

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TESTING AUTHORITIES, AUSTRALIA

ACCREDITATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE 20TH FORENSIC SCIENCE

NATA MELBOURNE OFFICE

29 MAY 2013

New AAC member required in fingerprints

The composition of the AAC was discussed. Due to the resignation of the AAC member representing fingerprints, it was determined that this position be refilled by seeking expressions of interest against the criteria developed.

AAC Information available on the website

The Committee agreed with the proposal to publish the following particulars for each AAC member:

- Qualifications
- Areas of professional expertise & interest
- Current professional memberships

This brings Forensic Science into line with all other fields and programs.

Review of accreditation criteria

It was noted that a full technical review of the Forensic Science Application Document is due in 2013. However, prior to this review, the following items were discussed as requiring immediate changes:

- Review of updated Competency and PT requirements
- Court Testimony Monitoring
- Personnel qualifications and experience

The wording for the sections listed above was discussed and amended by the Committee. The Committee agreed that the revised wording be published and the documentation was issued to all facilities on 1 July 2013.

Review of Classes of Tests

The commencement of a tabular format for scopes of accreditation was discussed and the need for the classes and subclasses to be defined as a "service" and "determination". Additionally, it was noted that the scopes of accreditation required review to minimise confusion as far as practicable and provide useable information to users of accredited facilities. Committee members agreed to revise the classes and subclasses of test with input being sought from the SMANZFL Specialist Advisory Groups (SAGs).

Implementation of AS 5388 requirements

Further review of implementation of AS 5388 requirements was undertaken following feedback received during the Quality Managers Forum. It is noted that these standards may not be applicable to Parentage Testing facilities or those who use the Forensic Operations Module (FOM). As such, a decision was made not to mandate the assessment against AS 5388.

Discussions were held surrounding the assessment approach against AS 5388 and it was determined that this would occur during a routine reassessment with technical assessors.

It was also noted that NATA would not be assessing against the OHS requirements of the standard (scopes of accreditation would reflect this). Facilities can voluntarily request NATA to accredit them against one or more of the parts of AS 5388, which would appear on their scope of accreditation.

Assessor criteria

The group determined the need to establish base line requirements for technical assessors to assist the AAC in approving potential new assessors. The following were agreed upon:

- Minimum of 5 years practical experience in a technical discipline
- Holding or having held the role of reporting scientist for that discipline
- Involvement in continuing education activities (for example, attending conferences and workshops, writing scientific papers, conducting presentations, training activities)

This would form the basis of staff nominating potential assessors and for NATA to seek assessors directly from facilities.

Next meeting

The 21st FSAAC meeting was proposed for 12 months time in May 2014.