

Forensic Science Regulator Declaration Guidance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Question	Answer
1) How should I complete the 'Accredited to ISO 17025 / ISO 17020 without accreditation to the Code? column within the mitigation table?	If your Forensic Unit is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or ISO/IEC 17020 for the FSA (Forensic Science Activity) undertaken but has not incorporated the Statutory Code within that accreditation, then you select 'Yes'. For all other scenarios, you select 'No.'
2) Do I need to state where I am compliant within the mitigation table?	No, only non-compliance is required to be stated in the mitigation table, anything not stated in the mitigation table should be assumed to be compliant by the reader. The following sentence taken from the FSR (Forensic Science Regulator) Declarations Guidance document should be included alongside the mitigation table 'The table below sets out the scope of non-compliance for the FSA I have undertaken in this case, and the mitigations to the risks associated with the non-compliance. In all other aspects, I am compliant with the requirements set out in the FSA.'
3) Can I select 'Yes' in the environment column when working at a scene?	It is possible to select 'Yes' in the environment column when working at a scene. It is accepted that a scene is not a fully controllable environment so if the appropriate precautions are taken 'Yes' can be selected.
4) For the five mitigating steps highlighted in the mitigation table, is there standardised criteria for when to select 'Yes.'	No there is not. Currently, it is for each Forensic Unit to define this themselves. The practitioner making the declaration needs to be confident of defending any mitigations should they be challenged in Court at a later stage.
5) What should I enter in the 'Additional Comments' section of the mitigation table?	This is for your Forensic Unit/each individual practitioner to determine, there is no set guidance. However, it should be relevant to the results reported. It could include satisfactory PT (Proficiency Testing) results, QC (Quality Control) checks, peer reviews etc. The FCN (Forensic Capability Network) has prepared Mitigation Guidance, which is available on the FCN website .
6) Do I need to use the full FSA title in the mitigation table or just the code?	Full title e.g., INC 100 – Incident scene examination.
7) What do I write in the scope of non-compliance section of the mitigation table?	This is for your Forensic Unit/each individual practitioner to determine; it should have resemblance to the sub-activity stated in the FSA, but a bespoke definition may be required so it more closely reflects the content of the report. Alternatively, 'all' can be used where relevant, and the mitigations are all the same.
8) Do DNA Match Reports require a declaration of compliance with the Code?	No. The OFSR (Office of the Forensic Science Regulator) has agreed a declaration of compliance or non-compliance is not required for DNA Match Reports.
9) Following the recent FSR Notification 01-2023, do I still need to provide a declaration of non-compliance in relation to opinions and interpretations?	As there is not the possibility to attain accreditation for activity level interpretation and opinion in certain instances where the Code requires it (BIO-300, MTP-500 & MTP-602), the FSR notification suspended the requirement for all activity level interpretation and opinion requirements for accreditation, whilst this is worked through by the Specialist Group. Therefore, there is no need to declare non-compliance to the Code for any activity level opinions and interpretations.