



Specific Accreditation Criteria

ISO/IEC 17025 Application Document Materials - Annex

Remote work locations

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Remote work locations

This document provides interpretative criteria and recommendations for the application of ISO/IEC 17025 for both applicant and accredited facilities involved in testing at remote work locations.

Applicant and accredited facilities must comply with all relevant documents in the NATA Accreditation Criteria (NAC) package for Materials (refer to *NATA Procedures for Accreditation*).

The clause numbers in this document follow those of ISO/IEC 17025 but since not all clauses require interpretation the numbering may not be consecutive.

Introduction

Facilities may be required from time to time to perform sampling, conditioning of specimens and testing away from the base fixed facility for which the accreditation has been granted. This Annex details the type of testing that may be conducted remotely and the procedures for establishment, notification and assessment of such testing.

Base facility

The base facility is the 'parent' facility that maintains control over the remote testing. This includes overall control of the quality system and supervision (including technical control).

Remote testing must be covered by the base facility's management system with documented procedures in place and operated by competent staff for the tests involved at the work site.

Test reports issued for work performed remotely from the base facility must include a means of identifying the specific remote site and its location, if mobile, from which the work was undertaken.

Types of remote testing

The following remote testing is covered by this Annex:

Field testing	Covers tests typically performed in-situ and is conducted by personnel on a call-out basis from the base or annex facility. All required equipment will be taken to the test site by the testing personnel. Such testing is covered by the base facility accreditation and is identified as field testing within the scope of accreditation.
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Laboratory testing at fixed remote work sites	Covers situations where the materials require immediate testing (or curing in the case of concrete) prior to transport of specimens to the base facility. Such testing is limited to those in situ and laboratory tests, as detailed for the work site on the scope of accreditation, for which the test method sets time limitations for the performance of the tests or for those tests on test samples which may change due to the distance needed to return to the base laboratory to complete the tests. Currently this is limited to testing that falls under AS 1012 1, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 8.1, 8.2, AS 1289 2.1.1 and AS 5101 3.3, 4 (preparation of specimens) (or similar road agency test methods). Remote concrete curing sites are examples of such fixed remote work sites.
Laboratory testing at mobile sites	Covers situations demanding short term testing, on a 'call-out' basis from the base facility, where the samples cannot be returned to the base facility for testing within the time frames required by the customer.

Procedures covering remote testing facilities

Procedures for the following shall be included in the base facility quality documents applying to all sites associated with remote testing operations:

- 'Setting up' and 'closing down' procedures for the remote work site;
- Issuing and control of reports, including preliminary reports and the identification of the site responsible for carrying out the testing;
- how the required level of technical control by the base facility for each site is established and allocated;
- how on-site audit and quality assurance activity requirements are established and delivered;
- availability and/or movement of equipment;
- storage of equipment and records not currently in use;
- verification of equipment performance and calibrations including any specialised requirements (e.g. set up of balances);
- storage, handling, packaging and transport of specimens including records of time of dispatch from the site, any temperature extremes encountered and time of arrival at the base facility.

Each site must have supervision and technical control provided by appropriate personnel.

Request to extend the accreditation coverage of a base facility to include work sites (including annex facilities)

Accreditation can only extend to tests for which the base facility holds accreditation and formal notification from NATA is required for each remote site, prior to the base facility being able to claim accreditation. Accordingly, the base facility is required to contact NATA prior to the commencement of testing activities at work sites (fixed or mobile) or annex facilities.

Facilities seeking accreditation coverage for a specific remote work site (whether fixed or mobile) must forward a copy of their procedures covering the operation which addresses the items detailed above, along with a letter of request. Depending on the nature of the operation and its similarity to any other activities for which coverage is already held, an assessment visit may be deemed necessary.

Requests will be considered under the timeframes of our *Charter of Service* (available from the NATA website) and therefore it is advisable that this be forwarded well before coverage is required. The time taken to review documentation, undertake any assessment activity and process requests will be charged at NATA's hourly rate in accordance with the current NATA Fee Schedule (available from the NATA website).

Assessment of remote work locations

A schedule of visits will be established to review a base facility's capability to establish and maintain or remote work sites (fixed or mobile). For fixed remote sites, additional technical units (refer to NATA's Fee Schedule) will be assigned based on the effort to assess these sites, which in turn will be reflected in the schedule of visits.

The visit schedule will be reviewed following each NATA assessment of the base facility (including any assessment of a remote testing facility associated with the base facility) and whenever any new fixed or mobile site is added to the scope. The visit schedule covering the base facility (including any associated remote testing facilities) will take into account the range of activities undertaken as well as the following factors:

- location and staffing arrangements (i.e. from where individual remote testing facilities are manned);
- frequency of establishment of remote sites;
- expected maximum staff numbers and level of on-site supervision for remote sites;
- satisfactory outcomes from NATA assessment of remote site visits conducted within the last eighteen months as measured by the following:
 - no reports have been needed to be withdrawn due to technical issues involving a remote site.
 - no findings have been raised which reflect:
 - inadequate supervision;
 - deficiencies in regard to staff competency;
 - loss of control over equipment assurance activities;
 - loss of control over quality assurance activities;
 - loss of control of accommodation/environmental conditions.

In the case of mobile work sites, these may be assessed at the base facility, however, if additional travel time is required to visit a mobile remote work site, costs associated with such travel will be charged on a fee-for-service basis.

Where multiple remote work sites exist, it is possible that such sites may not require on site assessment prior to addition to the scope provided that the nature and operation of such sites is similar.

Additional visits and suspension options

Failure to comply with the criteria of this Annex and/or the criteria for accreditation at remote work sites may result in a recommendation for a follow-up visit to the remote sites, or a visit to the next remote site established.

If it becomes evident at any time that there is a lack of supervision and/or technical control (or a failure to comply with other aspects of the criteria for accreditation) of a remote work site, the scope of accreditation of the base facility may be varied to reflect suspension of the relevant annex facility or remote site. Depending on the severity of the nonconformities, the facility may be required to withdraw test reports covered by accreditation and inform any affected customers.

Systemic non-conformities identified may result in suspension of the accreditation of the base facility to establish remote work locations. Such suspension would involve the suspension of accreditation coverage for all existing annex facilities under the scope of the base facility and the inability to establish new sites within the scope.

Assessment of the base facility

During assessment visits conducted at the base facility, records of remote work sites which are currently operating or have completed their operations since the last visit to the base facility, may be reviewed. If NATA considers that additional assessment time will need to be allocated in order to review such records then the facility will be notified of this in advance of the visit and the time taken will be charged at the published hourly rate.

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 17025	General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
AS 1012.1	Methods of testing concrete - Sampling of concrete
AS 1012.3.1	Methods of testing concrete - Determination of properties related to the consistency of concrete - Slump test
AS 1012.4.1	Methods of testing concrete - Determination of air content of freshly mixed concrete - Measuring reduction of concrete volume with increased air pressure
AS 1012.4.2	Methods of testing concrete - Determination of air content of freshly mixed concrete - Measuring reduction in air pressure in chamber above concrete
AS 1012.4.3	Methods of testing concrete - Determination of air content of freshly mixed concrete - Measuring air volume when concrete is dispersed in water
AS 1012.8.1	Methods of testing concrete - Method for making and curing concrete - Compression and indirect tensile test specimens

AS 1012.8.2	Methods of testing concrete - Method for making and testing concrete - Flexure test specimens
AS 1289.2.1.1	Methods of testing soils for engineering purposes - Determination of the moisture content of a soil - Oven drying method (standard method)
AS 5101.3.3	Method for preparation and testing of stabilized materials - Cement content of cement stabilized materials
AS 5101.4	Method for preparation and testing of stabilized materials - Unconfined compressive strength of compacted materials

Amendment Table

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

Section or Clause	Amendment
Whole document	New document