



1 September 2020

Dear Authorised Representatives and Technical Assessors,

COVID-19 update and NATA assessments

A number of communications, available from the homepage of the NATA website (NATA's Novel Coronavirus (COVID - 19) Update), have been sent to Members and Technical Assessors since March 2020 to advise of the continuation of NATA services during the pandemic.

I can confirm that on-site assessments have resumed in situations where Government restrictions do not prohibit them being performed. Unfortunately however, restrictions on interstate travel for NATA staff and technical assessors remain in force.

As previously advised, on-site assessments may be conducted subject to:

1. The assessment activity being able to be conducted by a lead assessor(s) and technical assessor(s) located in the State in which the facility is located;
2. Both the facility and the assessment team (lead assessor(s) and technical assessors(s)) agreeing to and comfortable with, conducting the on-site visit;
3. Government guidelines pertaining to social distancing being in place (including travel in separate cars);
4. The client providing PPE to the assessment team as required.

In order to minimise the time spent on-site as far as practicable, documentation which is usually reviewed during the on-site assessment, will be requested beforehand for review. This will allow for the on-site assessment to focus on witnessing and/or discussion of activities and for follow-up on any matters.

Where on-site assessments are not possible, scheduled surveillance visits and reassessments will continue to occur as an in-office activity. From October 2020, scheduled reassessments will now occur as a remote assessment (i.e. via "live video" link) and scheduled surveillance visits will continue as an in-office activity. For remote assessments, documentation will be requested to be provided beforehand to minimise the actual remote assessment time.

If you are a Technical Assessor and invited to participate in a remote assessment, the NATA Lead Assessor assigned to the job will discuss the process with you and the individually tailored assessment arrangements, including the live video technology(ies) to be used and the IT requirements.

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For requests to extend existing accreditations (i.e. to add new activities to a scope of accreditation) or to process new applications for accreditation, please contact your NATA Client Coordinator for further advice as to how such requests will be accommodated.

Assessments of laboratories accredited in NATA's Human Pathology program (ISO 15189) will follow the same process. However, those pathology laboratories that are also an Approved Pathology Laboratory (APL) for the purposes of Medicare reimbursement are subject to further directions from Services Australia and the Commonwealth Department of Health. If your laboratory finds itself in this situation and your APL is shortly due for renewal, you are requested to contact your NATA Client Coordinator to discuss your specific circumstances.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to those Technical Assessors who are continuing to give their time during the pandemic. This support is key in allowing NATA to continue to offer its services and is particularly appreciated at this time when all our lives are disrupted both professionally and personally.

Should you have any other queries in relation to your accreditation, including any disruptions that may be due to the pandemic, please contact your NATA Client Coordinator who will work with you to ensure we achieve the best result for your facility.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Evans', written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Evans
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER