

1 April 2020

COVID 19 Update

NATA appreciates the challenges that our accredited facilities are facing during restrictions posed by the COVID 19 pandemic and that these may be having an impact on normal business practices and service delivery.

During this time, facilities should ensure that the accredited conformity assessment activities they offer continue to be performed reliably. This may involve adopting a risk based approach to any necessary changes arising from the pandemic, while ensuring the accreditation criteria are satisfied, in order to maintain trust and confidence of NATA accredited services to the Australian community.

To this effect, the following specific advice is provided:

Calibration

In the current situation, a facility that is unable to access usual calibration services is expected to continue with other equipment assurance activities (e.g. planned maintenance and intermediary checks), as described in the relevant accreditation criteria.

Where a facility has records demonstrating any equipment is stable from one calibration to the next, it may choose to extend the calibration interval. This is in keeping with NATA's existing approach and the expectation that a facility structures its own equipment assurance program based on its needs and identified risks.

Further information can be obtained from the NATA *General Accreditation Criteria: Equipment assurance, in-house calibration and equipment verification*.

Where a facility does not have historical records to justify extending a calibration interval, it is expected that it assess the risks associated with continuing to use equipment where calibration has expired. The consideration of these risks must include the criticality of the equipment to the reported results and the risks to customers should it be found later that the equipment was not performing to specification, resulting in potentially incorrect results being reported.

Where calibration intervals will be extended, it would be expected that the facility maintain appropriate records (e.g. that a risk assessment has been performed and for reasons of equipment stability the calibration interval has been extended by xxxx). It would also be expected, upon resumption of calibration services, the facility perform a retrospect review.

Proficiency Testing (PT) / Quality Assurance Program (QAP)

NATA recognised that the provision of formal PT / QAP may be affected during the pandemic.

Interlaboratory sample exchanges and comparisons, other than PT / QAP, together with intralaboratory comparisons should continue where it is possible to do so.

As always, your Client Coordinator should be your first point of contact for clarification or assistance.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Styzinski", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

John Styzinski

GENERAL MANAGER, OPERATIONS AND TECHNICAL