

**GUIDE TO OBTAINING SPECIMEN HANDWRITING**

There are two types of specimen handwriting, each of which needs to be obtained to maximize the possibility of obtaining a useful conclusion:

**Request** – Specimens taken by you specifically for the case.

**Non-request** – Writing produced by the client on some other occasion, during the normal course of his/her business.

**Request specimens:**

1. The client should **not** be shown the questioned document when producing the specimens; rather, the specimens should be **dictated** at a speed which allows the client to produce their normal handwriting. So, for example, ask the client to, ‘make this cheque out to Mr Smith for ten pounds fifty two’ or ‘write the following words/sentences in your normal block capital handwriting’ or ‘sign your normal signature in the box’.
2. Handwriting examiners compare, ‘**like with like**’ so if the questioned handwriting is written in block capitals then the specimens need to be in block capitals, if the questioned handwriting is in cursive (joined up) writing then the specimens need to be in cursive writing. The client should be asked to produce specimens in ‘their normal handwriting.’
3. Wherever possible, specimens should be taken on separate **documents similar to those in question**. For example, if the questioned handwriting is written on a cheque then the specimens should be taken on blank mock cheques.
4. Take **as many specimens as possible**, and at least twelve. Remove each specimen from sight as it is completed and if possible obtain specimens at different times.
5. Try to obtain the specimens with a **well-used ball point pen** as this will allow examination of the fine stroke detail within the handwriting. If the questioned handwriting is written with another type of implement, such as a pencil, then ask the client to write some further specimens using this too.

**Non-request specimens:**

These are writings made by the client during the course of their everyday life. The same, ‘like with like’ principles apply for these. Suitable sources of request specimen writing include:

<b>For handwriting samples:</b>	<b>For signatures:</b>
Letters, diaries, address books DSS forms, employment documents Application forms	Passport, driving licence Legal aid forms and witness statements

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