



**Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers  
ISO/IEC 17043 Standard Application  
Document**

**March 2013**

**© Copyright National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia 2013**

This publication is protected by copyright under the Commonwealth of Australia Copyright Act 1968.

NATA's accredited facilities or facilities seeking accreditation may use or copy this publication or print or email this publication internally for accreditation purposes.

Individuals may store a copy of this publication for private non-commercial use or copy a reasonable portion of this publication in accordance with the fair dealing provisions in Part III Division 3 of the Copyright Act 1968.

You must include this copyright notice in its complete form if you make a copy of this publication.

Apart from these permitted uses, you must not modify, copy, reproduce, republish, frame, upload to a third party, store in a retrieval system, post, transmit or distribute this content in any way or any form or by any means without express written authority from NATA.

## Table of Contents

ISO IEC 17043 Standard Application Document for accreditation of Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers .....	4
Technical requirements .....	4
4.4 Design of proficiency testing schemes .....	4
4.4.5 Assigned values .....	4
Equipment calibration and intermediary checks .....	5
4.8 Reports.....	5
Management requirements.....	5
5.2 Management system .....	5
5.5 Subcontracting of tests and calibrations .....	6
5.12 Preventive action.....	6
5.13 Control of records.....	6
5.13.1 General .....	6
5.13.2 Technical records .....	6
5.14 Internal audits.....	6
5.15 Management reviews .....	6
References .....	7
Standards .....	7
NATA publications .....	7
Other references.....	7
Amendment Table .....	8

# ISO IEC 17043 Standard Application Document for accreditation of Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers

This document provides interpretative criteria and recommendations for the application of ISO/IEC 17043 for both applicant and accredited facilities.

Applicant and accredited facilities must also comply with the any program annexes, policies and/or technical circulars (refer to *NATA Procedures for Accreditation*).

The clause numbers in this document follow those of ISO Guide 34 General Requirements for the Competence of Reference Material Producers but since not all clauses require interpretation the numbering may not be consecutive.

## Technical requirements

### 4.4 Design of proficiency testing schemes

#### 4.4.5 Assigned values

**Note:** For calibration activities or reported results intended to be used in support of the further dissemination of metrological traceability, the criteria provided in the ISO/IEC 17025 Calibration Application Document must also be applied.

NATA's policy for metrological traceability requires that the results of all tests, measurements and calibrations, together with the assigned values of reference materials, that have a significant effect on the reported result and associated uncertainty of measurement, to be traceable, where possible to national or international standards. To ensure this policy is maintained, all facilities must:

#### 1) Equipment or instruments:

Have these calibrated by one (or more, if relevant) of the organisations included below:

- a) a NATA accredited calibration facility and the results reported on a NATA endorsed document;
- b) a calibration facility accredited by one of NATA's mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) partners, when the MRA recognition covers calibration and the results are reported on an endorsed document;<sup>1</sup>
- c) Australia's National Measurement Institute (NMI) or a national metrology institute that is a signatory to the Comité International des Poids et Mesures (CIPM) MRA.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2) Reference materials

Demonstrate suitable traceability of assigned values, through:

- a) a NATA accredited reference material provider and the results reported on a NATA endorsed document;
- b) a reference material provider accredited by one of NATA's mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) partners, when the MRA recognition covers reference material providers and the results are reported on an endorsed document;<sup>1</sup>
- c) Australia's National Measurement Institute (NMI) or a national metrology

institute that is a signatory to the Comité International des Poids et Mesures (CIPM) MRA.<sup>2</sup>

or where there are no readily available reference material providers as described in 2a) to

- d) a competent supplier who can demonstrate traceability of its reference material(s) using specified methods and/or consensus standards that are clearly described and agreed by all parties concerned.

- Notes:**
1. For details of NATA's current MRA partners, refer to NATA's website: [www.nata.com.au](http://www.nata.com.au).
  2. The calibration must actually be done by the NMI. Unendorsed reports from organisations claiming traceability to a NMI or those bearing only an ISO 9000 series certification logo are not acceptable.

**Note: National Measurement Act**

Where measurement traceability in accordance with Section 10 of the National Measurement Act 1960 is required, facilities performing such measurements must have Regulation 13 Certificates for their reference standards. Regulation 13 Certificates are issued by calibration facilities appointed as Verifying Authorities under the National Measurement Regulations. Further information can be obtained from the National Measurement Institute (NMI).

The National Measurement regulations contain schedules listing the maximum permissible variations and maximum permissible uncertainties that are required for various reference standards and measuring instruments.

## **Equipment calibration and intermediary checks**

In accordance with ISO/IEC 17043, Clause 4.4.5, the metrological traceability and measurement uncertainty of assigned values must be considered to ensure that proficiency testing schemes are fit for their purpose. Therefore any equipment that is used to provide a measurement of these parameters (which have a significant effect on the assigned value) must be calibrated.

A facility must demonstrate how it has determined which parameters are critical (and non critical) to the overall quality of test and calibration results. As an example, critical parameters may be analytical or quantitative data, or measurements which have a significant contribution to the final result and associated measurement uncertainty.

### **4.8 Reports**

**4.8.2** Reports must include the name in which accreditation is held, the relevant accreditation number of the facility and the date of issue.

No report, whether preliminary or final, shall include results not authorised for release.

## **Management requirements**

### **5.2 Management system**

**5.2.1** Quality documentation must include or reference the scope of accreditation and the policy on the use of the NATA endorsement.

## 5.5 Subcontracting of tests and calibrations

This clause applies in those cases where a facility is required to subcontract part of its normal service (e.g. due to temporary incapacity, excess workload) or where a facility subcontracts due to the need for further expertise and the results of the subcontracted service(s) are incorporated into the facility's test reports (refer also 4.8.2d).

**5.5.1** A competent subcontractor is for example, an appropriately accredited NATA facility or a facility accredited by a signatory to a Mutual Recognition Arrangement. Where reports are obtained from an accredited facility, these must be endorsed.

**5.5.5** The accreditation status of subcontractors should be regularly reviewed to ensure currency.

**Note:** Information on accreditation status and scope of accreditation may be found at NATA's website or by contacting one of NATA's offices.

## 5.12 Preventive action

Preventive action is a proactive process to identify improvement opportunities, rather than a reaction to the identification of problems or complaints.

Consideration should also be given to providing staff with a formal mechanism for contributing suggestions for improvement.

## 5.13 Control of records

### 5.13.1 General

All records must include the identity of the person making the record.

It is recognised that a number of staff may be involved in the activities for the provision of proficiency testing schemes. It is the facility's responsibility to identify the critical steps(s) in the procedure and ensure that the identities of the staff concerned are recorded.

**5.13.1.2** Unless otherwise prescribed by legislation or contractual obligation, retention times will not be less than three years or, in the case of equipment records, the maximum recalibration interval of equipment (whichever is the longer period).

### 5.13.2 Technical records

**5.13.2.3** As far as practicable, all records must be indelible and data or observations recorded in such a manner that prevents amendment.

## 5.14 Internal audits

**NOTE:** Refer to the international document *APLAC TC 002 Internal Audits for Laboratories and Inspection Bodies* for additional information.

## 5.15 Management reviews

The effectiveness of the management system shall be reviewed by management at least once per year.

**Note:** Refer to the international document *APLAC TC 003 Management Review for Laboratories and Inspection Bodies* for additional information.

## References

This section lists publications referenced in this document. The year of publication is not included as it is expected that only current versions of the references shall be used.

### Standards

- ISO/IEC Guide 99 International vocabulary of basic and general terms in metrology (VIM 3)
- ISO/IEC 17025 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
- ISO/IEC 17043 Conformity assessment - General requirements for proficiency testing
- AS2243 Safety in Laboratories

### NATA publications

#### NATA Rules

- Policy Circular 11 Policy on Metrological Traceability
- Policy Circular 12 NATA requirements for the performance of calibrations in-house
- Policy Circular 18 Use of the NATA emblem, NATA endorsement and references to accreditation

### Other references

- APLAC TC 002 Internal Audits for Laboratories and Inspection Bodies
- APLAC TC 003 Management Review for Laboratories and Inspection Bodies

Guidance documents covering the implementation of specific accreditation requirements are also available from the ILAC ([www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org)) and APLAC ([www.ianz.govt.nz/aplac/](http://www.ianz.govt.nz/aplac/)) websites

## Amendment Table

The following amendments were made to the ISO/IEC 17043 Application Document for Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers.

Please refer to this sheet in conjunction with the NATA Procedures for Accreditation and the associated ISO/IEC 17043 Standard Application Document to ensure that you are familiar with these amendments.

<b>AMENDMENT TABLE</b>			
	<b>Title</b>	<b>Clause or section amended</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
Section 1	Introduction	All	Reissued as NATA Procedures for Accreditation
Section 2	Accreditation procedures	All	Reissued as NATA Procedures for Accreditation
Section 3	Supplementary requirements for accreditation	4.4.5	Metrological Traceability commentary now incorporated into preamble with stand alone documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Equipment Table</li> <li>• Reference Equipment Table</li> </ul>
		5.14	Reference to NATA Technical Note 27 replaced with reference to APLAC TC002
		5.15	Reference to NATA Technical Note 27 replaced with reference to APLAC TC003
Section 4	References		Revised and Updated