

Forensic Anthropology :  
Theoretical Framework and  
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### 3.7 Workable solutions

A primary safeguard against any type of error in a laboratory is a surety-based quality assurance program and a comprehensive laboratory manual based on a standard. If policies and procedures are written down and followed closely, it is more difficult for bias to alter testing procedures, sequence of testing, and conclusions (Haber and Haber, 2013). As mentioned earlier, if the standard operating procedure is to assess the biological profile, then no prior information should alter that policy.

Each laboratory must decide which standards to use. In the forensic sciences, some of the most commonly used standards are ISO 17025 and supplemental standards upon which accreditation is based. Additional laboratory protocols may also be written for the sole purpose of combating bias, with the knowledge that some biasing information may be useful for laboratory management, if not scientific testing. These measures will be different depending upon variations in the physical laboratory, personnel, and other resources. They should reflect what is practical and possible, not necessarily the idealized scenario.

Perhaps the best step toward combating bias is to acknowledge potentially biasing information received relative to each specific case. By recording any potentially biasing *a priori* information in your analytical notes, there is complete transparency to all interested parties, and the jury is made aware that the scientist recognizes, and tried to mitigate, bias in their work. This acknowledgment should be a formal operating procedure, preferably using a form or checklist designed for that purpose. This seems to be a relatively simple and honest response to Kassin *et al.* (2013), who stress the importance of legal experts understanding how