



**AMERICAN  
ACCREDITATION  
ASSOCIATION**

## General Requirements for Accreditation



Document No. R-GEN-01

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## 1. Scope:

- 1.1 This document provides the necessary information and requirements on the AAA accreditation and assessment process required to apply for AAA accreditation, the rights and obligations of AAA and the CABs .
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the related program specific requirements, available on the AAA website, prior to submitting a formal application for accreditation.
- 1.3 This document is applicable to all areas of accreditation covered by AAA, i.e.:
  - Testing, Calibration Laboratories (According to ISO/IEC 17025)
  - Medical Laboratories (According to ISO 15189)
  - Personnel Certification Bodies (According to ISO/IEC 17024)
  - System Certification Bodies (According to ISO/IEC 17021)
  - Product Certification Bodies (According to ISO/IEC 17065)
  - Inspection Bodies (According to ISO/IEC 17020)
  - Proficiency Testing Providers (According to ISO/IEC 17043)
  - Certificate Issuers (ASTM E2659)

## 2. Confidentiality

- 2.1 AAA employees and assessors agree to maintain as confidential and not to use or disclose to any third party, any information derived from the CAB in connection with the services without the consent of the CAB, except:
  - 2.1.1 Any information which was in the possession of AAA prior to its disclosure by the CAB,

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- 2.1.2 Any information which is, or shall lawfully become, part of the public domain, required to be made available to any court, or obtained by AAA from a source independent of the CAB,
- 2.1.3 Communications between An interested Party and any of Regional/international Accreditation Organizations or signatories to the mutual recognition agreements between the members of such bodies under the terms of cross border policies; The CAB is not authorize to disseminate, distribute or use the information and data provided by AAA unless it has consent from AAA.

### **3. Accreditation**

- 3.1 AAA accreditation is the official recognition that a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is competent to perform specific tasks and has a documented Management System in place to ensure consistent implementation of its processes. An accredited CAB will have demonstrated through formal assessment that it is competent to perform the specific tasks for which accreditation is sought. In addition, the CAB needs to demonstrate that it satisfies both national and international criteria in this respect.
- 3.2 The requirements that have to be complied with for the various CABs are given in the AAA documents relevant to the field of accreditation.

### **4. Scope of Accreditation**

- 4.1 Every accredited CAB is issued with a certificate and schedule of accreditation detailing the scope of activities and functions which satisfy all the necessary accreditation requirements and for which accreditation is granted.
- 4.2 Applicants are required to complete the relevant application form and provide detailed information on the scope for which accreditation is being sought. If any problems are

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experienced the applicant should contact the AAA office for further guidance.

- 4.3 The draft scope of accreditation will be confirmed with the applicant during the initial assessment, and will only be issued once accreditation has been granted.
- 4.4 Where applicable, applicants who opt to undergo a pre-assessment visit should discuss the scope of accreditation with the assessor and try to finalize it as far as possible prior to the initial assessment.
- 4.5 No CAB is permitted to use the AAA accreditation symbol until such time that they have received written confirmation from AAA that they have been accredited.
- 4.6 An accredited organization should consult AAA document R-GEN-02 “Requirements for use of the Accreditation Symbols”, prior to preparing any organizational material, which makes any reference to accreditation or incorporates the AAA accreditation symbol.

## 5. Application Information

- 5.1 The applicant writes and implements a management system based on the applicable standard (The standards are obtainable from your local standards body) .Program specific AAA requirements and the Policy Manual are available on the AAA website [www.aaa-accreditation.org](http://www.aaa-accreditation.org)
- 5.2 The applicant completes all sections of the relevant application form. The application form requires very comprehensive information on the applicant's organization. This information is necessary to allow AAA to judge the extent that the organization's documented Management System satisfies the AAA accreditation requirements.
- 5.3 The application form is submitted to AAA on-line, together with the Management System (Quality) Manual and required information and documentation as prescribed in each application form.
- 5.4 The CABs applying for accreditation shall have Management System

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incompliance with the relevant standards.

- 5.5 Before accreditation assessment visit the CAB shall have conducted at least one full internal audit and one management review.
- 5.6 An organization may submit a completed application form for the sole purpose of obtaining a detailed quotation. However, the application will not be processed further than the quotation stage without the submission of the organizations quality manual and application fee.
- 5.7 The signing / acceptance of the application form binds the applicant to the AAA Terms and Conditions of Accreditation.
- 5.8 AAA will review the application and all information submitted and clarify all outstanding issues with the applicant before proceeding to the next step.
- 5.9 Failure to complete and submit all the required supporting documentation may result in a delay in processing the application.
- 5.10 A AAA lead assessor is appointed, and on acceptance of the Lead Assessor by the CAB, he will evaluate the Management System documentation, and if deficiencies reported, the CAB is required to correct it.

## 6. Pre-assessment

- 6.1 A Pre-assessment visit may be requested by an applicant in the voluntary domain or may be required after review of the applicants' documents.
- 6.2 The pre-assessment is a site visit normally only carried out by a Lead Assessor over a period of 1 day. At the end of the assessment, the Lead Assessor will only supply the CAB with a list of findings to be addressed.
- 6.3 The CAB may need to make changes to its policies, procedures and practices

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prior to AAA undertaking the initial assessment. The CAB is responsible to inform AAA when they have addressed all the findings and are ready for the initial assessment.

## 7. Initial Assessment

- 7.1 The CAB must ensure that there are sufficient records to confirm that the system is implemented prior to the initial assessment. AAA requires that a complete internal audit and management review be conducted by the applicant prior to the assessment
- 7.2 An initial assessment is a comprehensive site visit carried out by the lead assessor and technical assessors with the required expertise for the scope of accreditation applied for, normally within 2 days.
- 7.3 The CAB will be required to submit to AAA evidence of corrective action for any non-conformances identified during the initial assessment within a maximum period of 6 months from the date of the initial assessment.
- 7.4 Once all non-conformances recorded at the assessment have been satisfactorily cleared, the assessment documentation is submitted to the AAA decision Committee, who decides on whether accreditation can be granted.
- 7.5 Once a CAB is accredited, AAA will provide the CAB with a Certificate and scope of Accreditation, valid for 2 years. The Certificate and scope of Accreditation will be published on the AAA website.
- 7.6 After accreditation has been obtained, AAA will check that the CAB continues to comply with accreditation requirements by carrying out regular on-site surveillance visits annually.

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## 8. Extension of Accreditation scope

- 8.1 Applications for Extension of the Accreditation scope applies to CABs which:
- Have already been accredited, where the CAB wishes to extend the accredited scope of tests / inspections / certifications within the existing accredited field.
  - Where an already accredited CAB wishes to apply for accreditation in a new field altogether, but under the same management system.
- 8.2 The CAB is required to complete the relevant sections of the application form and submit it to the relevant program Manager.
- 8.3 Where possible, assessment or witnessing of extensions for accreditation will be carried out at the next surveillance or reassessment visit, however, when requested by the CAB, or required by AAA based on the evaluation of the application, additional visits will be arranged.
- 8.4 Applications for extension of scope or approval of personnel may not require a full review of the quality manual.
- 8.5 On receipt of payment, an assessment date is arranged. The CAB must ensure that there are sufficient records for the scope of extension to confirm that the system is implemented prior to the assessment visit.
- 8.6 The assessment is conducted on site by the lead and/or technical assessor/s. The names of the assessment team member(s) are made known to the CAB prior to the planned visit, to allow the CAB to object to members of the team, with good reason.
- 8.7 Once all non-conformances recorded at the assessment are cleared, the Decision Committee may grant or decline the extension, based on the outcome of the assessment.

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## 9. Renewal of Accreditation

- 9.1 A re-assessment visit shall be conducted before the end of the validity of the accreditation certificate, covering the whole scope of accreditation in order to renew the accreditation.
- 9.2 The re-assessment will be similar to an initial assessment, except that previous history of the CAB will be taken into consideration. A comprehensive assessment of the management system will be conducted by the Lead Assessor, and the technical assessors(s) will conduct an assessment of the technical aspects of the accreditation scope, including any personnel or extensions applied for.
- 9.3 The CAB will be required to submit evidence of corrective actions to AAA for any non-conformances identified and once all, if any, non-conformances have been satisfactorily cleared by the assessors, AAA will arrange for the Decision Committee to review the assessment pack and make a decision on the renewal of accreditation.
- 9.4 On successful renewal of accreditation, AAA will provide the CAB with a new Certificate and Scope of Accreditation valid for a specified period.

## 10. Suspension, Withdrawal, or Reduction of Accreditation Scope

### 10.1 Voluntary Reduction, Suspension or Withdrawal of Accreditation by CAB

- 10.1.1 In case the CAB wish to withdraw, voluntarily reduce accreditation scope, voluntarily suspend or delay the assessment visit; AAA has to be notified officially upon an official request received from the CAB 3 months prior to the scheduled assessment. AAA will take decision and inform the CAB

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about conditions of acceptance of such request. The CAB is required to clear all dues and associated costs in this regard.

## 10.2 Suspension of Accreditation Scope

10.2.1 The CAB may be suspended if it involves in situations that include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) Nonconformity that affect the capability of system to achieve the intended results (ex. Testing, calibration, inspection, certification).
- b) Number of nonconformities associated with the same issue that could demonstrate a systemic failure.
- c) Non-payment of fees on due date.
- d) Misuse of AAA symbol in reports/ certificates.
- e) Unethical practices such as issue of reports/ certificates without actual work.
- f) Failure to resolve nonconformance within defined time period.
- g) Significant changes without prior notification to AAA.
- h) Negative outcome of a complaint investigation.
- i) When the CAB found to provide certification to any standards used as a basis for accreditation of CABS such as ISO 17025, ISO 15189, ISO 17020 etc.
- j) Refusal or not responding for the scheduled or extraordinary assessment without reasonable justification.
- k) Unprofessional behavior of CAB that may affect the work of the assessment team such as not providing or hiding the needed information, misleading the assessment team.

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10.2.2 The CAB shall not provide any service(s) within the suspended scope neither by using AAA accreditation symbol on test report/ certificate or by subcontracting the suspended test/inspection to another accredited CAB.

10.2.3 Reinstatement of suspension can take place after the CAB has taken corrective actions to eliminate the matter of suspension within six months from the date of suspension.

10.2.4 AAA may require to conduct on-site visit to verify the corrective actions taken by the CB before lifting the suspension

### **10.3 Reduction of Accreditation Scope**

10.3.1 AAA shall make decisions to reduce the scope of accreditation of the CAB to exclude those parts where the CAB has persistently failed to meet the requirements for accreditation, including competence, or voluntarily reduced upon an official request received from the CAB.

### **10.4 Withdrawal of Accreditation Scope**

10.4.1 The accreditation of CAB may withdraw if it involves in situations that include, but are not limited to the following:

10.4.1.1 Failure in taking corrective action(s) to eliminate the matter of suspension within six months from the date of suspension.

10.4.1.2 In case of unavailability to lift the voluntary suspension within the 6 months from date of suspension

10.4.1.3 There is evidence of fraudulent behavior, or the CAB intentionally provides false information or conceals information.

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10.4.1.4 Total collapse in implementation of accreditation criteria that affect the quality of work.

10.4.1.5 Voluntarily withdrawn upon an official request received from the CAB 3 months prior to the scheduled assessment

**10.5 Actions to be take once Accreditation is Suspended/ Reduced or Withdrawn:**

10.5.1 All instances of suspension, reduction and withdrawal of accreditation will publicized by AAA, including but not limited to notices placed on AAA website.

10.5.2 The CAB shall acts as follows in case of suspension:

a) Shall not provide any service(s) within the suspended scope neither by using AAA accreditation symbol on test report/ certificate or by subcontracting the suspended test/inspection to another accredited CAB

b) Inform the persons/entities requesting activities, services, tests, exams, calibrations, production of reference materials, proficiency testing providers, with which it is in contact in that period of the withdrawal

c) discontinue immediately with no delay the use of all presentations and advertising that contains any reference to that terminated scope of accreditation

10.5.3 The CAB shall acts as follows in case of withdrawal:

a) Stop immediately the issue of any test report/ certificates bearing the AAA mark and any other references to accreditation or form of publicity using accreditation;

b) Stop all advertising promotions or publications of the fact of Accreditation;

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c) Must take any steps reasonably required by AAA to notify staff, customers, and suppliers about the withdrawal of accreditation.

10.5.4 In case of reduction, the CAB shall stop all advertising promotions or publications of the fact of Accreditation

## **11. Notification of Change**

11.1 The CAB shall inform AAA, without delay, of significant changes relevant to its accreditation, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to:

- a) its legal, commercial, ownership or organizational status,
- b) the organization, top management and key personnel,
- c) resources and premises,
- d) scope of accreditation, and
- e) Other such matters that may affect the ability of the CAB to fulfill requirements for accreditation.

## **12. Cooperation with AAA**

12.1 The CAB shall provide AAA and its representatives and assessors the necessary assistance, cooperation and access to relevant areas of CAB for witnessing of conformity assessment activities and to undertake any reasonable check to verify the capability and competence of the CAB including preparation, packaging and dispatch of test items, samples or other items needed by AAA for verification purposes.

## **13. Health & Safety**

13.1 The CAB shall ensure that AAA's employees and agents, when attending the

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CAB's or its clients' sites for assessment purposes, are provided such personal protective equipment as may be necessary to reduce risks to an acceptable level and meet any applicable legal requirements.

- 13.2 The CAB shall accept the responsibility for the safety of AAA staff and assessors in conducting activities related to accreditation, and provide all relevant safety or protective clothing or equipment and disclosing to them any hazards.

#### **14. Liability**

- 14.1 AAA shall not be responsible for any Losses directly or indirectly suffered by the CAB, Its clients or any third party arising from any event that may result during the validity of the Accreditation application/agreement.
- 14.2 The CAB acknowledges that no employee or agent of AAA owes any personal duty of care to it and that it shall not be entitled to bring any claim against any person other than AAA arising out of or in connection with the Accreditation application/agreement.
- 14.3 AAA shall not perform any duties or services in respect of the CAB after the date of termination of the Accreditation agreement.

#### **15. Indemnity**

- 15.1 The CAB shall indemnify AAA and its staff lead assessors/external lead assessors/technical assessors/experts/visiting representatives, escorts and observers... etc from and against all expenses, losses, damages and costs that AAA may sustain or incur as a result directly or indirectly of any loss or damage to any property or injury or death of any person caused by negligent act or omission or willful misconduct by the CAB in connection with accreditation activities.

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## 16. CAB Obligations

- 16.1 The CAB acknowledges and agrees to abide and sustain full compliance with the Relevant accreditation criteria, Accreditation requirements and Guidelines issued by AAA and any Relevant Mandatory and Guidance Documents issued by the international/ Recognition Bodies.
- 16.2 The CAB is required to frequently visit the AAA's website: [www.aaa-accreditation.org](http://www.aaa-accreditation.org) for the latest updates,
- 16.3 To inform AAA, without delay, of significant changes relevant to its accreditation, in any aspect of its status or operation relating to:
  - A. its legal, commercial, ownership or organizational status,
  - B. the organization, top management and key personnel,
  - C. resources, premises and methods,
  - D. scope of accreditation, and
  - E. Other such matters that may affect the ability of the CAB to fulfill requirements for accreditation.
- 16.4 To provide AAA with all needed documentation information as listed in the accreditation application
- 16.5 To claim accreditation only with respect to the scope for which it has been granted accreditation,
- 16.6 To commit to follow AAA's requirements for the use of the accreditation symbol,
- 16.7 CAB is committed to fulfill continually the requirements of accreditation scope for which accreditation is sought or granted and to commit to provide evidence of fulfillment. This includes agreement to adapt to changes in the requirements for accreditation,

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- 16.8 To provide AAA with clear and valid reasons for the objection to any member of the Assessment Personnel in writing within three working days of receipt of the notification of Assessment.
- 16.9 To arrange the witnessing of conformity assessment services when requested by AAA,
- 16.10 The CAB is obliged to comply with AAA Fees requirement available at website, knowing that all fees are non- refundable.
- 16.11 In case AAA could not provide the service after the fees being paid, or if there is change in the CAB's circumstances after paying the fees; the CAB can request a refund of these fees in writing with a justification, accordingly the authority of AAA will decide upon the refund of the transferred fees.
- 16.12 In case the CAB delays to conform the assessment plan on defined time; all expenses, such as, but not limited to, travel tickets, accommodations and accreditation fees of the visit shall be paid in full.
- 16.13 To have, where applicable, legally enforceable arrangements with their clients that commit the clients to provide, on request, access to AAA's assessment teams to assess the CAB's performance carrying out conformity assessment activities at the client's site,
- 16.14 To assist in the investigation and resolution of any complaints made by third-parties about the CAB's accredited activities, and
- 16.15 Upon suspension or reduction of its accreditation, the CAB shall discontinue immediately with no delay the use of all presentations and advertising that contains any reference to that terminated scope of accreditation
- 16.16 The CAB shall not cede, assign or in any way transfer its accreditation to another party and such status shall not extend to the franchisee or franchisor of the CAB

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## 17. AAA Obligations

- 17.1 AAA shall carry out accreditation services consistently in accordance with the relevant International/ National standards and Regulations, Guidelines, Requirements, AAA Requirements and avail suitable Personnel to its accreditation service.
- 17.2 In the event that accreditation has been granted, accreditation Certificate including the scope shall be issued to the CAB.
- 17.3 AAA shall publish on its website ([www.aaa-accreditation.org](http://www.aaa-accreditation.org)), on a regular basis, the status of accredited CABs.
- 17.4 AAA shall publish all updated documents on its website: [www.aaa-accreditation.org](http://www.aaa-accreditation.org) and will notify the CABs of any changes to those documents.
- 17.5 AAA shall only consider objections in writing by CAB to any member of assessment Personnel due to conflict of interest in respect of such member with a clear and valid reasons for the objection within five working days.
- 17.6 AAA shall notify the Customer how continuing conformity with the requirements for Accreditation will be monitored in order that it may maintain Accreditation. The frequency of monitoring will be determined by AAA in accordance with AAA published documents and will depend on the scope and scale of the Accreditation. In addition to the planned assessment program, AAA reserves the right to carry out extraordinary visits at any time during the accreditation cycle other than those predetermined as it may require.

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