



General Accreditation Criteria

Remote assessment policy

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Purpose

This document describes NATA's policy for remote assessments.

A remote assessment involves the use of live video and audio technology (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc) in lieu of an on-site assessment.

A remote assessment may be used in specific circumstances and is to achieve the same objective as an on-site assessment, that is to establish through discussions, review of records and observations a facility's:

- fulfilment of the accreditation criteria;
- competence to perform the activities covered by its scope of accreditation.

Applicability

A remote assessment may be conducted in full or as a hybrid activity (i.e. all or part of the NATA assessment team may be remote) and follows the same structure and processes as an on-site assessment.

It is not the intention for a remote assessment to be conducted in lieu of an on-site assessment. However, consideration may be given to a remote assessment for on-site assessments should circumstances deem it appropriate.

Remote assessments may be considered, but not limited to the following situations:

- where activities covered by the scope of accreditation are performed away from the facility's fixed premises and not reasonably accessible or there are limited benefits to assess on-site, for example:
 - at a client's premises;
 - field work or sampling activities;
 - at project sites (i.e. annexes for Geotechnical and Civil Construction Materials testing facilities);
 - where staff may be located remotely (e.g. crime scene officers).
- the facility holds multi-site accreditation and has centrally managed processes where documents, records, data, etc can be reviewed at one site and activities assessed at other sites;
- staff interviews (e.g. staff working remotely, interviewing of contracted staff authorised to release results, reporters undertaking parentage testing, etc);
- to confirm a facility's compliance with the accreditation criteria following a physical relocation;
- for additions to a facility's scope of accreditation.

Criteria for the conduct of a remote assessment

Where a remote assessment is to be performed, the following criteria shall apply:

- the facility must have a sound accreditation history;
 - the IT platform(s) to be used must be able to allow the objectives of the assessment to be satisfied and be accessible and supported by both NATA and the facility;
 - the facility must have the appropriate resources to facilitate the remote assessment including, but not limited to the following:
 - stable / reliable internet access and bandwidth;
 - appropriate equipment to allow all relevant activities at the premises to be assessed and not restricted to one location (e.g. only able to be used in one area of the laboratory);
- Note:** Any additional expenses associated with the remote assessment such as the hiring of teleconference or audio/visual equipment, are the responsibility of the facility.
- provide the NATA assessment team with the appropriate security and profile access (including screen sharing) to allow the gathering of objective evidence.
- the use of pre-recorded videos for witnessing conformity assessment activities is generally not acceptable.

Prior to the assessment, NATA will request the facility to provide the information to demonstrate its ability to comply with the above criteria. NATA will also arrange with the facility a trial meeting to ensure the suitability of the arrangements prior to the assessment.

NATA reserves the right to replace a remote assessment with an on-site assessment at any time for a range of reasons, including but not limited to:

- the criteria outlined in this document cannot be met before or during the assessment;
- the assessment team cannot gather objective evidence to confirm that the facility is able to satisfy the accreditation criteria.

Amendment table

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

Section or Clause	Amendment
Whole document	This is a new policy.