TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

FINAL REPORT ON SELF-DISCLOSURE NO. 26.07; SOUTHWESTERN INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES (SEIZED DRUGS)

JULY 31, 2026



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I. BACKGROUND

A. History and Mission of the Texas Forensic Science Commission

The Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) was created during the 79th Legislative Session in 2005 with the passage of HB-1068. The Act amended the Code of Criminal Procedure to add Article 38.01, which describes the composition and authority of the Commission. During subsequent legislative sessions, the Texas Legislature further amended the Code of Criminal Procedure to clarify and expand the Commission's jurisdictional responsibilities and authority.[1]

The Commission has nine members appointed by the Governor of Texas.[2] Seven of the nine commissioners are scientists or medical doctors and two are attorneys (one prosecutor nominated by the Texas District and County Attorney's Association and one criminal defense attorney nominated by the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyer's Association).[3] The Commission's Presiding Officer is Jeffrey Barnard, MD.

B. Commission Jurisdiction

1. Investigations Resulting from Laboratory Self-Disclosures

Texas law requires the Commission to "investigate in a timely manner, any allegation of professional negligence or professional misconduct that would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis conducted by a crime laboratory."[4] The term "forensic analysis" is defined as a medical, chemical, toxicological, ballistic, or other examination or test

[1] *See e.g.*, Acts 2013, 83rd Leg. ch. 782 (S.B. 1238) §§ 1-4 (2013); Acts 2015, 84th Leg. ch. 1276 (S.B. 1287) §§ 1-7 (2015), Acts 2023, 88th Leg. ch. 742 (H.B. 3506) §§ 1-2 (2023), Acts 2023, 88th Leg. ch. 1149 (S.B. 0991) § 1 (2023).
[2] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 3.
[3] *Id.*
[4] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4(a)(3)(A).

performed on physical evidence, including DNA evidence, for the purpose of determining the connection of the evidence to a criminal action.[5]

Crime laboratories must self-report professional negligence or professional misconduct to the Commission.[6] The statute does not define the terms "professional negligence" and "professional misconduct." The Commission defined those terms in its administrative rules.[7]

> "Professional misconduct" means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, deliberately failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the deliberate act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was deliberate if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory was aware of and consciously disregarded an accepted standard of practice required for a forensic analysis.
>
> "Professional negligence" means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, negligently failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the negligent act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was negligent if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory should have been but was not aware of an accepted standard of practice.

2. Accreditation Jurisdiction

The Commission is charged with accrediting crime laboratories and other entities that conduct forensic analyses of physical evidence.[8] The term "crime laboratory" includes a public or private laboratory or other entity that conducts a forensic analysis subject to article 38.35 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.[9]

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[5] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.35(a)(4).
[6] *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4(a)(1)-(2) (2019); *See also*, 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.219(c)(5) (2026).
*(*Pursuant to the Forensic Analyst Licensing Program Code of Professional Responsibility, members of crime laboratory management shall make timely and full disclosure to the Texas Forensic Science Commission of any non-conformance that may rise to the level of professional negligence or professional misconduct*).*
[7] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.302 (7), (8), and (10) (2020). The term "would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis" does not necessarily require that a criminal case be impacted or a report be issued to a customer in error. The term includes acts or omissions that would call into question the integrity of the forensic analysis, the forensic analyst or analysts, or the crime laboratory as a whole regardless of the ultimate outcome in the underlying criminal case.
[8] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4-d(b).
[9] *Id.* at art. 38.35(a)(1).

3. Licensing Jurisdiction

Under Texas law, a person may not act or offer to act as a forensic analyst unless the person holds a forensic analyst license issued by the Commission.[10] While accreditation is granted to entities that perform forensic analysis, licensing is a credential obtained by individuals who practice forensic analysis. The Texas forensic licensing program took effect on January 1, 2019.

The law defines the term "forensic analyst" as "a person who on behalf of a crime laboratory [accredited by the Commission] technically reviews or performs a forensic analysis or draws conclusions from or interprets a forensic analysis for a court or crime laboratory."[11]

Pursuant to its licensing authority, the Commission may take disciplinary action against a license holder or applicant for a license on a determination by the Commission that a license holder or applicant for a license committed professional negligence or professional misconduct or violated the code of professional responsibility under Article 38.01 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure or otherwise violated Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 38.01 or an administrative rule or other order by the Commission.[12]

If the Commission determines a license holder committed professional negligence or professional misconduct or violated the code of professional responsibility under Article 38.01 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure or otherwise violated Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 38.01 or violated an administrative rule or order by the Commission, the Commission may: (1) revoke or suspend the person's license; (2) refuse to renew the person's license; (3) reprimand the license holder; or (4) deny the person a license.[13] The Commission may place on

[10] *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-a(b); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.201(c) (2018).
[11] *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-a(a)(2).
[12] *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-c; 37 Tex. Admin Code § 651.216(a) (2026).
[13] 37 Tex. Admin Code § 651.216(a)(1)-(4) (2026).

probation a person whose license is suspended.[14] Disciplinary proceedings and the process for appealing a disciplinary action by the Commission are governed by the Judicial Branch Certification Commission.[15]

4. Jurisdiction Applicable to the Disclosure

The disclosing crime laboratory, the Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences (SWIFS), is accredited by the Commission and the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) under International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard 17025: 2017 and falls within the Commission's jurisdiction.[16] The individual who is the subject of the disclosure, Madison Calvert, was employed as a Seized Drugs Analyst at the time of the events described in the disclosure. She has been licensed by the Commission in the Seized Drugs discipline since September 8, 2025. She resigned in lieu of termination on February 20, 2026. Her license was placed on "inactive" status pending the resolution of this disclosure; it will expire on September 7, 2027.

C. Investigative Process

The Commission's administrative rules set forth the process by which it determines whether to accept a self-disclosure for investigation as well as the process used to conduct the investigation.[17] The Commission's rules also describe the process for appealing final investigative reports by the Commission including possible disciplinary actions against a license holder or applicant.[18]

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[14] *Id.* at (b).
[15] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4-c(e); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.216(d) (2026).
[16] *See*, https://fsc.txcourts.gov/AccreditedLabPublic# for a list of accredited laboratories.
[17] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.304-307 (2024).
[18] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.401 (2024).

D. Limitations of this Report

The Commission's authority contains important limitations. For example, no finding by the Commission constitutes a comment upon the guilt or innocence of any individual.[19] The Commission's written reports are not admissible in civil or criminal actions.[20] The Commission does not have the authority to subpoena documents or testimony. Information received during any investigation is dependent on the willingness of affected parties to submit relevant documents and respond to questions posed. Information gathered in this report was not subjected to standards for the admission of evidence in a courtroom. For example, no individual testified under oath, was limited by either the Texas or Federal Rules of Evidence (*e.g.*, against the admission of hearsay) or was subject to cross-examination under a judge's supervision.

II. SUMMARY OF THE SELF-DISCLOSURE

The disclosure alleges the Analyst falsified educational credentials on her curriculum vitae (CV) that she submitted to the SWIFS Quality Manager on January 29, 2026. The CV she submitted stated she had a master's degree when she had not yet completed the academic program and no degree was conferred. Additionally, the disclosure alleges she was unable to provide transcripts to support the claimed master's degree and was dishonest with management regarding her ability to do so. The laboratory alleges the events described constitute professional misconduct.

[19] TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4(g).
[20] *Id*. at § 11.

EXHIBIT A

Self-Disclosure Details

FSC Case #

SD26.07

Status

Assigned

Status History/Document(s)

Proficiency Testing

Does this disclosure relate to a non-consensus result for a proficiency test or other proficiency monitoring activity?

No

Laboratory and Representative Completing Disclosure

Laboratory/Other Entity

Southwestern Institute of Forensic Sciences

Completed By

Harlie Sanchez, Quality Manager
swifs.quality@dallascounty.org
214-920-5838

Self-Disclosure

Approximate Date when issue(s) described in the self-disclosure first occurred

01/29/2026

Date laboratory identified issue(s) described in the self-disclosure

02/20/2026

Type(s) of Forensic Analysis

None

Date the laboratory provided notice of the issues described in the self-disclosure to its accrediting body

02/25/2026

Description of the Non-Conformance

Madison Calvert falsified her credentials on her CV that was submitted to the Quality Manager on 01/29/2026, stating that she had a Master's Degree when she had not yet completed the academic program (no degree conferred). She was unable to provide transcripts to support the claimed master's degree, and was dishonest with management regarding her ability to do so. Her last day at SWIFS was 02/20/2026.

Laboratory Investigation and Identification of Root Cause Analysis

Not Yet Available

Description of Corrective Action(s) Taken by the Laboratory

Not Yet Available

Casework Impact

Not Yet Available

Summary of Notification to Stakeholders

Stakeholders Notified?: Yes
Stakeholder Notification Date: 02/20/2026
How Notified: Submitted Via Attachment (see below)

Self-Disclosure Document(s)

File Name	Sections Covered	File Options	Public Viewable
Discolsure to DA office.pdf	Stakeholder Notification	View	No

Known Defendant(s) Associated With the Forensic Analysis

None Identified

Individual(s) With Direct Knowledge of Events That are the Subject of This Disclosure

Name

Madison Calvert

Role in the Matter

Analyst

Name

Dr Sara Dempsey

Role in the Matter

Section Chief

Name

Monica Lopez

Role in the Matter

Laboratory Supervisor

Name

Harlie Sanchez

Role in the Matter

Quality Manager

Misconduct/Agency Notification

Does the laboratory believe the events that are the subject of this disclosure constitute professional misconduct?

Yes

Are you aware of anyone involved in this disclosure (other than the defendant) being the subject of a criminal investigation regarding the matters described in the disclosure?

No

Additional Comments

Laboratory evaluation and write-up in progress and will be provided when available.

General/Miscellaneous Documents

General/Miscellaneous Document(s)

File Name	File Options	Public Viewable
Calvert, Madison CV 2026.docx	Download	No

History

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The Analyst resigned in lieu of termination on February 20, 2026, and the Dallas County District Attorney's Office was notified the same day.

A. Notice and Investigative Decision

TFSC staff notified the Analyst on April 9, 2026, of the disclosure and afforded her the opportunity to respond to the allegations. She did not respond. The Commission voted to accept the self-disclosure for investigation by Commission staff at its quarterly meeting on April 24, 2026.

B. Staff Investigation

Staff reviewed the documents provided by the laboratory as well as materials obtained from the investigation conducted by SWIFS. On June 13, 2026, staff again extended the Analyst and opportunity to be interviewed. She did not respond.

III. COMMISSION OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

A. Background Facts

The Analyst submitted a job application for the Drug Chemist II position at SWIFS in April 2025. The application represented the Analyst would complete her master's degree in forensic chemistry in May 2025. While the position did not require a graduate degree, the human resources process at Dallas County allows qualifying advanced education to substitute for up to two years of work-related experience the position requires. The Analyst in this case received one year of work-related experience credit from the claimed graduate work. When this was combined with her previous work experience, she met the minimum experience requirement for the drug chemistry position in question.

In the summer of 2025, the Analyst represented to laboratory management that she would complete her master's degree in the fall of 2025. On January 6, 2026, the Chief of Forensic Chemistry at SWIFS asked the Analyst whether she had completed her degree and if so, to provide

the final transcript. The Analyst never responded to the inquiry, even after receiving a follow-up inquiry on January 26, 2026.

On January 29, 2026, the Analyst provided the SWIFS Quality Manager with an updated version of her CV which stated she had a "master's degree in science from Virginia Commonwealth University in Forensic Chemistry in Toxicology and Drug Chemistry." (*See*, **Exhibit A: Incorrect CV**). The Chief of Forensic Chemistry asked the Analyst to provide a transcript to support the degree to ensure her training file was current. On February 2, 2026, the Quality Manager asked for an expected date for SWIFS to receive the transcript, but the Analyst did not provide a date. On February 11, 2026, the Chief of Forensic Chemistry again requested the Analyst provide a copy of the transcript by the close of business on February 13, 2026. On February 16, 2026, the Analyst told the Chief of Forensic Chemistry that she had requested the transcript but "there may be an issue with payment." On February 18, 2026, the Analyst admitted that she did not have a master's degree and that she was dishonest when representing her credentials on her CV.

Additionally, on February 4, 2026, during her final mock trial in front of the drug laboratory supervisory staff and peers, the Analyst stated she had a Master of Science in Forensic Science degree.

Based on the above facts, the Analyst's admission of dishonesty as it relates to her submitted CV, and her inability to provide transcripts documenting that she earned a master's degree, the laboratory determined she failed to comply with the policies of Dallas County, SWIFS, and SWIFS' accrediting bodies. On February 18, 2026, the laboratory issued a "Statement of Non-Compliance" detailing the above facts. The laboratory allowed her an opportunity to provide a written response.

B. Analyst's Written Response

The Analyst submitted a written response to the Chief of Forensic Chemistry on February 19, 2026. Having reviewed the Statement of Non-Compliance, she candidly recognized that her actions were violations of both SWIFS and the accrediting body's protocols for representations of qualifications. She admitted that she failed to be transparent about her credentials on several occasions and was dishonest about her ability to provide transcripts. She stated she should have gone to management directly and revealed that she had not yet completed her degree and that she should have removed the entry from the CV she submitted to the Quality Manager. The Analyst maintained she was unaware that she only met the two-year work-related experience requirement based on a combination of her graduate course work and qualifying work experience. The Analyst indicated that she needed extra time to complete the manuscript for her master's degree due to severe anxiety and panic associated with lack of confidence in the writing process. She recognized that she should have properly communicated and represented her situation. Instead, she continued to be dishonest, did not provide the transcripts, and failed to respond to communications. The Analyst expressed deep shame and regret for her conduct and sincerely apologized. The Analyst offered a revised CV that accurately reflected her current qualifications and outlined a plan to quickly obtain her master's degree to correct her actions. The Analyst expressed her desire to prove her integrity and correct her actions through timeliness and transparency.

The Analyst resigned in lieu of termination the next day, February 20, 2026.

C. Professional Misconduct Finding

The Commission shall investigate, in a timely manner, any allegation of professional negligence or professional misconduct that would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis conducted by a crime laboratory.[21]

> "Professional misconduct" means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, deliberately failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the deliberate act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was deliberate if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory was aware of and consciously disregarded an accepted standard of practice required for a forensic analysis.[22]

The Commission has long maintained the phrase "would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis" does not necessarily require adverse impact on a criminal case or that a report be issued to a customer in error. The term includes acts or omissions that would "call into question the integrity of the forensic analysis, the forensic analyst, or the crime laboratory as a whole" regardless of the ultimate outcome in the underlying criminal case.[23]

The Analyst was signed off to do independent casework from February 4, 2026, through February 20, 2026 (her last day). The laboratory produced a list of her cases to the Dallas County District Attorney's Office. Any cases dated before February 4, 2026, would have been directly supervised by a qualified analyst, the qualified analyst would have signed the report as the supervising analyst, and the case would have gone through SWIFS' technical and administrative review process. Cases completed after her independent sign-off date of February 4, 2026, have gone through technical and administrative review and the laboratory would have addressed errors

[21] Tex, Code Crim. Proc. Article 38.01 § 4(a)(3).
[22] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.302(7) (2020).
[23] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.302(10) (2020).

at that time. The laboratory reports they found no concerns with her casework during her employment at SWIFS.

However, the deliberate act of falsifying the job-related educational credentials on her CV would call into question her integrity as a forensic analyst, as well as the integrity of any forensic analysis she performed. The Analyst was not qualified for the Drug Chemist II position but for the combination of work and educational experience and the latter was based on a misrepresentation. The Commission finds the Analyst deliberately failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst would have followed by lying about her job-related credentials, and the impact on her cases would have been significant but for the other quality-related measures SWIFS has in place. She committed professional misconduct when she deliberately falsified her job-related educational credentials on the CV she submitted to the SWIFS Quality Manager.

D. The Analyst Violated the Texas Administrative Code (Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management).

The Commission also finds the Analyst violated the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management[24] when she falsified her credentials on the CV she submitted to the SWIFS Quality Manager and subsequently lied about it. The Commission draws specific attention to provisions (b)(1) and (b)(16), requiring the forensic analyst to:

- Accurately represent his/her education, training, experience, and areas of expertise.
- Document and notify management or quality assurance personnel of adverse events, such as an unintended mistake or breach of ethical, legal, scientific standards, or questionable conduct.

[24] *See*, 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.219 (2026).

E. Disciplinary Action

On a determination by the Commission that a license holder has committed professional negligence or professional misconduct or violated the code of professional responsibility under Article 38.01 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure or otherwise violated Article 38.01 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure or violated an administrative rule or order of the Commission, the Commission may: (1) revoke or suspend the person's license; (2) refuse to renew the person's license; (3) reprimand the license holder; or (4) deny the person a license.[25]

Factors considered in determining the appropriate disciplinary action against a license holder may include: (1) the seriousness of the violation; (2) the prevalence of misconduct by the individual; (3) the individual's conduct history, including any investigative history by the Commission; (4) the harm or potential harm to the laboratory or criminal justice system as a whole; (5) attempts to conceal the act by the individual; and (6) any other relevant factors.[26]

The Commission also may decide one following factors warrants less severe or less restrictive disciplinary action in a particular investigation: (1) candor in addressing the violation, including self-reported and voluntary admissions of the misconduct or violation; (2) acknowledgement of wrongdoing and willingness to cooperate with the Commission; (3) changes made by the individual to ensure compliance and prevent future misconduct; (4) rehabilitative potential; (5) other relevant circumstances reducing the seriousness of the misconduct; or (6) other relevant circumstances lessening the responsibility for the misconduct.[27]

The Analyst falsified her credentials on the CV she provided to the SWIFS Quality Manager and even went so far as to continue the misrepresentation when she discussed her

[25] 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.216(a)(1)-(4) (2026).
[26] *Id*. at 651.216 (c)(1) (2026).
[27] *Id*. at 651.216 (c)(2) (2026).

credentials during a mock trial exercise. Her inaccurate CV would have been provided to stakeholders for any testimony and included within the laboratory's representations regarding analyst qualifications to external parties. The entire purpose of the mock trial exercise was to prepare her to testify in criminal proceedings regarding her qualifications and the laboratory's analytical work. While the Analyst does not have any known disciplinary or conduct history, the deliberate act of falsifying job-related educational credentials on her CV is severe in terms of its impact and the level of potential harm. This is a very weighty concern that should not be borne by defendants accused of crime, victims impacted by criminal offenses, judges or lawyers in the criminal justice system.

Though she was dishonest with management multiple times regarding her master's degree, in her written response to the non-conformance report, she ultimately admitted the misrepresentation and expressed contrition.

Because the Commission finds sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that the Analyst committed professional misconduct and violated the Code of Professional Responsibility, the Commission finds license revocation to be the appropriate disciplinary action. The Analyst's forensic analyst license is hereby revoked until September 7, 2027 (the end of her licensing term).

IV. APPEALS PROCESS

Any finding by the Commission that includes disciplinary action against a license holder (revocation, suspension, probation, etc.) may be appealed to the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC).[28] A written request for a hearing before the JBCC must be received by the Commission or by the JBCC within twenty (20) days after the date the notice of the disciplinary

[28] *Id*. at § 651.402(c) (2024).

action is received, or the Commission's decision becomes final and is not subject to further review by the JBCC or the Commission.[29]

[29] *Id.*