

NATA accreditation in Forensic Science



The National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) established its Forensic Science accreditation program in the mid 1990s to underpin the confidence in the testing offered by the forensic science community.

The international standard, **ISO/IEC 17025 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories**, is interpreted by NATA for application to the forensic setting with specific criteria relating to chain of custody, security of exhibits and the facility, court testimony monitoring and case file maintenance and review.

The accreditation of forensic facilities by NATA allows the customers of these services (namely the Courts and Police) to have confidence not only in the technical competence of the testing undertaken but also the case management, reporting associated with legal cases and the presentation of results in court.

Accreditation under the Forensic Science program covers a broad range of disciplines including Controlled Substances, Toxicology, Chemistry and Criminalistics, Firearms, Document Examinations, Fingerprints, Crime Scene Investigations (under ISO/IEC 17025), Signal Processing, Electronic Evidence, Forensic Biology, DNA Testing and Parentage Testing for the Australian Family Law Courts.

Facilities accredited under NATA's Forensic Science program include both Police and Scientific Organisations.

Additionally, NATA offers Forensic Operations Module accreditation to any facility holding accreditation in one or more of NATA's other fields or programs where their results may be used in legal proceedings. Accreditations against the module currently include facilities supporting the Public Health, Environmental, Medical and Aviation industries.

ABOUT NATA

The core of NATA accreditation is the third party, objective, peer review process at a scientific/technical level which provides confidence that the accredited facility has the competence and capability to produce reliable outputs upon which informed decisions can be made.

NATA's ability to provide confidence in the technical competence of a broad range of measurement, testing and inspection activities is achieved through the services provided by over three thousand voluntary peer assessors - people who have specific understanding and technical expertise of the activities performed by the laboratory, facility or inspection body - supported by NATA's staff of Lead Assessors.

Further information regarding NATA accreditation and the Forensic Science Program can be obtained from the NATA website www.nata.com.au

A listing of all accredited facilities and the work they perform can also be retrieved through the website, or by contacting 1800 621 666