CHARTER
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
National Commission on Forensic Science

1. **Committee's Official Designation (Title):** The Committee shall be known as the National Commission on Forensic Science (Commission), hereinafter referred to as the Commission.

2. **Authority:** The Commission is established under Agency authority, and will be governed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities:** The objectives and scope of activities of the Commission are to provide recommendations and advice to the Department of Justice (DOJ) concerning national methods and strategies for: strengthening the validity and reliability of the forensic sciences (including medico-legal death investigation); enhancing quality assurance and quality control in forensic science laboratories and units; identifying and recommending scientific guidance and protocols for evidence seizure, testing, analysis, and reporting by forensic science laboratories and units; and identifying and assessing other needs of the forensic science communities to strengthen their disciplines and meet the increasing demands generated by the criminal and civil justice systems at all levels of government.

4. **Description of Duties:** The duties to support the objectives described in paragraph 3 include:

    a. To recommend priorities for standards development to the Attorney General;
    b. To review and recommend that the Attorney General endorse guidance identified or developed by subject-matter experts;
    c. To develop proposed guidance concerning the intersection of forensic science and the courtroom;
    d. To develop policy recommendations, including a uniform code of professional responsibility and minimum requirements for training, accreditation and/or certification;
    e. To consider the recommendations of the National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Forensic Science;
    f. To identify and assess the current and future needs of the forensic sciences to strengthen their disciplines and meet growing demands.

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports:** The Commission shall report to the Attorney General, who, through the Deputy Attorney General, shall direct the work of the Commission in fulfilling its mission. The Attorney General will refer recommendations regarding measurement standards and priorities for standards development to the Director of NIST, as the Attorney General deems appropriate.

6. **Support:** DOJ will provide support services for the Commission. DOJ will coordinate with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) regarding the duties and activities of the Commission through a Memorandum of Understanding.

7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years**: The estimated annual operating costs of the Commission are expected to be approximately $1,000,000. These costs include three workyears of support services and the expenses of members to attend meetings.

8. **Designated Federal Officer (DFO):** A full-time or permanent part-time DOJ employee, appointed by the Attorney General, will serve as the DFO of the Commission. The DFO will approve of and call all of the Commission meetings; prepare all Commission meeting agendas; facilitate public notice of, and public comment periods at, all Commission meetings; attend all Commission meetings; adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; chair meetings of the Commission when directed to do so by the Agency head; and perform other duties as required by FACA.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings:** The Commission generally will meet four times each year at approximately three-month intervals.

10. **Duration:** The period of time necessary for the Commission to carry out its purpose is indefinite.

11. **Termination:** The Commission's termination date is two years from the date this Charter is filed with Congress, and is subject to renewal in accordance with Section 14 of FACA.

12. **Membership and Designation:** The Commission will be co-chaired by a senior DOJ official and a senior NIST official. The Commission shall recommend whether the Attorney General should endorse guidance and practice guidelines for DOJ laboratories and forensic-science related policy initiatives. The Commission will consist of approximately 30 members appointed by the Attorney General in consultation with the Director of NIST and the co-chairs of the Commission. The Commission members will be selected to achieve a balance of backgrounds, experiences, viewpoints, and expertise in scientific, legal, law enforcement, academic, and advocacy professions. Candidates for membership from non-federal entities will be solicited through the Federal Register and outreach to relevant professional societies.

13. **Subcommittees:** The Attorney General may approve the establishment of subcommittees for purposes consistent with this Charter. Such subcommittees must report their recommendations and advice to the Commission for full deliberation and discussion. Subcommittees have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Commission and may not report directly to the Federal Government or any other entity.

14. **Record Keeping:** Records of the Commission shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552

15. **Filing Date:** The filing date is the date this Charter is filed with Congress.

April 23, 2015
Date

Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General