FORENSIC SCIENTIST TECHNICAL LEADER (FINGERPRINT)
CS-0401-14

INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS). The mission of the DFS is to provide high-quality, timely, accurate, and reliable forensic science services using best practices and best available technology, focusing on unbiased science and transparency, to enhance public safety and health.

This position works in the Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) and under the Forensic Science Laboratory Director. The Technical Leader provides expert guidance and advice, and oversees the technical aspects of the LFU analysis programs, with the specific objective of ensuring that those programs maintain best practices, technical relevancy, and compliance with accreditation requirements and quality assurance standards.

MAJOR DUTIES

Works with the LFU Lead Scientist to oversee the technical operations of the LFU laboratory and ensures that the methodologies and procedures used in performing analyses and comparisons in casework are in compliance with established standards and accreditation requirements and remain appropriate and relevant in the context of emerging technologies. Recommends process changes to the Manager.

Oversees the LFU laboratory quality system to ensure compliance with all associated quality standards pertaining to International 17025-based accreditation and ensures generally-accepted latent fingerprint analysis standards (i.e., Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge Analysis Study and Technology (SWGFAST) and/or Organization on Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)) for forensic science recommendations are being followed.

Proposes new or modified analytical procedures in the LFU to Unit Manager for approval and implementation planning.

Reviews the laboratory procedures annually.

Reviews internal and external LFU Audit documents and approves corrective action(s) as needed.

Inspects and evaluates equipment, objects, information, and work related conditions to ensure compliance with agency prescribed operating procedures and safety standards, regulations, and guidelines to include manufacturer’s specifications on computerized scientific equipment and national laboratory accreditation.

Conducts and oversees research; develops, validates, and implements new laboratory analytical procedures deemed feasible by management.

May have casework responsibilities, particularly with respect to more complex cases; performs verifications of results and technical reviews of cases; provides scientific consultations; interprets test results and develops conclusions; prepares reports; and serves as an expert witness on findings of tests/results or LFU technologies.

Assists Unit Manager with approving the training, quality assurance, and proficiency testing programs in the LFU.
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Works with Unit Manager to review training records for newly qualified/hired scientists and approves their qualifications prior to independent casework analysis.

When feasible, participates in courses, symposiums, workshops, and conferences on matters related to forensic science and latent fingerprint analysis.

Stays abreast of new research and practices within the fingerprint analysis field and regularly conducts internal trainings/meetings with staff to disseminate/teach new information.

Develops and oversees scientific programs for training lab staff and stakeholders, when applicable.

Develops an internal training program for trainees in the latent fingerprint analysis field and for current employees to maintain competency.

Mentors LFU trainees to help them prepare for casework.

Develops and oversees applied research programs to ensure technical relevancy and agency goals are maintained.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Expert knowledge of, and skill in, the following:

- Analysis–Compare–Evaluate–Verify (ACE-V) methodology; SWGFAST, International Association for Identification (IAI) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards relating to fingerprint analysis; familiarity with other relevant standards/agency procedures (i.e. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) procedures, OSAC recommendations),

- Forensic fingerprint analysis laboratory quality and accreditation standards and guidelines as they relate to ISO 17025, and

- Applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to conduct in-depth research of operational/program issues; to review and analyze complex reports; to develop necessary plans; and to prepare clear, in-depth reports of studies and recommendations.

Effective communication skills to solve complex problems.

Demonstrated skill and ability to use a PC and software packages (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Power Point, etc.) and other software applicable to various reporting systems, particularly laboratory information management systems (LIMS)

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Work under the general supervision of the Unit Manager or designee, who makes assignments by defining objectives, scope, priorities, and timelines. The incumbent independently plans and carries out the procedural and technical aspects of the assignments developing solutions to technical and procedural
problems or issues; keeps supervisor informed of progress especially those with possible potential serious implications; seeks assistance as needed, and independently coordinates work efforts as necessary.

The work is reviewed for effectiveness in meeting the objectives, compliance with guidelines, feasibility of recommendations and proposed policies and procedures, soundness of overall approach and meeting deadlines, expected and effect of results, and adherence to resources and requirements; Receives direction from higher authority on the course of action to follow when encountering significant technical or procedural problems with work.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines include but are not limited to the policies and procedures of DFS, the standard operating procedures developed by the Latent Fingerprint Unit through field standards, Mayor’s Orders/Instructions, the Deputy Mayor’s policies and priorities, and accreditation standards. Incumbent exercises sound judgment in choosing, interpreting, or adapting available standards and guidelines to specific issues. Many situations are not covered by the guidelines, and therefore, require interpretation and adaptation or research.

COMPLEXITY

Develops and validates criteria for testing parameters with new methods and equipment as well as training team members to perform the same. Maintains quality control measures and ensures detailed documentation of test results. Provides leadership and expertise in the application of procedures, identifies problems, and anticipates and addresses any deviations or discrepancies in the results. The work requires assessing, evaluating, modifying, and adapting various methods to satisfy requirements and to arrive at sound conclusions.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The work involves leading a team in performing technically sound casework examinations meeting agency and accreditation requirements; resolving critical problems; developing new theories, techniques and methods; and establishing and maintaining technical adequacy.

The result of the work may affect other experts and/or the department’s credibility, adequacy, accuracy, and effectiveness and laboratory tests, and ensures its relevancy to assist with closure. The results are also binding and affect judicial proceedings.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with DFS officials, employees, laboratory personnel, consultants, Federal and District regulatory agencies, the general public, law enforcement, investigators, and other stakeholders.

The incumbent must establish professional liaisons with colleagues engaged in latent fingerprint analysis testing and research.
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PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Contacts are for the purpose of influencing and motivating persons or groups in order to obtain the desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies and regulations by exchanging and gathering information, ensuring efficient and orderly work flow as it pertains to examination of evidence and preparation of detailed reports.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Work is sedentary; however, some work requires periods of walking, standing, bending, stretching, etc. Occasionally carry items weighing up to 50 pounds, such as bags and/or boxes of evidence. Incumbent must possess sufficient manual dexterity to manipulate and operate laboratory equipment; must be able to visually distinguish color, shape, size, number and picture resolution quality; and must be able to withstand exposure to disagreeable elements such as malodorous and/or decomposing samples/bodies, blood, bodily fluids, etc., that may pose a health risk.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work is performed in an office and laboratory setting. The office setting is when preparing documentation, and the laboratory is when performing research, testing, and analysis phases.

The incumbent may be exposed to hazardous materials, toxic substances, blood borne pathogens, electric current and electrostatic discharge; is required to follow safe laboratory practices and wear protective clothing, including facial masks, safety glasses, gloves, etc.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

This position’s duty station will be housed within the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) which is a protection-sensitive facility. As such, incumbents of this position shall be subject to criminal background checks, background investigations, and mandatory drug and alcohol testing, as applicable.

The nature of the DFS mission necessarily involves potential risks associated with biological or chemical hazards, including morgue functions. Although contact with these functions is intended to be minimal, the risks are nevertheless possible; training to recognize, address, and mitigate these risks is required as is dealing with potentially personally difficult topics, such as crime, death, and disease.

The nature of the work in the Forensic Science Laboratory may require safe handling and processing of chemicals and reagents within the laboratory, and standard health and safety processes must be constantly demonstrated and reinforced.

May be required to work weekends and holidays.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Required Must be a graduate of biological sciences, forensic science or related discipline appropriate to the position from an accredited college or university and at least one (1) year of specialized experience equivalent to the grade 13 level.
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Specialized experience is experience which is directly related to the position and has equipped the individual with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the position including, but are not limited to, providing expert guidance and advice, and overseeing the technical aspects of the LFU analysis programs to ensure and maintain best practices, technical relevancy, and compliance with accreditation requirements and quality assurance standards;

OR

an equivalent combination of professional education, training, and experience.

Preferred. Master's degree in a biology, chemistry, or forensic science-related area from an accredited college or university and six years of forensic latent fingerprint analysis laboratory experience obtained at a laboratory where comparisons where routinely done between known and unknown latent samples.

LICENSE/CERTIFICATION

IAI latent print examiner certification preferred.

Incumbent is required to successfully complete competency testing prior to beginning any technical work on casework.