



Guidance on Surveillance and Reassessments

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish guidance regarding surveillance and reassessment activities by ACLASS.

This document applies to all applicant and accredited laboratories.

Definitions

Surveillance – Regularly scheduled assessment visit subsequent to accreditation. Surveillance visits typically will review either half or all of the requirements of the applicable ACLASS conformity assessment program, depending upon whether they coincide with the reassessment visits.

Reassessment – The regularly scheduled assessment visit where all of the requirements of the applicable ACLASS conformity assessment program and all of the scope of accreditation items are witnessed and reviewed. Reassessments are scheduled just prior to the expiration of the organizations accreditation.

Major Discipline – Defined as Calibration and/or Testing

Major Sub-Discipline – Parameters falling within the two major disciplines of Calibration and Testing, used for PT/ILC requirements and planning per ILAC P9. Some examples of Calibration major sub-areas include: dimensional, electromagnetic dc/low frequency, mechanical, and thermodynamic; environmental-soil, environmental-air, chemical-organic (or inorganic), etc. ILAC P9 provides some guidance on these sub-disciplines, but more definition and clarity on these is expected in future versions of ILAC P9.

References

ACLASS Document 2, Conformity Assessment System Policies and Procedures

ILAC G10:[1996 Harmonized Procedures for Surveillance & Reassessment of Accredited Laboratories](#)

ILAC G18:2002. The Scope of Accreditation and Consideration of Methods and Criteria for the Assessment of the Scope in Testing

Introduction

The purpose of the surveillance assessment is to sample the customer's organizational management and technical system to ensure it is maintained and remains effective following initial accreditation and reassessments. The purpose of reassessments is to ensure that the entire customer's organizational management and technical system continues to meet the requirements each applicable ACLASS conformity assessment

program and remains effective, with a particular focus on the organization's scope of accreditation.

Surveillance Assessments

The purpose of the surveillance is to ensure that the customer's organizational management system is maintained and remains effective. All surveillance visits are critical in that they not only determine if the customer continues to meet the requirements, but they allow the opportunity for the assessor to provide additional value to the customer (as a result of the face-to-face discussions and review).

Surveillance Assessment Interval

Surveillance assessments are typically conducted at least yearly following initial accreditation and include reassessment visits. ACLASS may conduct surveillance assessments on a more frequent occurrence should ACLASS determine surveillance is warranted.

Surveillance assessments typically comprise one or two assessor days. The customer will be notified in advance if the time needed to conduct surveillances must be increased. Additional time requirements most frequently result from the customer pre-notification to ACLASS that additional line items to a scope of accreditation are to be added. In these cases, ACLASS has notified the organization in advance of the time requirements and given assurances that sufficient expertise in the assessment team will be provided at the surveillance to witness the items satisfactorily.

Additional surveillance visits and/or time may be required if one or more major non-conformities result from the surveillance visit. Also, additional surveillance visits and/or time may occur to verify changes in and/or additions to the customer's management system.

Significant changes to the Quality Manual and/or Operating Procedures may result in additional assessment time.

Witness Scope of Accreditation

During the surveillance assessment the customer's scope of accreditation shall be sampled and witnessed.¹ The assessment team will verify that there are no additions or deletions warranted to the scope of accreditation.

Results from Surveillances

¹ Witnessing of the scope of accreditation during surveillance assessments will consist of sampling within a customer's scope of accreditation. ACLASS encourages the assessment team to witness more technically demanding areas. The team will also arrange to witness technical staff not witnessed at initial accreditation and/or reassessments. Customers maintaining a scope of accreditation in multiple major disciplines will have each discipline sampled during surveillance assessments.

Any resulting non-conformances shall be responded to by the customer within 30 days. Responses shall be sent to ACLASS for distribution to the lead assessor for review. ACLASS will monitor this time limit, and take any appropriate action. Such appropriate action may include suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

Scheduling the Surveillance

Our accreditation cycle is typically a two year reassessment timeframe. ACLASS establishes surveillance and reassessment plans based on an organization's proven stability and competence. Surveillances typically occur on or around the anniversary date of the customer's certificate and scope of accreditation.

Reassessments

The purpose of the reassessment is to sample the entire customer's quality and technical management system and determine through the use of interviews, reviewing procedures, data, witnessing of scope of accreditation and records that the customer's system is effectively implemented and meets the applicable requirement(s). The assessment team uses the reassessment to judge if the customer continues to meet ACLASS requirements and is to remain accredited.

Reassessment Interval

Our accreditation cycle is typically a two year reassessment timeframe. ACLASS establishes surveillance and reassessment plans based on an organization's proven stability and competence.² ACLASS may conduct reassessments on a more frequent occurrence should ACLASS determine reassessment is warranted.

Reassessments always comprise multiple assessor days. Additional assessment time may be needed due to changes in personnel, changes in equipment, any change in scope, receiving complaints, or other reasons. The customer will be notified if the time needed to conduct the reassessment must be increased.

Additional visits and/or time (i.e. follow-up or surveillance) may be required if one or more major non-conformities result from the reassessment. Also, additional visits and/or time (i.e. follow-up or surveillance) may occur to verify changes in and/or additions to the customer's management system.

Significant changes to the Quality Manual and/or Operating Procedures may result in additional assessment time.

² Proven stability and competence could include current and active accreditation of a customer accredited by an ILAC MRA signatory. Basis for the decision to extend or reduce the reassessment cycle timeframe may be as a result of the consideration of: compliance with an additional ISO standard(s); performance in PT/ILC activity; effectiveness of corrective action activity; effective internal audits and management reviews; effective training of personnel.

Witness Scope of Accreditation

During the reassessment the customer's scope of accreditation shall be witnessed.³ The assessment team will verify that there are no additions or deletions warranted to the scope of accreditation

Results from Reassessments

Any resulting non-conformances shall be responded to by the customer within 30 days. Responses shall be sent to ACLASS for distribution to the lead assessor for review. ACLASS will monitor this time limit, and take any appropriate action. Such appropriate action may include suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

Scheduling the Reassessment

A customer's reassessment typically occurs at a minimum 45-60 days prior to the expiry date on the customer's certificate and scope of accreditation. ACLASS recommends customers reassessments occur at least 60 days prior to the expiry date. ACLASS typically contacts the customer approximately 90-120 days prior to the expiry date to begin scheduling the reassessment.

ACLASS recognizes that reassessments may not be conducted on or around the expiry date due to the demanding schedules of our customers. If the customer must delay their reassessment they must do so upon written request. Such requests shall be considered on a case by case basis and the customer will be notified by ACLASS regarding acceptability of the request.

Customers that are non-responsive to scheduling requests, and as a result cause the reassessment to be delayed, including the decision on continued accreditation to go beyond their expiry date, will not be granted extension letters.

Customers that insist on having their reassessment occur on their expiry date shall not receive extension letters. In such case, the customer's accreditation will be suspended until all non-conformities have been addressed and the ACLASS decision process on continued accreditation is complete.

³ Assessor(s) review every line item of the scope of accreditation.