

Forensic Science ISO/IEC 17025 Application Document

Annex B: Accreditation of forensic science facilities offering multi-site crime scene services

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Accreditation of forensic science facilities offering multi-site crime scene services

1. Introduction

This Annex details the criteria allowing a laboratory to include evidence/sample collection services which are coordinated from collection sites under its Scope of Accreditation.

The activities performed by a forensic science facility can be broadly defined into two categories:

- testing, examination and related activities performed at a fixed site (hereon referred to as a 'laboratory' in this document); and
- evidence / sample collection services performed in the field (e.g. at a crime scene) or within a sampling annex.

A multi-site forensic science facility may coordinate the collection of evidence / sample collection services from:

- a laboratory; and/or
- a sampling annex or other fixed site which is not a laboratory.

In the latter case, staff from the site attend crime scenes, collect items of interest, undertake evidence sampling processes and from there, either send the evidence directly to the laboratory or store the evidence prior to transport to the laboratory. Hereon these sites are referred as 'collection sites' in this document.

Evidence/sample collection services may involve some screening, detection or enhancement processes prior to the secure transportation of the evidence to the laboratory.

2. Accreditation criteria

The laboratory must have a policy and/or procedure covering the establishment and control of collection sites, which identifies the laboratory responsible for each collection site (responsible laboratory).

All relevant accreditation criteria as detailed in the Forensic Science NATA Accreditation Criteria (NAC) are applicable and evidence must be available that the organisation reviews the sites included on the Scope of Accreditation as complying with the NAC (Clause 4.14).

During scheduled reassessments and surveillance visits of the responsible laboratory, a sample of the records relating to collection sites covered by its Scope of Accreditation shall be reviewed. Accordingly, the laboratory must make appropriate arrangements to allow access to the records. Records reviewed may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- supervision and control (Clauses 4.1 and 5.2);
- staff (Clause 5.2);
- case files (including storage, chain of custody, presumptive test results etc.) (Clauses 4.13 and 5.9); and
- proficiency testing (Clause 5.9).

3. Assessment process

The first collection site to be included under the Scope of Accreditation of the laboratory shall be visited (either separately or concurrently with the assessment of the laboratory). Subsequent sites added may not necessarily be visited before being covered by the Scope of Accreditation should it be established that no further information may be gained from a site visit. This may be the case where the same procedures as for the first site are adopted. NATA will provide further advice at the time the laboratory makes a request to add another site to its Scope of Accreditation.

The number of collection sites which may be under the control of a laboratory is not limited.

NATA reserves the right to visit any collection site during a scheduled visit to a laboratory where concerns with compliance with the requirements for accreditation are identified.

A visit to a minimum of one collection site per responsible laboratory shall occur during each assessment cycle (i.e. either at the time of the reassessment or the surveillance visit of the laboratory). The site to be visited shall be negotiated with the laboratory prior to its scheduled visit.

4. Expression of the Scope of Accreditation

The collection sites will be defined in the Scope of Accreditation of the responsible laboratory as noted below.

- 18.08 Crime scene investigation
 - .05 Multi-site crime scene services
 - List of sites*

AMENDMENTS

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

Section	Amendment
Whole Document	Conversion of Policy Circular 43 into Annex B of the Forensic Science Application Document
Section 3	Clarification of the visits to collection sites