



## RISK AND IMPARTIALITY POLICY STATEMENT

### Purpose

The purpose of the LSD&FC impartiality policy is to ensure that all forensic services at the Lagos State DNA & Forensic Center are undertaken impartially, and they are structured and managed always to safeguard impartiality.

LSD&FC commits to identify risks to impartiality and implement measures to eliminate or mitigate the risks. Objectivity will always be maintained by ensuring that conflicts of interest do not exist, or if identified are resolved so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the center.

In the context of the forensic services offered by LSD&FC, being impartial includes ensuring that,

- a) Forensic services and laboratory activities are conducted without bias,
- b) Results are not influenced or have the appearance of being influenced by any relationship the center or any staff may have with a client, victim, or suspect and
- c) Forensic services also cannot be influenced by any undue pressure being put on LSD&FC staff by any person.

LSD&FC recognizes that there can be internal and external risks to impartiality:

**Internal risks** to impartiality include for example, supervisors putting pressure on analysts and technicians to adjust procedures to improve turn-around time, or to deviate from procedures just to please a client. The provision of financial or other incentives for productivity e.g. to improve the number of tests conducted, or for releasing results of tests fast also represents a form of undue pressure.

**External risks** to impartiality cover all the possibilities that could cause bias, including, business relationships between the forensic center and the client; family or personal relationships between staff of the center who will be involved in laboratory activities and the client; financial interests, such as ownership in a client company, or in a venture that has interest in the test results. LSD&FC recognizes that having a relationship with a client does not necessarily mean that there is a risk of impartiality or conflict of interest. But the center will recognize such a risk and demonstrate that the risk has been eliminated or minimized.



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### Impartiality Policy Statement

The LSD&FC impartiality policy applies to all personnel. It specifies LSD&FCs' policy on conflict of interest and impartiality. It also discusses how to recognize and deal with conflict of interest and risks to impartiality. To inspire confidence and credibility LSD&FC will demonstrate independence, impartiality and competence both in action and appearance.

LSD&FC is fully aware that impartiality is one of the fundamental principles that must be guaranteed by a forensic center. It recognizes the utmost importance of impartiality and potential conflicts of interests in promoting confidence when conducting its forensic activities.

LSD&FC management is fully committed to ensure that all activities are carried out impartially and objectively and are perceived as such by all stakeholders, in compliance with the relevant requirements and best practices.

For this reason, LSD&FC is committed to:

- a) Conduct an **annual review** of impartiality risk applicable to LSD&FC employees and key suppliers and vendors.
  - i. The impartiality risk of the most important Key/Critical Suppliers and Vendors will be assessed by the **Office Manager or Admin Assistant** using the Impartiality – Threat/Risk Identification Questionnaire (*Form Adm 008*).
  - ii. The impartiality risk of Employees will be assessed by each key employee using the Impartiality – Threat/Risk Identification Questionnaire (*Form Adm 008*).
  - iii. If any risk is identified, then the Impartiality Risk Assessment/Mitigation Form (Form Admin 007) will be completed by Reviewers made up of the **Quality Manager, Section Director and Center Director**, to assess, eliminate, mitigate and document the management of the risk.
- b) ensure that procedures for accessing LSD&FC services are fair and nondiscriminatory, and treated as such;
- c) continuously identify risks to the impartiality of LSD&FC arising from its activities, its relationships or relationship of its staff;
- d) analyze, evaluate, treat, monitor and document the identified risks and demonstrate how to eliminate or minimize such risks to the impartiality;
- e) provide internal and external staff the knowledge required to operate in accordance with impartiality and ask its staff to sign a commitment to promptly reveal any situation that may constitute a conflict of interest;



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- f) not allow personal, family, commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality of LSD&FC activities;
- g) ensure that separate legal entities, with whom it has relationships, do not compromise the impartiality of LSD&FC activities;
- h) handle all dealings with all entities in full compliance with the standard and accreditation requirements;
- i) not provide any forensic service if unacceptable threats arise;
- j) act decisively to respond to any threat to its impartiality arising from the actions of other persons, bodies or organizations;
- k) provide a mechanism to safeguard the impartiality of LSD&FC which ensures a balanced representation of the relevant interested parties, without the prevalence of individual interests.

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12/05/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changed laboratory activities to forensic services.</li> <li>Changed "people performing laboratory activities" to "all LSD&amp;FC staff".</li> </ul>	Dr Richard Somiari	V1.0
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