



## **Proficiency Testing Scheme Providers**

## **Categories of Proficiency Testing Schemes**

**August 2014**



**© Copyright National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia 2014**


This publication is protected by copyright under the Commonwealth of Australia Copyright Act 1968.

NATA's accredited facilities or facilities seeking accreditation may use or copy this publication or print or email this publication internally for accreditation purposes.

Individuals may store a copy of this publication for private non-commercial use or copy a reasonable portion of this publication in accordance with the fair dealing provisions in Part III Division 3 of the Copyright Act 1968.

You must include this copyright notice in its complete form if you make a copy of this publication.

Apart from these permitted uses, you must not modify, copy, reproduce, republish, frame, upload to a third party, store in a retrieval system, post, transmit or distribute this content in any way or any form or by any means without express written authority from NATA.



## Categories of Proficiency Testing Schemes

Accreditation of proficiency testing scheme providers is described by categories and subcategories of schemes. The categories of schemes shown in this section are a first order description of a facility's accreditation. Most Scopes of Accreditation are described in more detail (refer to Expressing the Scope of Accreditation below).

The Scope of Accreditation serves two functions. Firstly, it defines exactly which schemes the facility is accredited for. NATA endorsed reports can only be issued for the accredited activities defined in the Scope of Accreditation. Secondly, it provides potential clients with information about available proficiency testing services.

### Expressing the Scope of Accreditation

Scopes of accreditation will include essential information covering the following elements:

- The discipline/Industry group for which the scheme is targeted
- The testing service group or testing activity which the scheme supports
- The artifact, test item, equipment, matrix or material which is distributed to the participants
- The determination, test result or measurement for which the proficiency testing participants report

To ensure these elements are covered and to assist in keeping consistency in the Scopes of Accreditation, this document categorises the schemes following the first three dot points above.

Additionally scopes must also list the determinations and/or reported characteristics for which the scheme is based (the fourth dot point) as free text either aside each subcategory of scheme or against the main service category following information obtained from each facility. The facility may choose the level of detail they wish to express here depending on the openness/flexibility of its Scope of Accreditation. The level of detail in the Scope of Accreditation will inform the level of assessment effort. In general more detail in a scope leads to less assessment time as a more open Scope of Accreditation requires all possible applications to be discussed during assessment.

For example, scheme providers who offer programs in environmental contaminants testing may list:

Environment

Chemical Composition, Residues and Contaminants

Soils and Sediments

*Detection of Cadmium, Mercury, Lead*

or

*Detection of Heavy Metals*

More detail in the Scope of Accreditation allows potential customers to easily search for scheme providers. In the example above a customer searching for mercury detection will have a successful hit in the first example, but not the second.

The existing classes of test used by the ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 Scopes of Accreditation can be used as a guide when listing specific details of the scope.

Scheme providers may also wish to list the testing techniques for which the scheme is based and the statistical methods (as listed in Annex B of ISO/IEC 17043) each scheme uses in reporting as this additional information can be of assistance to potential customers. Even if this extra detail is not included in the Scope of Accreditation, NATA will seek this information before each assessment to ensure the assessment team has the required technical competence.

Where a facility wants to be accredited for activities not covered by the existing categories defined below, the Accreditation Advisory Committee would consider creating new categories and developing new technical criteria for accreditation of such activities where necessary.

## **Categories of schemes**

### Environment

#### Chemical Composition, Residues and Contaminants

- Waters
- Soils and Sediments
- Gases

#### Biological Composition

- Waters

#### Detection of Asbestos

- Soils and Sediments
- Prepared Slides
- Filters

### Agriculture, Foods and Beverages

#### Chemical Composition, Residues and Contaminants

- Livestock Feeds
- Foods and Food Products
- Cosmetics and Hygiene Products
- Potable Water

#### Biological Composition and Contaminants

- Meat and Meat Products
- Dairy Products
- Grains
- Other Foods
- Plant Pathogens
- Potable Water
- Cosmetics and Hygiene Products

Nutritional Content

- Livestock Feeds
- Grains
- Foods and Food Products

Health and Community Services

Human and Veterinary Pathology Services

- Bacteria
- Parasites
- Viruses
- Fungi and Yeasts
- Molecular Diagnostics
- Cytogenetics
- Chemical and Biochemical Analytes
- Drugs and Drug Metabolites
- Blood and Blood Products
- Histology and Cytology Tissues and Body Fluid Samples

Pharmaceuticals

- Active ingredients
- Contaminants

Clinical Services

- Medical Imaging
- Contaminated Equipment

Legal

Forensic Activities

- Accelerants
- Physical Materials
- Biological Materials
- Electronic Evidence
- Firearms
- Documents
- Fingerprints

DNA Testing

- Human Samples
- Non-Human Samples

Controlled Substances

- Forensic Drugs
- Sport Doping Controlled Substances
- Toxicology Samples

### Calibration Schemes

#### Chemical Metrology

- Alcohol Standards

#### Length and Dimensional Metrology

- Gauges

#### Mass and Related Quantities

- Masses
- Pressure equipment

#### Electrical Metrology

- Digital Multi-Meters

#### Time and Frequency

- Frequency Analysers
- Communications Equipment

#### Optics and Radiometry

- Standard Lamps
- Filters

#### Temperature Metrology

- Temperature Sources
- Thermometers

#### Acoustics Vibration and Ultrasonics

- Vibration Equipment
- Acoustic Equipment

### Materials Testing and Industrial Products

#### Material Testing of Construction Materials

- Concrete, grout and mortar
- Aggregates
- Soils
- Asphalts

#### Tensile Testing

- Lifting Gear

#### Non Destructive Testing

- Welds

### Consumer Products

#### Electrical Safety Testing

- Household Appliances and Components
- Medical Equipment

Gas Appliances Safety Testing

- Water Heaters
- Space Heaters
- Cookers

Energy Efficiency

- Water Heaters
- Space Heaters
- Air Conditioning Equipment
- White Goods
- Solar Appliances

Textile Testing

- Wool and Natural Fibres
- Fibres for identification
- Woven and Knitted Products

Chemical Analysis

- Detergents and Cleaning Products
- Surface Coatings and Adhesives