SWGDRUG SD-5 Reporting Examples
Public Comments and SWGDRUG Responses

SWGDRUG Supplemental Document Reporting Examples (SD-5) was posted for a public comment period from April 12 to June 15, 2012. SWGDRUG received 21 responses (17 affirmative, 4 negative) which included the following comments. The comments have not been edited. Each comment was considered by the Reporting subcommittee and responses are below in red.

1. I prefer the table format. Also, it would be nice if SWGDRUG recommendations would allow for other forms of communication regarding testing methods. For example, instead of including all of the recommended information in the report, a lab could periodically send their customers a letter which addresses all the recommended information (instrumentation, statistical methods/ parameters, etc). Then, the lab could issue reports with results only. Additional information could be included on the report when deviations are made. My laboratory would like this option because we believe our customers don't want to read all of that information on each and every report. Particular information can be left off the report, if the laboratory has appropriate documentation (Part IVA, sec. 9.2). The comment addresses the SWGDRUG Recommendations and does not address the supplemental document; therefore, no action was taken.

2. 1) Page 1, last paragraph, suggest to add after the sentence: Laboratories may report additional information that is not included in these examples "or exclude information that is not required by the their jurisdiction or client". 2) Reference should be made to ILAC-G19:2002 "Guidelines for Forensic Science Laboratories", Section 5.10.2 on "Reporting the results" which states that: It is accepted that forensic science laboratories may not be able to include all of the items in 'Court statements' that are detailed in sub-clause 5.10 of ISO/IEC 17025 as the format of these documents is prescribed in legislation. Forensic science laboratories may therefore elect to adopt one or more of the following means of meeting these requirements. - the preparation of a test report which includes all of the information required by ISO/IEC 17025; - the preparation of an annex to the Court Statement which includes any additional information required by ISO/IEC 17025; - ensuring that the case record relating to a specific investigation contains all the relevant information required by ISO/IEC 17025.
Point 1 is adequately addressed in the introduction. Regarding Point 2, particular information can be left off the report, if the laboratory has appropriate documentation (Part IVA, sec. 9.2).

3. This guideline allows for some of the information to be documented in the case record but not necessarily reported on the case report, unless it is required by the client, jurisdiction, or accreditation standard. 3) Do not agree with the approach used for analysis of item 2. From 978 packets, hypergeometric sampling results in testing of 28 packets. The weight of substance and purity should be determined from these 28 packets and not a further selection of 10 (or 9) packets (number reported in the 2 examples are different). In addition, the reporting of weights is very confusing: - net weight of packets tested - calculated total net weight Are these the weight of the substance, the weight of the drug reported? 4) Remarks for item 4 on page 2: The phrase "limited sample size" is confusing since this refers to residue. Weight determination is not made using a hypergeometric distribution. However, the examples were noted to be inconsistent, example one was corrected to specify "Nine Packets," "Calculated" was changed to "extrapolated," and "Size" was changed to "amount."

4. Example 1: If methods are listed, does this include ALL methods attempted on the sample, or only those with positive results that contribute toward the reported result? And what about visual examination? In most cases, that's what we start with to determine the appropriate next step of testing. At what level of detail would methods be reported? Are specific color tests named? Specific GC/MS parameters? A list of analytical techniques employed should be iterated on the report (Report Writing, section 9.2). Laboratories should determine the level of detail reported appropriate to their specific jurisdiction.

5. In the results and conclusions section there is a listing of analysis done. I would like to see an acceptable alternative being that of having the "Types of Examinations Done" being its own seperate section. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

6. Example 1: The first report is verbose, and it is easy for the results to get lost in the descriptions of the testing performed. This also introduces an additional source for potential errors on the report, so it would

require extra vigilance on behalf of analysts and supervisors when performing technical reviews. Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity.

7. Example 2: The second version, with the chart, is more organized but still contains an overwhelming amount of information. This also introduces an additional source for potential errors on the report, so it would require vigilance on behalf of analysts and supervisors when performing technical reviews. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations. No other changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

8. There is a clause in section 9.2 Report writing that states: “Reports issued by laboratories shall be accurate, clear, objective, and meet the requirements of the jurisdictions served.” While no one questioned the accuracy or objectivity of the reports, SAC did feel that these reports would not meet our agencies’ needs. (It should be noted, however, that our agencies have not been formally asked.) All of the information obtained is discoverable and contained in our case files, and the addition of so much unsolicited information to our reports might raise more issues than are addressed. This seems to be more of an internal issue, and not necessarily what SWGDRUG is seeking at this moment. Particular information can be left off the report, if the laboratory has appropriate documentation (Part IVA, sec. 9.2). No other changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

9. For the most part, the target audience of our reports consists of non-scientists. It is difficult to argue that the report would be clear to them if it necessitated the use of a glossary or list of abbreviations to interpret. No changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

10. The use of the term “color tests” to include both the preliminary color tests used in drug analysis and the more specific Duquenois-Levine test used in cannabis analysis could be misleading. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

11. Our chemists have expressed concern regarding the potential for improper comparisons between cases and analysts. An example was given that two cases with the same results by two different analysts could conceivably employ a substantially different array of testing techniques. Analysts who are in compliance with our procedures and the minimum standards and controls could be accused of performing inadequate analysis in comparison to another analyst who performed more tests. Without the explanation that is included within our case files, merely listing the testing completed could lead to erroneous assumptions regarding the quality of our work. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations. No other changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

12. Example 1 - item 2: This description feels really clunky. It's an entire paragraph of text that contains a lot of scientific jargon. Courts will be required to read the entire thing to dig out the answers they want. I would recommend breaking it down in to smaller paragraphs just for visual ease. Example 2 - item 3 (in table): the "one tablet only" comes across a bit unclear since the next column over says "53 tablets". I would change the statement to "one tablet tested". Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity. "One tablet only" was changed to "one tablet tested."

13. Item 2. The [laboratory] hypergeometry plan is a little bit different, if there are no sub units all other looks the sam, we need to check only 7 samples and we don't estimate the value of the pure heroin. (drug definition included also mixtures of drugs). SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

14. Example 1, Item 2 --An additional supplemental document may be necessary to explain the appropriate use of calculated weights. SWGDRUG is planning to address this issue in the future.

15. There is too much information in the results that is not necesasry by ASCLD stds. The confidence levels in the first report might be misunderstood to be the confidence of what the ID of the drug is not the number that contain the substance. I think to include the 95% in a report would be interprested wrong in court. They would think that we are only 95% certain that it is ID correctly not how many contain the substance. Also the report has so much misc info it's had to tell the forest from the trees. If the sop and the confidence

level is in an addendum that is available to the CA, court and defense why write it in every report. Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity.

16. Example 1: The confidence levels are not clear whether they refer to the ID or the number that contain the substance. Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity.

17. This would be difficult to type in our LIMS system and a nightmare to review and correct. Our SOP are available on the internet. What tests were used is basically redundant in drugs and can just be checked out in the SOP. Particular information can be left off the report, if the laboratory has appropriate documentation (Part IVA, sec. 9.2). No other changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

18. ASCLD stds allow for the confidence level and tests used be given other ways beside in the report. Why aren't those examples shown? These examples are designed to assist laboratories in producing reports that capture all information as specified in SWGDRUG recommendations. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

19. I like the remarks statement at the end of the second example. I think this would be a better place to put the techniques used, particularly if many items use the same ones. It keeps the basic results cleaner, and the report more easy to read. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

20. I don't believe uncertaininty of measurement is necessary for every item...it is important when weights are close to a threshold. It would be nice if there was a concise version of the hypergeometric sampling plan used--perhaps if laboratories had a checkbox for it. Particular information can be left off the report, if the laboratory has appropriate documentation (Part IVA, sec. 9.2). SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations. No other changes were recommended, as such, no action was taken.

21. Ok, however there is a lot of information in a small area. I prefer the table format. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

22. Our lab does not use use hypergeometric sampling or determine purity, so I have no opinion on that portion. However I am curious as to why chemical compounds are capitalized. Chemical substances are not proper nouns and should not be capitalized. I suppose this is just standard practice in Forensic Science? I know when I taught general chemistry at one of our local university, prior to my employment here, that was one major point we drilled into our student's minds was to not treat chemicals as proper nouns. Just a thought. Capitalization was removed from one of the examples. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.

23. I don't think there is anything wrong with the document, however I think there are much clearer ways to present results than the examples. Formatting those a little differently would even help. I also do not think it is necessary to say that weight determination was a technique used. Since that is not part of the categories of testing it appears out of place with the analytical techniques used to identify the substance. Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations. Weight determination was performed in the example, and was therefore, listed as a technique used.

24. I think the first example is much too difficult for anyone from our agencies to understand on their own. The second example with the chart is much easier to read and would like to see the information underneath the table to somehow be included in the table. Example 1 was reformatted to enhance clarity. SWGDRUG examples are meant to be illustrative, not exclusive or limiting. Laboratories are encouraged to utilize a format appropriate for their jurisdictions while remaining in compliance with reporting recommendations.