie with the investigating team.

6.2 Response and Actions at the Scene

- 6.2.1 Once the ToR has been agreed, there shall be no unreasonable delay in responding to a call for scene/mortuary attendance and the client must be made aware of the time required to prepare and travel.
- 6.2.2 Costs and deadlines shall be discussed and agreed at the briefing stage where possible. This will include any critical timescales such as custody time limits, bail and court dates etc. to which they may be expected to work.
- 6.2.3 Where required, the FA shall provide their own personal protection equipment (PPE) for attendance at a scene or have agreed that it is to be provided by the instructing party.
- 6.2.4 The FA will be contactable or provide an alternative point of contact for the instructing party.
- 6.2.5 Prior to an examination or any work being undertaken at scene, a briefing with an appropriate individual should be undertaken so that the FA is informed about the nature of the incident and any background information of significance and relevance.
- 6.2.6 If, during the briefing, new information about the scene comes to light, renegotiation of the ToR/Purpose must be initiated if appropriate.
- 6.2.7 The type of scenes an FA may attend include (but are not limited to):
 - 1. Surface deposition of articulated and/or disarticulated/dispersed human remains.
 - 2. Partially exposed human remains in a number of contexts.
 - 3. Decomposed or decomposing human remains in a number of contexts.
 - 4. Excavation of a clandestine grave working alongside a forensic archaeologist.
 - 5. Fatal fire scenes.
 - 6. The site of an explosion.
 - 7. Mass fatality scenarios.
- 6.2.8 On arrival at the scene/police station/mortuary, the FA must introduce themselves to the point of contact and be prepared to show appropriate identification.
- 6.2.9 All activities, observations, findings and conclusions must be recorded in the FA's contemporaneous notes and documentation must be continuous throughout the investigation.
- 6.2.10 The FA must be aware of the scene parameters, cordons, logs and common approach paths and prescribed use of PPE for the incident and only access the scene in accordance with these specific

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parameters, ensuring that they complete the scene logs where appropriate.

- 6.2.11 The FA must ensure that they minimise the risk of cross contamination at scenes and of exhibits/productions by adhering to recognised anti-contamination and cross contamination procedures, and standard operating procedures (SOPs), at all times, including proper use of PPE and preservation of scene integrity.
- 6.2.12 The FA must undertake a risk assessment for their specific activities and ensure awareness of, and adherence to, other risk assessments already in place.
- 6.2.13 An assessment must be made before any work is carried out to outline and agree the FA's involvement, bearing in mind the presence of other evidence, other specialists and police staff. Agreement must be reached with the instructing party and other experts present to avoid compromising other potential evidence. The agreed strategy should be documented by all concerned and should be agreed with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) or the SIO's representative at the scene such as the Crime Scene Manager (CSM). Any additional work required at the scene by the FA including any specific techniques which necessitate the use of equipment (e.g. sieving), must be discussed and agreed in principle at the outset with other experts.
- 6.2.14 Any disturbance of the remains must be in line with the agreed strategy and any removal of remains from the scene or within the scene must have been agreed previously, according to local management guidelines and any Coronial / Procurator Fiscal's direction pertaining to that case.
- 6.2.15 Any photographs taken by the FA must only be with the express permission of the SIO or CSM (or their equivalent or representative) and the images must be stored in a secure manner and be disclosed.
- 6.2.16 The FA must understand the requirements of other attending specialists and members of the search/investigative team, clarify their various roles and responsibilities and coordinate their activities with the wider team at all times.
- 6.2.17 Any removal of human tissue from the scene (other than that going directly to a mortuary) must be agreed and follow local management, legal guidelines and any Coronial / Procurator Fiscal's direction pertaining to that case.
- 6.2.18 All equipment must be used and cleaned, or used and disposed of, in an appropriate manner following an SOP for anticontamination of

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equipment, and the FA should be able to demonstrate this process (section 7.5.1).

6.3 Records of the scene and exhibits/productions

- 6.3.1 Records can be undertaken via a variety of means including written notes, images, or voice recording, and must commence prior to examination occurring and continue throughout the examination and analysis processes. All activities conducted, observations, findings and conclusions reached during attendance at the scene/mortuary must be recorded. Records must be sufficient to permit another competent FA to understand and evaluate the examination undertaken.
- 6.3.2 Any exhibits/productions taken by the FA must be suitably recorded, packaged and labelled to ensure that subsequent identification of the person seizing, together with the time, date and location seized.
- 6.3.3 All exhibits/productions must be packaged appropriately to prevent contamination and avoid damage and degradation of the item/sample.
- 6.3.4 The FA must ensure that if they take control of any exhibits/productions, a 'chain of custody record' is maintained and that any storage facilities utilised are secure and appropriate to prevent contamination and avoidable degradation of the sample.
- 6.3.5 The FA must ensure the next stage of continuity of their exhibits/productions is executed appropriately, ensuring there is a written record of this on the exhibit/productions label and within their notes or exhibit/productions list.
- 6.3.6 Any damage to the remains during lifting and transportation from the scene must be recorded in the FA's notes and the relevant personnel informed.
- 6.3.7 It is not expected that an FA will undertake testing such as quantitative measurements or presumptive or screening tests at a scene.
- 6.3.8 If portable equipment is to be used at the scene or in the laboratory, it must be calibrated according to a prescribed maintenance programme before use. This calibration must be recorded. The equipment must carry a label indicating the current calibration status. Examples of equipment include callipers or osteometric boards.

6.4 Examination at the mortuary

- 6.4.1 If examination of remains at the mortuary is the first involvement of an FA, then all relevant processes mentioned under sections 6.1-6.3

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must be followed.

- 6.4.2 The post-mortem is generally led by a forensic pathologist. It is recommended practice that the forensic pathologist and FA clarify expectations and roles before commencement of the post-mortem examination. The FA is present at the mortuary following request from several possible sources: Coroner, Procurator Fiscal, Forensic Pathologist, SIO etc.
- 6.4.3 Maceration of remains should be undertaken as a last resort and must only be undertaken after all relevant permissions are sought and with cognisance of the Human Tissue Act 2004 or the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 in England, Wales and Scotland or country-specific legislation as otherwise appropriate.
- 6.4.4 All actions which alter the state of the remains (cleaning, reconstruction, sampling) must only be undertaken with the permission of the forensic pathologist (and ultimately HM Coroner/Procurator Fiscal if appropriate), after thorough recording has occurred e.g. written descriptions, drawings, diagrams, photographs etc. and with the knowledge that the actions of the FA will not impact on current or subsequent examinations by any other specialists. This is especially relevant where testing might result in changes to the sample including destructive testing.
- 6.4.5 Examination of remains must be undertaken with dignity and respect, taking into account any ethical, cultural, and/or religious considerations where appropriate. The use of invasive / destructive procedures should be minimised and alternative methods such as radiographic / imaging techniques sought where possible.
- 6.4.6 Any examination, measurements or tests must be undertaken by an FA who has a proven competency in the use of the applied methods.
- 6.4.7 Reconstruction of the remains shall be undertaken using techniques which are agreed in advance, and which should not permanently alter the remains (e.g. glue products etc.).
- 6.4.8 Care must be taken in handling more fragile evidence. Remains in a poor state of preservation can be subject to further damage while being examined. Any further damage caused must be recorded.
- 6.4.9 Methods for examination must be validated and be the most appropriate for the specific group or population to which the individual belongs (if known). Methods used must have demonstrated levels of reliability. All methods must be undertaken by an FA who has proven competence in their use and the methods and conclusions must be subject to case specific peer review as part of the critical review

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process.

- 6.4.10 The reliability (precision and accuracy), variability (statistical variance), errors of any method (e.g. estimating age-at-death or post-mortem interval dating) and calibration related to any instrumental measurement must be understood by the practitioner and stated clearly in any conclusions based on that method.
- 6.4.11 Methods shall be fully documented (see Section 7) including procedures for quality control and, where appropriate, the use of reference materials.

6.5 Equipment

- 6.5.1 The FA must maintain all specialist equipment and ensure that equipment which is to be used on more than one scene is cleaned using a method validated to prevent cross contamination. All cleaning methods must be validated and must follow employing organisation's protocols/SOPs and must be fully recorded.
- 6.5.2 All measuring equipment must be calibrated and maintained as appropriate to manufacturer's guidelines and records kept of such.

6.6 Validation

- 6.6.1 All methods shall be fully documented including procedures for quality control and where appropriate, the use of reference materials.
- 6.6.2 Validation studies are required for all methods including comparative methods. Validation studies can be conducted by the scientific community (as in the case of standard or published methods) or by the practitioner themselves (as in the case of methods developed in-house or where significant modifications have been made to previously validated methods).
- 6.6.3 Where novel methods are applied, these should be founded on a sound scientific basis.
- 6.6.4 If a method is validated by another organisation, the practitioner should review validation records to ensure that the validation performed was fit for purpose and should ensure that this is included in their documentation.
- 6.6.5 Where practicable, technical procedures used by a FA shall be validated before being used on casework or applied at a scene of a crime. For novel techniques or non-routine activities, the forensic anthropologist shall ensure that the status of the validation, product, method or service is clearly understood by the end user prior to its use.

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- 6.6.6 It is important to ensure that the FA is current in their knowledge and literature reviews should be undertaken regularly to ensure that a full range of opinions can be conveyed regarding the use of techniques and conclusions drawn from results as displayed through documented CPD.

7 Documentation and Records

This section addresses documentary requirements for the FA.

7.1 Requirements for Records

- 7.1.1 Each FA must have a documented procedure to create and maintain records relating to each case under investigation. All information must be documented appropriately and may include, but not be limited to, records of any communication with the client (verbal and written), contract review, financial information, terms of reference/purpose, examinations requested, forensic strategy(ies), examination notes, diagrams, printouts and images, draft reports, evidence of peer review and critical findings checks.
- 7.1.2 The records must be such that another competent practitioner could evaluate what has been performed, interpret the data and if necessary, repeat the activity.
- 7.1.3 The records must be sufficient to provide an auditable trail and should comply with data protection law and confidentiality practice.
- 7.1.4 If a sample has been authorised to be subject to destructive methods, it must be documented and/or measured using appropriate recording techniques prior to its destruction.
- 7.1.5 Records must be made at the time of examination or as soon as practicable thereafter and these must include all of the information which would make it clear from the case record who has performed each stage of the process, when this was done (e.g. by signing and dating each page), what was examined and the results of any examination.
- 7.1.6 Any changes made to the records must be retained so that the original information can be reviewed whether this is in hard copy or electronic format. All tests undertaken must be recorded, even if they are eventually rejected, along with the information of who has rejected the result and why.
- 7.1.7 Each page of every document (or grouped, stapled documents) in the case records must be traceable to the case. There must be a mechanism by which the integrity of the documentation is maintained.

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- 7.1.8 Hard copy records must be paginated using a page numbering system that indicates the total number of pages.
- 7.1.9 All records must be stored securely including electronic records and a method of indicating place of storage should be included in the case file. All case files should be retained for as long as required by the retention schedule of the relevant criminal justice system.
- 7.1.10 Where cases involve the assessment of images provided by the police or solicitor, delivery of images shall be through secure and recorded methods and storage of case images shall follow data protection law and confidentiality practice.

7.2 Report writing

- 7.2.1 It may be that the FA may supply preliminary reports verbally or via email. Any verbal report must be supported by a written document at the earliest opportunity and records kept of all communication in a traceable manner. These results must include a caveat that the results are provisional and declare whether they have been subject to peer review.
- 7.2.2 Any Streamlined Forensic Reporting undertaken by the FA should adhere to Streamlined Forensic Reporting Guidance.
- 7.2.3 The FA must produce a formal report to record:
 - 1. The information provided to them with regards to the background of the case.
 - 2. Evidence to justify the actions and decisions taken at the scene and/or mortuary/laboratory.
 - 3. The analysis strategy and methods utilised and/or considered.
 - 4. The results of the analysis.
 - 5. The justification for preferring one explanation over others. Where findings could lead to more than one explanation, this should be stated.
 - 6. Where the purpose of the FA examination is to address two opposing propositions, i.e. if, in the opinion of the FA, the findings be more (or less) probable if proposition one is true rather than proposition two and the two propositions are mutually exclusive, then reporting should state where on a scale the conclusion in the particular case lies, by use of a verbal scale or similar.
 - 7. The conclusions and explanations for those conclusions, with reference to current and pertinent literature when appropriate.
 - 8. The repeatability, reliability and accuracy of all methods relied

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upon must be stated clearly.

9. The quantification of all records and samples kept by the FA, referring to police exhibit/production numbers where allocated.
 10. Any additional information required, with reference to the Crown Prosecution Service guidance on expert witnesses' obligations on disclosure (for England and Wales).
 11. The FA must ensure that the country-specific legal requirements for expert reports are followed.
- 7.2.4 All reports from an FA shall be peer reviewed/critically checked by an FA with the requisite competency prior to providing them to the instructing authority (section 7.3).
- 7.2.5 The FA should produce the report as soon as reasonably practicable within the specific circumstances of the case and within an agreed timescale.
- 7.2.6 The FA must be prepared to consider new information, re-evaluate findings and interpretation, if necessary and produce supplementary reports as appropriate.
- 7.2.7 The FA must write the report in an unbiased manner, taking into account all relevant issues, remembering that their core responsibility is to the court.
- 7.2.8 The FA must ensure that the report is not in any way misleading.
- 7.2.9 Any sharing or storage of the report must follow data protection law and confidentiality practice.
- 7.2.10 Where a rapid remote response has been requested e.g. images have been sent for confirmation if bones found are human or non-human (animal), a formal expert witness report is not necessary. Any critical findings conveyed in a provisional and/or oral report shall be qualified with a caveat that the results are provisional and have not been subject to peer review. An oral report should be followed by a written report which should indicate if it has been subject to peerreview.

7.3 Case Specific Peer Review

- 7.3.1 The FA must ensure that a case specific peer review has been undertaken by another appropriately qualified FA. The second FA shall scrutinise the document to ensure that the report is internally consistent, the interpretations and conclusions drawn are justifiable from the examination findings and information set out in the report and the report is capable of being understood without reference to

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other material e.g. material included within appendices.

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7.3.2 The report must state that a case specific peer review has been performed but it should not make any suggestion of support from the person performing the check.

7.3.3 Before signing and submitting the report, it is the responsibility of the FA to check their work for typographical and grammatical errors, this may also form part of the peer review or independent checking process.

7.3.4 The FA must ensure that any unresolved disagreement that might arise during the case specific peer review process be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities including for example: HM Coroner/the Procurator Fiscal/the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)/ Public Prosecution Service and the SIO as soon as practically possible.

7.4 Disclosure of information

7.4.1 The FA must ensure that all findings are made available to the Senior Investigating Officer and surrender all information to the Police Investigation Team (in accordance with the relevant sections of The Disclosure Manual, or other relevant jurisdictional guidelines).

7.5 Obligations to the Court

7.5.1 The FA must ensure that they fulfil their obligations to court as outlined in the relevant guide such as the Guidance Booklet for Experts. This includes, but is not limited to: responding to court warnings, fulfilling the details of expected preparations including the preparation of joint reports if requested and providing expert witness testimony when required.

8 Bibliography and documents consulted in formation of this Code.

1. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Expert Evidence - Prosecution Guidance, Court Processes and Case Management May 2010, updated November 2025. [Expert Evidence | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)
2. Criminal Procedure Rules 2025. [The Criminal Procedure Rules 2020 \(revoked\)](#)
3. Criminal Practice Directions 2023. [criminal-practice-directions-2023-amended16032026.pdf](#)

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