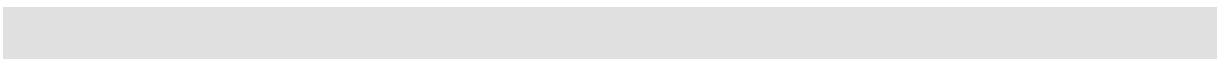




General Accreditation Criteria

Corporate accreditation – accreditation of multiple site facilities and/or facilities accredited in multiple programs

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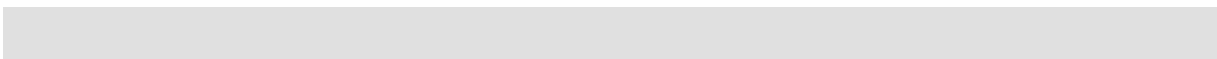
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Corporate accreditation – accreditation of multiple site facilities and/or facilities accredited in multiple programs

1. Overview

Corporate accreditation allows facilities to combine a number of accreditations into one. This may involve a facility being accredited:

- in more than one accreditation program on one site;
- in one accreditation program at various sites (some which may be co-located); or
- a combination of these two scenarios.

For consideration of corporate accreditation, the facility must be a single legal entity.

The rationale for corporate accreditation is that efficiencies may be gained if a group of accreditations are centrally managed and operated under a single management system.

This also provides NATA with an opportunity to administer such accreditations in a more focused and coordinated manner.

2. Features and benefits of corporate accreditation

The features and benefits of corporate accreditation are as follows:

- For multiple-site accreditations, a core site will be identified and considered as the source of central management between NATA and the organisation. The core site is nominated by the facility and is normally the head office or the site where the management system is administered.
- A single NATA Client Coordinator will be appointed to oversee and coordinate the corporate accreditation covering all sites and/or programs. Where possible, the Client Coordinator will also undertake the assessment of the core site.
- Within the confines of NATA's Rules and accreditation criteria, surveillance of a corporate accreditation will be tailored as far as possible to the needs of the facility; and
- The facility's management will be provided with an organisation-wide view of its operations.

Application of the management system will still need to be evaluated at each site.

Please note that as there is only one accreditation number, there is only one Authorised Representative who is entitled to one vote at a general meeting of NATA.

3. Eligibility for corporate accreditation

The following conditions apply to gaining and maintaining a corporate accreditation:

- (i) The facility must have a quality policy common to all sites included in the corporate accreditation.
- (ii) The management system must be centrally administered and uniformly applied across all work locations covered by the scope of the corporate accreditation. It is recognised that some local work instructions may be necessary due to location requirements etc. As a minimum requirement, the following elements of the management system must be centrally administered:
 - Management review;

- Internal audits;
 - Corrective action;
 - Complaints;
 - Changes to the management system documentation for key elements;
 - Procedures for control of commonly occurring calibrations and user checks at various sites; and
 - Procedures for the establishment and closure of annex or temporary laboratories or other remote facilities where this is applicable.
- (iii) The facility must have one appointed management representative with responsibility for maintenance and application of the management system across all sites and/or accreditation programs.
- (iv) The facility must appoint one Authorised Representative who has the responsibility for all sites in relation to accreditation matters and who will be the central point of contact in the organisation for NATA. Refer to NATA's *Responsibilities of Authorised Representatives* for further details.
- (v) Each site included in the corporate accreditation must satisfy the criteria for accreditation applicable to the activities covered by its scope of accreditation. Each site will undergo assessment as described in the *NATA procedures for accreditation*.
- (vi) Any conditions for accreditation that are identified at the assessment of one site must be investigated and acted upon at all sites, where relevant to those sites. It should be noted that the conditions identified at one site may affect the accreditation status of other sites.

4. Minimising duplication at assessments

As corporate accreditation is based on a single management system, it should not be necessary to duplicate the assessment of all elements of the system at each site covered by the corporate accreditation.

However, NATA reserves the right to perform a complete assessment of the management system (and any technical elements as necessary) at any site covered by a corporate accreditation, particularly when major deficiencies are identified at one or more sites.

5. Assessment schedules

Whenever practicable, and with the agreement of the facility, combined assessments will be organised for multi-program accreditations at any given site or when more than one site is co-located.

For multi-site accreditations the most resource effective arrangements for assessing individual locations will be negotiated with the facility. This, however, must also be in accordance with the surveillance schedule of all the accreditation programs involved.

6. Reporting on assessments

A *Report on Assessment* will be provided after each assessment of each site identifying any conditions for accreditation. The response from the facility to this report must include an assurance that the conditions, where relevant, have been addressed at all sites. This would include documentary evidence for any conditions coded as "C".

NATA will verify corrective action taken on conditions at all applicable sites.

7. How to apply

A facility currently holding separate accreditation for each of its sites and wishes to apply for corporate accreditation should contact its existing NATA Client Coordinator. A facility not yet accredited should contact a NATA office.

The relevant information and forms will be sent to the facility should it be eligible for corporate accreditation.

i) Conversion of existing accreditations

Existing accreditations may be converted to corporate accreditations if such accreditations comply with the eligibility criteria under 3 above.

Prior to corporate accreditation being granted, an initial documentation review of the facility's corporate management system will be conducted to confirm compliance with the corporate accreditation criteria.

The facility will be provided with a report detailing any conditions to address. Once these are met, and pending any outstanding conditions being closed-out from recent assessments of each site, a recommendation for corporate accreditation will be made.

One of the existing accreditation numbers from one of the sites will be nominated by the facility as the corporate accreditation number.

The facility will be formally notified of the granting of corporate accreditation and a combined corporate scope of accreditation will be provided. Separate scopes for each site will also be provided.

A facility does not need to include all of its sites under the corporate accreditation and can apply to add additional sites as it determines.

ii) Initial applicants for accreditation

A document review of the facility's corporate manual as described under 7 i) above will be performed. Prior to the granting of corporate accreditation, at least the core site and one additional site must undergo an initial assessment and address any conditions identified as described in the *NATA Procedures for Accreditation*.

iii) Changes to existing corporate accreditations

Where a significant change to an existing corporate accreditation occurs (e.g. ownership change, acquisition of additional sites, extension into new technical areas etc), the Authorised Representative is required to notify NATA in accordance with the *NATA Rules*. The steps to be taken by NATA regarding the changed circumstance(s) will be determined on a case-by-case basis. There may be additional costs associated with the activity NATA is required to perform (e.g. document review).

8. Fees

There are no application fees for facilities that are converting existing accreditations to corporate accreditation. However, there will be a documentation review for which a fee will be levied in accordance with the *NATA Fee Schedule* current at the time.

For applicants applying for corporate accreditation, the standard application fees will apply.

AMENDMENT TABLE

The table below provides a summary of changes made to the document with this issue.

Section	Amendment
Entire document	<p>This document replaces the former Policy Circular 1.</p> <p>The document has been reviewed and updated to reflect the new accreditation criteria documentation structure. Minor editorial changes have also been made with immaterial changes to the criteria.</p>