



Guidance Notes for Assessor Panels on Educational Accreditation/Surveillance Visits & to improve consistency and more open questions

The following guidance is issued as a general aide memoire to support assessors and to ensure consistency at all visits. For example we may not check the same detail at all universities due to course content for example we may not check on the use of databases by every university and it has been pointed out to us that this is a potential inconsistency.

Below are a number of areas of open ended questions:

1. Databases. How do they incorporate and use databases? Noting that there are a number of freely available databases from the website, e.g. STR allele frequencies are well known as are FBI data on the relative frequencies of refractive indices, others could be compiled locally reasonably easily, for example through student projects. No capital expenditure is required to incorporate these databases.
2. How they provide court experience to the students?
 - a. Do they link with a law department within their university or do they have legal advice to support?
 - b. How do they do the "court experience?"
3. Do students get hands on experience with analytical equipment?
4. Mock Court Room Exercise. Although court skills are useful, there's a whole raft of other "soft" skills which are required. Something akin to a mix of consultancy and project management skills which would enable the scientist to :
 - * develop a thorough understanding of the problem and the objectives of their involvement
 - * plan an effective strategy and tactics to deliver the required results efficiently and within agreed limits
 - * implement their plan, dealing with scheduling, resourcing and new client-requirement issues as they arise
 - * present their findings to the client
 - * negotiate with colleagues (e.g. the opposing side's "expert" to produce a report of agreed common findings and opinions).

These 4 probably, IMNSHO, reflect a more widely applicable set of skills than being able to withstand cross-examination and would be far more transferable skills for those who do not go on to be reporting scientists.