


POLICY


 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION BUREAU	Subject: Accreditation of Multiple-Site Laboratories	No. 009
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides guidance and requirements for the application of ISO/IEC 17025, *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*, to multiple locations within an organization, one legal entity for multi-site laboratory accreditation purposes.
- 1.2 The term 'multi-site accreditation' is used by L-A-B where more than one permanent location is included in a single accreditation granted to a legal entity. For example, companies offering calibration service from technicians individually located in their homes are "multi-site" laboratories. Laboratories seeking multi-site accreditation must specifically apply for it.

2 General guidance

- 2.1 All parts of the entity seeking accreditation shall be subject to the same quality system, same quality manual, which must comply in all respects with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025. One corporate quality contact should be allocated for the laboratory.
- 2.2 In particular, organizations based at multiple locations shall:
- Document fully the relationships between the locations and the extent of interaction (e.g. allocation of testing/calibration work, transfer of samples between locations, movement of technical staff and/or equipment and centralized or otherwise rationalized reporting arrangements).
- Note: The extent of interaction possible will depend, among other factors, on the commonality of test/calibration and/or sampling methods and of quality control of performance.
- Have mechanisms in place to assure that inquiries about work in progress are handled efficiently, regardless of any transfer between locations.
 - Assure that reviews of requests, tenders and contracts include appropriate consideration of clients' or potential clients' awareness of a multi-site accreditation status and the implications of this for work undertaken.

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3 Defining scopes of multi-site accreditation

- 3.1 For laboratory accredited sites, each scope has to be separate and applicable for the technical competence for that particular site. This is necessary for the clients of organizations performing testing and/or calibration and also for L-A-B assessment purposes. With multi-site accreditation, each location involved in the provision of accredited testing/calibration activities, or in providing support functions to those activities, has to be identified with separate scopes.
- 3.2 Scopes issued by L-A-B state clearly that a multi-site accreditation is involved via the numbering system for each scope (see SOP 304.2). They detail the entire scope of testing/calibration and/or sampling (whether performed in a permanent laboratory or on site) and list the locations involved together with the general activities and or support functions carried at or by each.
- 3.3 Separate certificates of accreditation will be issued by L-A-B for each site with a distinct suffix number.
- 3.4 Similarly, separate scopes for multi-site accreditation will be issued for each site when separate certificates are issued.

4 Assessment and accreditation processes

- 4.1 The normal assessment and accreditation processes for laboratory accreditation apply to multi-site accreditation (see SOP 205 - Assessment Process Procedure). Each site shall be considered an individual assessment to assure compliance to ISO / IEC 17025 and their own quality system.
- 4.2 At the initial assessment all locations, key activities and individuals must be reviewed to assure technical competence. The entire proposed scope is covered with the appropriate technical evaluation thru a series of observations, procedural review, interviews, and detailed equipment evaluation.
- 4.3 During subsequent assessments; activities throughout the multi-site organization will be covered during the surveillance and renewal assessments to the extent necessary to form a reliable judgment about compliance with ISO/IEC 17025. It is expected that all locations or individuals would be visited or personally interviewed at least once in the assessment cycle.

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- 4.4 When an assessment involves sampling of individual sites, L-A-B, the assessor and laboratory must agree to a sampling plan that must be approved by L-A-B before the assessment is conducted. The sampling plan must be documented, based on good statistical practice¹, and it must ensure that a sufficient number of sites and technical personnel are sampled to provide a firm basis for judgments of competence for the organization as a whole.
- 4.5 A technical evaluation may constitute an evaluation at a central location particularly if the calibration and/or test can be performed without the requirement of technical competence of the particular laboratory environment. (this would not constitute a "key activity for accreditation) Additionally a representative number of technicians must be witnessed performing calibrations and/or testing to further that confidence for accreditation.
- 4.6 In some cases it may be feasible to have the various technicians and their equipment, procedures and other requisite documentation brought to one central location. In such cases, the assessor(s) may interview each of the technicians involved in the multi-site accreditation. Otherwise, the assessor will have to visit each of the individuals involved in the multi-site accreditation to ensure that they have the proper equipment, training, and documentation.
- 4.7 An accredited multi-site organization must notify L-A-B of any changes of individuals or locations to the accreditation. Depending on the significance of the change, an additional visit may have to be scheduled to confirm continued conformance with ISO/IEC 17025 and L-A-B's requirements.
- 4.8 In all cases it must be remembered that accreditation of calibration services offered by a number of individuals located in various parts of the country, or even internationally, is a complex affair generally involving significant time and effort on the part of the assessor to assure that each of the individuals included in the assessment and subsequent accreditation is competent.

5 Suspension, termination, and reduction and of accreditation

- 5.1 Suspensions, terminations or reductions in scope at one location, whether voluntary or imposed, will automatically involve a full consideration of the implications for the multi-site as a whole. Where associated activities at other locations are affected or where distinction between affected and unaffected activities at different locations is not feasible, the suspension, termination or reduction in scope would apply across

¹ See for example ASTM E105, E122, and E141.

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the multi-site. Specific locations may suspend, have suspended, or terminate their participation in the multi-site accreditation and the accreditation may be reduced permanently to exclude the particular location.

- 5.2 In the event of termination or resignation of a location from a multi-site accreditation, any one or more of the locations included in the multi-site that wishes to remain accredited will be required to apply for individual accreditation, and to pay an application fee. L-A-B will apply its full accreditation processes to such applications.

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Level	Revision Date	Revised By	Brief Description of Revision
Original Issue	3/28/03	Thom Adams	Original Issue
Rev.1	10/25/05	Ryan Fischer	Revised to ISO/IEC 17011 reference and requirements
Rev 2	06/12/06	Jason Stine	Added the requirement for one corporate quality contact. More clearly defined section 4

APPROVED: _____



DATE: 06/12/06