



# Forensic Science Regulator

## Regulator's Notification: No. 03-2024

**Issue:** Changes to the Code FSA definition and FSA specific requirements for undertaking of FSA–MTP 101 – Friction Ridge Detail: Comparison.

The approval of version 2 of the statutory Code will be delayed due to the change of government and the Regulator wishes to take the opportunity to incorporate changes to the Code FSA definition and FSA specific requirements for the undertaking of FSA–MTP 101 – Friction Ridge Detail: Comparison into version 2 of the statutory Code.

### Background

In May 2023 concerns were raised with the Regulator initially by the MPS and then by the NPCC, regarding the accreditation of friction ridge detail examinations and the role that the source (e.g. finger, thumb, foot, palm etc) of friction ridge detail on the human body plays in the undertaking of friction ridge detail comparison. The Regulator reviewed the available information, discussed this with senior practitioners and attended an accreditation assessment at the MPS. The Regulator concluded that there is no significant variation between areas of friction ridge detail on different areas of the human body such that any separate consideration in respect of method validation or determining practitioner competence is required in the undertaking of the comparison of friction ridge detail. The undertaking of friction ridge detail comparison should consider all areas of friction ridge detail on the human body and take an holistic approach.

On this basis the Regulator commissioned the Fingerprint Quality Standard Specialist Group (FQSSG) to consider changes to the Code and the FSA specific requirements. The FQSSG have identified changes that need to be made to the Code FSA definition and the FSA specific requirements for friction ridge detail comparison and they have passed them to the Regulator for formal consultation.

### Description of Notification

The revised FSA definition and the FSA Specific requirements can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/friction-ridge-detail-comparison> the main changes are;

1. the definition of friction ridge detail comparison has been amended to avoid ambiguity that areas of friction ridge detail from the human body should be treated differently in the comparison process
2. the sub-activities in the FSA definition have been revised and the FSA specific requirement now include a section on the scope of accreditation

that is required for the undertaking of friction ridge detail comparison which mirrors the sub activities. The sub activities are; searching, identity check, scene linking, direct comparison. This will ensure that when organisations apply for accreditation it will be based on the definition of the FSA set out in the Code.

3. The sections in the FSA specific requirements now reference the relevant clauses in ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and ILAC-G19:06/2022. This will ensure that the achievement of accreditation is based on the requirements in the Code.

The FQSSG will continue to work on other aspects of the commissioning brief including updating the terminology guidance.

These changes should not have a major impact but are more important in bringing clarity to the requirements in the Code and ensuring that accreditation is focused on the requirements in the Code. In line with Section 3 of the FSR Act the Regulator has instigated a targeted consultation with those organisations that undertake the forensic science activity of friction ridge detail comparison. Through this notification the Regulator invites comments on the changes from other parties who are not subject of the targeted consultation. Comments should be returned to the Regulator by **13<sup>th</sup> September 2024** to [fsrenquiries@forensicscienceregulator.gov.uk](mailto:fsrenquiries@forensicscienceregulator.gov.uk)



**Mr Gary Pugh OBE**

**August 2024**