

# Handwriting and Footwear Black Box Studies

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The FBI Laboratory, with Ideal Innovations and Noblis, is conducting black box studies evaluating the accuracy and reliability of forensic footwear examiners and document examiners. These studies will also assess what impact, if any, such factors as experience and training have on examiner decisions.

Participation in the studies is open to all examiners who perform footwear or handwriting evidence comparisons in operational casework.

## **Handwriting black box study:**

Examiners will be asked to perform a total of 100 handwriting comparisons over a period of eight months. Each comparison will include one questioned sample and one or more known samples; all known samples in a given comparison will be from a single person. The first 80 comparisons will be provided as electronic files accessed online. The last 20 comparisons will be shipped to the participants, in order to include the physical original for each questioned sample, with high-resolution printed images of the known samples.

## **Footwear black box study:**

Participants will be asked to perform a total of 100 footwear evidence comparisons over a period of approximately one year. Each comparison involves one questioned impression, and one item of footwear (test impressions and outsole images). The 100 comparisons will be distributed in five packets of 20 comparisons each over the one-year period. Each packet will be shipped to participants, with high-resolution printed images of the images, and the option to download images online.

We will begin testing examiners for both studies in late 2018. Participation in these studies will be anonymous.

To encourage participation, four participants in each study who completed all assigned comparisons will be randomly selected and given awards: one \$1,000 and three \$500 awards will be given in each study. These will only be awarded after all results are collected: rapid completion will not improve the chances of winning.

If interested, please let us know by contacting: [handwriting@noblis.org](mailto:handwriting@noblis.org) or [footwear@noblis.org](mailto:footwear@noblis.org).

Thank you for your time and expertise!