

# Forensic Anthropology Practitioner Levels



This document lays out the criteria for the various levels of Forensic Anthropologist as defined in the RAI and the Forensic Regulator's Code of Practice, Ethics and Professional Standards for Forensic Anthropology and, for those working in the UK, it should be read in conjunction with the document outlining the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Forensic Anthropology and aligned professions.

There are three levels of certification for Forensic Anthropologists providing a means of natural career progression within the field, through a process of continuing professional and learning development within a structured mentoring environment. Applicants do not need to progress through consecutive levels but can apply directly for FAI and FAII certification. Each forensic anthropologist will be certified to work within their named criminal justice system only.

For the purposes of this document aligned professions, such as Osteology and Craniofacial Anthropology, are subsumed under the overarching profession of Forensic Anthropology. It is assumed throughout this document that forensic casework presented for examination may be domestic or international, providing it meets the standards and format required for the named criminal justice system that the practitioner will be working within.

### 1. FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST III (FAIII)

A Forensic Anthropologist III is the entry level for professional practice and is aimed at appropriately qualified individuals who have begun to develop their skills within the discipline.

Entry into **Forensic Anthropologist III** is conferred by portfolio review. The portfolio must contain evidence of all the following:

- An Honours degree (and preferably a Masters degree) in forensic, physical or biological anthropology, anatomy or a related discipline, with supporting transcripts providing evidence of osteology training.
- Attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences post-graduation.
- Fellow (or Student Fellow as appropriate) of the RAI
- Demonstrable professional experience gained over a period of 2 years post-graduation.

Relevant experience must include at least **two** of the following types of activities from section **A)** and **two** from section **B)** and must be evidenced:

#### Section A

- Conducting triage to decide whether skeletal elements are animal or human. This can either be within the framework of a forensic case (supervised by a mentor) or working with archaeological material (supervised by a biological anthropologist, an osteoarchaeologist etc.).
- Collecting basic data (which should include measurements) within a laboratory or a mortuary setting and can either be done within the framework of a forensic case (supervised by a mentor) or working with archaeological human remains (supervised by a biological anthropologist, an osteoarchaeologist etc.).

- Additional experience working with bone; for example, through volunteer work in museums, or on archaeological sites excavating or analysing human remains, or assisting in the post excavation processing of bone from a site where both human and animal remains were being recovered (the latter example may also allow the applicant to undertake human/non-human bone identification and therefore satisfy another of the eligibility criteria). These activities can be undertaken globally and be supervised by a biological anthropologist, an osteoarchaeologist etc.

## Section B

- Keeping appropriate professional laboratory notes or appropriate professional field notes if undertaking archaeological excavation of human remains.
- Developing an understanding of forensic anthropological practice in a professional and criminal justice setting.
- Developing an understanding of health and safety for both scene and laboratory/mortuary investigations.

Applicants must have gained this experience after their honours degree and may have gained it as part of their Masters or PhD studies, or through voluntary or paid work.

And at least **one** of the following:

- Certificates of attendance at least one CPD activity relevant to forensic anthropology.
- Evidence of enrolment in a taught postgraduate (Masters Level) or research degree programme (PhD or Masters by research) in Forensic Anthropology.

The portfolio should contain the various certificates and documentary evidence that demonstrates that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria. Documentary evidence can include:

- Certificates of attendance/completion
- Letters of reference from head of project/excavation/line manager (these should include dates/responsibilities/role, etc.)
- Reports from mentor in relation to the work and responsibilities undertaken in each instance
- Other evidence of attendance and responsibilities

Application for Forensic Anthropologist III must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a mentor who is a Forensic Anthropologist at level I or II or a subject matter expert and the second from an academic supervisor or employer. Both referees must be familiar with the candidates work but should not originate from the same institution/organization as each other.

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## 1.1 WORKING PRACTICE

A Forensic Anthropologist III should work under the supervision of a Forensic Anthropologist II or I and should have an understanding of the pertinent legal requirements before embarking on any forensic case work. Their direct responsibilities would include:

1. Conducting triage deciding where skeletal elements are animal or human,
2. Collecting basic data within a laboratory/mortuary setting,
3. Taking measurements and keeping appropriate professional notes,
4. Assisting a Forensic Anthropologist II or I.

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## 1.2 PROGRESSION

A Forensic Anthropologist III is expected to be involved in various activities, including a combination of the following:

1. Engaging in continued scholarly activities related to Forensic Anthropology.
2. Developing knowledge through attendance at relevant CPD activities as outlined in the CPD guidance document.
3. Developing an understanding of health and safety for both scene and laboratory/mortuary investigations.
4. Developing an understanding of forensic anthropological practice in a professional and criminal justice setting.
5. Work with and be supervised by Forensic Anthropologists II and/or I.
6. Present papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences, symposia.
7. Engage in research and publish in peer-reviewed journals.

## 2. FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST II (FAII)

To be eligible for progression to forensic anthropology level II, or to apply directly to level FAII, a candidate must present a portfolio of evidence which must demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. Participation in a minimum of 5 cases which may relate to human remains or where animal vs human bone differentiation was undertaken.
2. A demonstrable understanding of health and safety for both scene and laboratory/mortuary investigations.
3. A demonstrable knowledge of osteology and/or anatomy, skeletal biology, population variation, statistics and human identification.
4. Participation in relevant continuing education and training in forensic anthropology or related fields, for example, but not limited to, osteology, human identification, craniofacial anthropology, anatomy, biological anthropology, etc. through CPD or research activities including, if applicable, enrolment in a PhD degree programme.
5. If the application is not by direct entry, then a minimum of two years relevant experience after attaining Forensic Anthropologist III status including evidence of participation in the activities involved in that role including those outlined in the CPD guidance document is required.
6. Continued attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences which could include (but are not limited to) BAHID, BAFA, FASE, IAFS, AAFS, IAI or AAPA.
7. Continued membership of at least one relevant professional body/association in addition to fellowship of the RAI.

Application for Forensic Anthropologist II must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a Forensic Anthropologist I and the second from a senior forensic scientist, Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), Crime Scene Manager (CSM) or other relevant police officer or relevant member of the legal profession. Both referees must be familiar with your work but should not originate from the same institution/organization as each other.

The examination for Forensic Anthropologist II shall consist of two parts:

### PART 1 Demonstrating Theoretical Knowledge

- (a) The candidate must demonstrate that their existing qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate levels encompasses the knowledge base contained within the RAI forensic anthropology curriculum. This should take the form of a mapping exercise which should be submitted to the examination committee. Alternatively, the candidate should be able to demonstrate from their casework on human remains that they have an appropriate knowledge base.

**OR**

- (b) The candidate completes a written examination of 2 hours duration which covers the RAI forensic anthropology curriculum.

The written examination paper will be in two sections. Section A will assess the candidate's technical knowledge of the discipline according to the published curriculum. Section B will assess the candidate's problem solving abilities and will include reference to the role of the expert witness and legal matters.

## PART 2 – THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

The practical examination consists of two parts;

- (a) A practical examination of a mixed skeletal assemblage resulting in the preparation of a set of contemporaneous notes and relevant photographs. The examination will run for 3 hours.
- (b) Using the same skeletal material, the candidate will prepare a full case file including a formal report. The case file must be submitted to the Examination Committee within two weeks of the initial skeletal evaluation and should include all contemporaneous notes, examination photographs, a final report and any other relevant documentation.

The examination shall be available annually (see Examination Procedures document for dates). Candidates who fail the examination can re-sit at the next available examination.

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### 2.1 WORKING PRACTICE

A Forensic Anthropologist II should work under the direct supervision of a Forensic Anthropologist I. Their responsibilities would include:

1. Deciding whether skeletal elements are animal or human
2. Collecting and interpreting data in a laboratory/mortuary setting
3. Keeping appropriate professional notes and documentation
4. Assisting in forensic anthropology casework at both the scene and the laboratory/mortuary
5. Co-authoring / authoring peer reviewed case reports and potentially providing evidence as an expert witness for the courts of law
6. Possibly engaging in mentoring activities for Forensic Anthropologist III

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### 2.2 PROGRESSION

A Forensic Anthropologist II is expected to be involved in various activities, including a combination of the following:

1. Engaging in continued scholarly activities
2. Continued maintenance and development of competencies including attendance at relevant CPD activities as outlined in the CPD guidance document
3. Work with, and be supervised by, a Forensic Anthropologist I
4. Provide supervision and mentoring to Forensic Anthropologist III

5. Active and on-going engagement in casework under the instruction and guidance of Forensic Anthropologist I including engagement in peer review processes and potentially delivering evidence as an expert witness for the court
6. Present papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences, symposia
7. Engage in research and publish in peer-reviewed journals
8. Be involved in the development and delivery of training and education (for example through activities in institutions or professional training)

### 3. CHARTERED FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST (FAI)

A Forensic Anthropologist I must have completed at least an MSc, and preferably a PhD, in forensic anthropology or a related discipline (for example, anatomy, human osteology, physical or biological anthropology). Candidates must have undertaken further training in forensic anthropology and, have been an active participant in forensic anthropology casework compliant with the requirements of professional practitioners within their named criminal justice system. FAI's are Chartered Forensic Anthropologists.

Casework experience must have included work across a broad range of case types and complexity.

Application for **Forensic Anthropologist I** chartership is by case review and *viva voce* examination. Application normally requires a minimum of three years' experience after attaining Forensic Anthropologist II status including evidence of participation in the activities involved in that role including those outlined in the CPD guidance documentation.

Direct entry is also possible where the candidate presents a portfolio of evidence commensurate with these requirements.

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate evidence of the following:

1. A case portfolio documenting a minimum of 5 co-authored/sole-authored peer-reviewed forensic cases, 3 of which must satisfy the standards required by their named criminal justice system. These cases must demonstrate a broad range of expertise, complexity and knowledge demonstrating the breadth of knowledge required at this level.
2. Participation in relevant continuing education and training in forensic anthropology or related fields, for example, but not limited to, osteology, human identification, craniofacial anthropology, anatomy, biological anthropology) etc. through CPD or research activities including, if applicable, enrolment in a PhD degree programme.
3. Evidence of delivery of scientific evidence as an expert witness to the courts and/or completion of expert witness training.
4. A demonstrable understanding of health and safety for both scene and laboratory/mortuary investigations.
5. Continued attendance at a minimum of two professionally relevant conferences which could include (but is not limited to) BAHID, BAFA, FASE, IAFS, AAFS, IAI or AAPA.
6. Continued membership of at least one relevant professional body/association in addition to fellowship of the RAI.

Application for certification at Forensic Anthropologist I level must be supported by two letters of reference, at least one of which should be from a mentor and the second from a relevant professional, including police, legal or academic. Both referees must be familiar with the candidates work but should not originate from the same institution/organization as each other.

The examination for **Forensic Anthropologist I** shall consist of an **expert witness oral examination**. The candidate will supply 5 forensic cases, 3 of which must satisfy the requirements of their named criminal justice system, which demonstrate a range of types and complexities, from which the examiners will choose three. The oral examination will relate to



these cases as well as a number of core areas, e.g. theoretical aspects of population variation and its application to forensic anthropology (the biological profile), expert witness testimony, forensic taphonomy, craniofacial analysis, the interpretation of trauma (distinguishing between ante-, peri- and post- mortem trauma), bone pathology, knowledge of burned and cremated remains, soft tissue/decomposed remains and juvenile remains.

The examination shall be available annually. Candidates who fail at examination can re-sit at the next available examination.

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### 3.1 WORKING PRACTICE

A Forensic Anthropologist I is expected to be actively involved in activities 1-3, and in addition to be involved in at least two of the activities 4 to 7.

1. Active and on-going engagement in casework either as a sole expert or as part of a team. The casework should include the production of a witness report /statement, and engagement in a full peer review process and delivery of evidence as an expert witness for the courts of law.
2. Continuing maintenance and development of competence including attendance at relevant CPD events as outlined in the CPD guidance document.
3. Supervising and mentoring Forensic Anthropologists II and/or III.
4. Providing leadership in relevant professional organisations such as BAFA, BAHID, FASE, AAFS, IAFS, RAI or in other relevant national and international professional bodies and organisations (for example with the Forensic Science Regulator, Interpol etc.)
5. Presenting papers/posters at professional meetings, conferences or symposia.
6. Leading research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.
7. Be involved in the development and delivery of training and education (for example through activities in higher education establishments or professional training).