

RULES OF PROCEDURE

PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDER ACCREDITATION

1 Scope

1.1 The purpose of these rules is to establish procedures governing accreditation of Proficiency Testing Provider (PTP) by International Accreditation Service, Inc. (IAS).

IAS accreditation does not make any representation, nor should it be construed as making representation regarding attributes not specifically addressed by the accreditation. Accreditation does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation for use of a particular provider, proficiency program, or whether the assigned value for the measurands or characteristics in a particular program are fit for its intended purpose by the PTP.

1.2 Reference Documents (Only current versions are stated below)

- 1.2.1 IAS Accreditation Criteria for Proficiency Testing Provider, AC785.
- 1.2.2 IAS Rules of Procedure for Appeals Concerning International Accreditation Service, Inc., Actions.
- 1.2.3 ISO/IEC 17043, Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing.
- 1.2.4 ISO 13528: Statistical methods for use in proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons.

2 Initial Accreditation

2.1 Initial Application, Fees and Assessment Cost

- 2.1.1 Each initial application must be submitted to IAS by electronic means.
- 2.1.2 The new applicant must submit appropriate basic fee and assessment cost as identified in the quotation provided by IAS.
- 2.1.3 The basic fee covers one scheme of proficiency testing field, as applicable and as provided in the quotation.
- 2.1.4 If any additional fields are identified during the accreditation process, additional fees may apply. Schemes are broadly categorized as Testing, Calibration, Medical, Inspection or Other. Any other sectors deemed relevant may be added by IAS.
- 2.1.5 Initial applications held for more than 180 days, without the applicant's having fulfilled IAS requirements for IAS accreditation, are subject to cancellation unless such term is extended by the IAS president, or his/her designee.
- 2.1.6 All IAS fees are nonrefundable.

- 2.1.7 **Taxes and charges:** All sales, use, excise, value-added and similar taxes and charges are the responsibility of the applicant, and the applicant agrees to reimburse IAS for any such taxes and charges imposed on IAS with respect to services provided by IAS.
- 2.1.8 Required documentation as noted in Sections 4 and 5 of IAS AC785 must be submitted.
- 2.1.9 Desired scope of accreditation detailing the PT Schemes for which accreditation is sought must be submitted. As an example, the following format is recommended:

Schemes/Sector (Sub sector): Testing (chemical)		
Description of Item	Properties Measured	Procedure for Establishing Assigned Value
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS Gasoline, Diesel, Kerosene, Lubricant	Acidity Acid Number Aromatics Base Number Benzene Content	Procedure Number (with description of how consensus value or reference value obtained)

- 2.1.10 IAS may at any time, in addition to the required documentation noted above, require other information.
- 2.1.11 Initial applicants will be invoiced for the balance of costs and expenses resulting from the initial assessment.
- 2.1.12 Additional fees, if any, due to identification of additional PT schemes (refer to Section 2.1.4) at the conclusion of the accreditation process will be invoiced.

2.2 Initial Assessment

- 2.2.1 Upon receipt by IAS of the application, applicable fees, required documentation and the desired scope of accreditation, IAS will process the application as follows:
- 2.2.1.1. A review of submitted documentation will be conducted to determine preliminary compliance with applicable requirements. A letter summarizing preliminary observations will be related to the applicant, including a request for any additional data which may be required prior to scheduling the initial assessment.
- 2.2.1.2. An (optional) onsite pre-assessment visit may be scheduled at the discretion of the applicant for the purpose of determining preliminary compliance with applicable requirements. IAS and assessors shall ensure that no consultancy is provided during this pre-assessment exercise.

- 2.2.1.3. **Initial Assessment:** In consultation with the applicant, an initial onsite assessment will be scheduled to verify compliance with the accreditation requirements.
- 2.2.2 Response to assessment report: A written response to any Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Concerns identified during the initial assessment shall be submitted to IAS within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the assessment as follows:
 - 2.2.2.1. Corrective Action Requests (CARs) require a mandatory response on actions taken by the PTP to resolve the CARs, including objective evidence substantiating the actions taken. The response must include root cause analysis to support CAR closure, where appropriate. Resolutions of CARs requiring the PTP's management and technical system must be documented and submitted to IAS. Objective evidence may be in the form of revisions to procedures, additional training, mentoring, and monitoring given to personal accompanied by appropriate records and/or other data.
 - 2.2.2.2. Concerns require a mandatory written response from the PTP within 30 days of submissions of the assessment report. While objective evidence addressing Concerns is not mandatory, the PTP must inform IAS on the actions taken or intended actions to be undertaken with a timeline for completion. The action taken by the organization to implement actions to resolve concerns will be verified at the provider's next scheduled assessment or during a follow-up assessment.
 - 2.2.2.3. If more than 30 days are needed to resolve CARs or Concerns, the PTP must request, in writing, for an extension from IAS. Request for an extension shall be accompanied by a reasonable estimate on when the responses will be submitted for review.
 - 2.2.2.4. IAS reserved the right to conduct a follow-up assessment to determine if CARs and Concerns have been satisfactorily resolved.
 - 2.2.2.5. Failure to resolve all CARs and Concerns within six months from the date of assessment will result in another assessment before accreditation is granted.
- 2.2.3 IAS will grant accreditation upon determination that based on the onsite assessment and review of evidence submitted, the applicant has met all the accreditation requirements as a PTP for the PT schemes noted in the scope of accreditation.
- 2.2.4 Each initial accreditation is valid for one-year period from the accreditation date.
- 2.3 **Transfer of Accreditation:** Applicant PTPs currently accredited by signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) seeking transfer of accreditation, in addition to fulfilling IAS accreditation requirements, must provide the following:
 - 2.3.1 A complete copy of the most recent assessment report from the current accreditation body.

- 2.3.2 Corrective actions for any deficiencies noted in the assessment report, including acknowledgement of acceptance of the corrective actions by the current accreditation body. Where the previous assessment report by the current accreditation body is not closed and if the applicant and the accreditation body differ on the closure of corrective actions or deficiencies, IAS will review and make a decision as to the status of the nonconformity.

Note: If required, IAS reserves the right to contact the current accreditation body

- 2.3.3 A copy of the most recent accreditation certificate issued by the current accreditation body.
- 2.3.4 Other information as deemed pertinent by IAS.

3 Maintenance of Accreditation

3.1 Renewal Application, Fees and Assessment Costs

- 3.1.1 Each renewal application must be submitted to IAS.
- 3.1.2 An application to renew accreditation must be submitted to IAS at least 15 days prior to the expiration date if continued accreditation is desired and shall be accompanied by the applicable fee as identified in the renewal notice.
- 3.1.3 Accreditation is subject to cancellation if an application to renew accreditation is not completed by the renewal date.
- 3.1.4 Taxes and charges: All sales, use, excise, value-added and similar taxes and charges are the responsibility of the applicant, and the applicant agrees to reimburse IAS for any such taxes and charges imposed on IAS with respect to services provided by IAS.
- 3.1.5 All expenses, including but not limited to travel and staff time, related to the assessments are reimbursable to IAS by the PTP.
- 3.1.6 Additional fees, if any, due to identification of any additional schemes (Refer to Section 2.1.4) at the conclusion of the accreditation process will be invoiced.

3.2 Surveillance Assessment after Initial Year of Accreditation

- 3.2.1 All accredited PTPs are subject to a surveillance assessment at the end of the initial year of accreditation. IAS will determine whether the surveillance assessment may be conducted remotely or onsite. Determination will be based on factors including severity of CARs and Concerns from the initial assessment, changes in the management system as indicated in the renewal application, complaints received by IAS in the past year, and the risk associated with the scope of accreditation.
- 3.2.2 Onsite Surveillance Assessment
 - 3.2.2.1 If IAS determines an onsite surveillance assessment is required, IAS staff will contact the PTP to schedule the assessment.

- 3.2.2.2. At minimum, the following information shall be reviewed during the onsite surveillance assessment: the PTP's internal audit and management review reports/minutes; any complaints; actions resulting from any CARs and/or Concerns noted in the previous IAS assessment report; any major changes in key personnel, facilities, equipment or in the PTP's management system and records for scheme that are within the PTP's scope with IAS.
- 3.2.2.3. Surveillance assessment process is similar to the initial assessment process noted above.
- 3.2.2.4. IAS may decide not to grant accreditation to the accredited PTP for not fulfilling accreditation requirements. Organizations denied accreditation may appeal this decision per requirements noted in Section 6 of these rules.
- 3.2.2.5. Failure to respond to an IAS assessment report within 90 days will result in suspension of PTP accreditation and removal of PTP's accreditation certificate from the IAS website.

3.2.3 Remote Surveillance Assessment

- 3.2.3.1. If IAS determines that the PTP qualifies for a remote surveillance assessment, the PTP shall provide the following information: The PTP's internal audit and management review reports/minutes; any complaints; actions resulting from any CARs and/or Concerns noted in the previous assessment report; any major changes in key personnel, facilities, equipment or in the PTP's management system and PT records that are within the PTP' scope with IAS.
- 3.2.3.2. IAS will review the submittals and make determination if the accreditation can be continued or an onsite surveillance assessment is required.
- 3.2.3.3. IAS may decide not to grant accreditation to the accredited PTP for not fulfilling accreditation requirements. Organizations denied accreditation may appeal this decision per requirements noted in Section 6 of these rules.
- 3.2.3.4. IAS will grant accreditation upon determination based on surveillance assessment and completion of renewal application that the accredited PTP has met the accreditation requirements for the schemes noted in the scope of accreditation.

3.3 Onsite Reassessment

- 3.3.1 An onsite reassessment is required by the end of every two years commencing from the date of initial accreditation.
- 3.3.2 In consultation with the accredited PTP, an onsite assessment will be scheduled to verify the accredited compliance with the accreditation requirements.
- 3.3.3 Onsite reassessment process is similar to the initial assessment process noted above.

- 3.3.4 For accredited PTPs, failure to respond to an assessment report within 90 days will result in suspension of accreditation and removal of the PTP's accreditation certificate from the IAS website.
- 3.4 Scope Extension Assessment
 - 3.4.1 Requests for extension of scope require submission of a formal request detailing the extension request.
 - 3.4.2 PTPs seeking extension within their current scope may be subject to an onsite or a remote assessment depending on the nature of their requested extension to the scope.
 - 3.4.3 In consultation with the accredited PTP, an onsite assessment will be scheduled to review the new schemes being sought.
- 3.5 Extraordinary Assessments
 - 3.5.1 Extraordinary onsite assessments may be conducted, including unannounced assessments, to investigate formal complaints or other changes in a PTP's status that may affect the ability of the PTP to fulfil IAS requirements for accreditation.
 - 3.5.2 All costs associated with the extraordinary assessment will be the responsibility of the accredited PTP.

4 Responsibilities of PTPs

- 4.1 Changes to PTP's accreditation status: PTPs accredited under these rules shall notify IAS, in writing, within thirty days concerning the following:
 - 4.1.1 Changes to PTP name;
 - 4.1.2 Changes to PTP ownership;
 - 4.1.3 Changes to PTP address;
 - 4.1.4 Changes in policies or procedures that affect the PTP's accreditation;
 - 4.1.5 Major changes to the PTP facility;
 - 4.1.6 Changes in key technical or supervisory personnel;
 - 4.1.7 Change in status, including but not limited to cancellation, revocation, suspension or withdrawal of other accreditations maintained by the PTP.
- 4.2 PTPs operating under Special Jurisdictional/Governmental Regulations
 - 4.2.1 Regulatory entities may place specific compliance requirements on PTPs operating within their jurisdiction. If a PTP intends to seek acceptance of its schemes and results by these entities, they must agree to comply with the additional assessment requirements, including more frequent onsite assessments, as applicable.
 - 4.2.2 By executing the IAS application for PTP accreditation, the PTP agrees to furnish all needed documentation, pay the required fees, perform additional assessments, or otherwise fully comply with the requirements of the regulatory entities.

- 4.3 **Indemnification:** All applications for an IAS accreditation contain indemnification provisions.
- 4.4 Unannounced Assessments: The PTP agrees to permit unannounced assessments of its office and facilities by the IAS for cause, such as formal complaints, pattern of nonconformance, violation of regulatory requirements, etc.
- 4.5 Usage of the IAS Name or Symbol by accredited PTPs:
- 4.5.1 An accredited PTP can make reference to its IAS accreditation in PT results, on its website, in its general literature and promotional materials, and in business solicitation, under the following provisions:
 - 4.5.1.1. The PTP may not reference its accredited status in any way that indicates or implies accreditation in areas outside the actual scope of the specific IAS accreditation, or that indicates or implies IAS endorsement of any particular product, material or service.
 - 4.5.1.2. When the IAS name and/or the registered symbol are used, it shall be accompanied by the word “ACCREDITED”. The symbol must also include the name of the accredited program, e.g. “Proficiency Testing Provider”.
 - 4.5.1.3. When the IAS name or the registered symbol is printed on letterhead and/or other PTP stationary, such stationary may not be used for work proposals or quotations if none of the work is within the PTP’s current scope of accreditation with IAS.
 - 4.5.1.4. The IAS registered symbol is to be used on IAS-endorsed PT results. The IAS registered symbol may not be changed in any way, although it may be enlarged or reduced.
 - 4.5.1.5. The IAS registered symbol displayed on the PTP’s IAS-endorsed PT result report must include the name of the accredited program, e.g. “Proficiency Testing Provider”, provided the results related to the schemes that are within the PTP’s IAS-scope of accreditation. Whenever the IAS symbol is used on a report covering multiple schemes, some of which are within the PTP’s scope of accreditation and some of which are outside the scope, the PTP must clearly identify whatever portion of the report is not covered by IAS accreditation.
 - 4.5.2 It is the PTP’s responsibility to not misrepresent its accreditation status in any way, and to secure IAS approval in advance whenever there is a question about the PTP’s intended use of the IAS name and/or symbol.

5 Responsibilities of International Accreditation Service

- 5.1 Accreditation Documents: A certificate of accreditation and scope of accreditation document shall be issued and maintained current for each accredited PTP upon satisfactory completion of the accreditation requirements. For each accredited PTP, the certificate and the scope of accreditation shall be posted on the IAS website. Accreditation actions will also be noted on the IAS website.

- 5.2 Fee Modification: Any modification to the fees must be reviewed and approved by the IAS president or his/her designee.
- 5.3 Proprietary Data: Data in any accreditation file or application are considered proprietary to the applicant. The data may be disclosed by IAS only upon the written consent of the applicant or pursuant to subpoena issued by a court or other governmental agency of competent jurisdiction. Proprietary data may also be disclosed to a staff member of IAS or an authorized representative of IAS having a legitimate interest therein; any duly identified representative of the PTP, or like person or organization who initially prepared the data, or a duly authorized representative thereof stated to be an employee or principal thereof having a legitimate interest therein. Governmental regulatory bodies may be granted access in the interest of public safety or preservation of property as it related to enforcement of laws/regulation upon receipt of an official written request.
- 5.4 Access to Proprietary Data: From time to time, IAS records are audited by national and international bodies on a random basis to establish conformance with international accreditation and conformity assessment standards. It is understood that, by executing and accreditation application, the PTPs grant IAS the authority to allow such access.
- 5.5 Selection of Assessment Team: IAS will provide an opportunity to the applicant or accredited PTP to appeal against an assessor or assessment team assigned to assess the PTP. This appeal must be in writing with the reasons identified. IAS, in mutual agreement with the PTP, may arrange to assign a different assessor or assessment team for the scheduled assessment.

6 Denial, Revocation, Modification, Suspension or Cancellation of the Accreditation, and Appeals.

- 6.1 Any accreditation is subject to denial, revocation, modification, suspension, or cancellation upon occurrence of the following:
 - 6.1.1 Failure by the PTP to comply with the current or updated Rules of Procedure.
 - 6.1.2 Failure to comply with current or updated Accreditation Criteria.
 - 6.1.3 Failure to comply with any condition to the issuance of the accreditation.
 - 6.1.4 Any misstatement, whether intentionally or unintentionally made, in the application or any data or documentation submitted in support thereof.
 - 6.1.5 Failure to comply with any provision contained in the application.
 - 6.1.6 Failure to comply with any terms of the management system documentation on which the IAS accreditation is based.
 - 6.1.7 Any other grounds considered as adequate cause in the judgment of IAS.
- 6.2 Appeals
 - 6.2.1 The denial, revocation, modification, suspension, or cancellation of accreditation may only be appealed by the holder of the accreditation.

- 6.2.2 Procedures for appeals of denial, revocation, modification, suspension, or cancellation of accreditation shall be in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Appeals Concerning International Accreditation Service, Inc. Actions. The IAS president or his/her designee, or the Board of Directors, as the case may ne, may shorten any of the time periods set forth in the Rules of Procedure for Appeals Concerning International Accreditation Service, Inc. Actions, if such action is deemed necessary, in their discretion, in the interest of public safety and welfare.
- 6.3 With No Right to Appeal: Notwithstanding anything in these rules to the contrary, any initial application, or accreditation may be denied, revoked, modified, suspended, or cancelled by the IAS president or his/her designee for any of the following reasons with no right to appeal:
 - 6.3.1 Failure to pay required fees to IAS within thirty days from the date of the mailing by IAS of written demand for payment.
 - 6.3.2 Failure to comply or furnish any material or data relating to PTP accreditation required by IAS within the specified time limit, unless extended by the IAS President or his/her designee.
 - 6.3.3 Failure to respond and resolve IAS Corrective Action Requests or Concerns resulting from an IAS assessment report in the allotted time, unless extended by the IAS President or his/her designee.
 - 6.3.4 Failure to permit or submit to an assessment as set forth in Section 2 and 3 and, if applicable, the special oversight requirements stipulated in Section 4.2 of these rules.
 - 6.3.5 Failure to furnish information and/or submit to a remote surveillance assessment as required in Section 3.2.3 of these rules within the specified time limit.
- 6.4 **Results of Denial, Revocation, Modification, Suspension, or Cancellation**
 - 6.4.1 Upon the occurrence of any of the events set forth in Section 6.1 or Section 6.3, IAS, by the decision of its President or his/her designee, may choose any of the following actions:
 - 6.4.1.1. Denial of the application.
 - 6.4.1.2. Revocation of the accreditation.
 - 6.4.1.3. Modification of the accreditation, on such terms as determined by IAS President or his/her designee.
 - 6.4.1.4. Suspension of the accreditation for such period on such terms as determined by IAS President or his/her designee.
 - 6.4.1.5. Cancellation of the accreditation.
 - 6.4.2 The decision of the IAS President or his/her designee with respect to any of the actions set forth in this section may become effective immediately if deemed necessary, in the interest of public safety and welfare, may be stated pending an appeal pursuant to the Rules of Procedure for Appeals Concerning International Accreditation Service, Inc. Actions, or may be otherwise stayed on such terms and conditions as determined by the IAS President or his/her designee.

- 6.4.3 Upon revocation or cancellation of the accreditation or during any period of suspension, unless this provision is specifically modified by the terms of the suspension, the accredited PTP shall discontinue all use of the IAS symbols. The PTP shall also immediately discontinue any references to IAS accreditation on any reports, certificates, or promotional material.
- 6.4.4 IAS shall have the right to immediately notify governmental jurisdictions and any other interested parties of any improper and unauthorized reference to the continuation of the accreditation, when in the sole judgment of IAS, as determined by its President or his/her designee, such notification is necessary in the interest of public safety or welfare.
- 6.4.5 Upon the determination by IAS that cause exists for any of the actions specified in this section, with respect to the accreditation, IAS shall deliver to the PTP a written statement, signed by the IAS President or his/her designee, setting forth the factual basis for such action. This written statement shall include a specific reference to the cause for the action which is set forth in the Rules of Procedure. ▪