

Navigating the NATA accreditation maze



NAVIGATING THE NATA ACCREDITATION MAZE

So you've decided to go down the path of NATA accreditation and you're probably wondering where you should start.

That's why we've put together this guide. It will give you an idea of the steps you need to make the process as smooth as possible and navigate through the 'wall' of NATA documentation.

First of all, we're going to assume that you have a quality system in place and you've read the requirements of the Standard that's relevant to your business.

If you haven't sorted out your quality system, don't worry!

Start by browsing through our [Blog](#) and [Resources](#) pages on our website. We have plenty of information you can access so you won't be left floundering.

Head to the [NATA website](#) and hover over the Accreditation section on the toolbar. You'll see that on the left there's information about accreditation. On the right under the heading 'Standards' are the standards for which NATA grants accreditation.

Choose the one that's relevant to you – we'll use [Testing and Calibration ISO/IEC 17025](#) as an example. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you'll find the NATA Accreditation Criteria (or NAC) packages - this is just the first of many acronyms!

You'll see that there are 11 buttons linking to publications relating to various industry sectors. Not sure which sector you're in? You'll need to check the 'service descriptors' (that's NATA's list of the types of tests and calibrations typically performed by labs) to be certain but here's a very brief summary of each one:

Agribusiness

- Analysis of seeds
- Analysis of physical and nutritional characteristics of foods
- Plant biology
- Plant health diagnostics
- Shipping analysis of grains, seeds, cereals and legumes
- Analysis of agricultural products for microorganisms, residues and contaminants
- Detection, characterisation and/or quantification of nucleic acids in agricultural products
- Molecular Bioinformatic analysis and interpretation in agricultural products

Animal Health

- Veterinary testing
- Analysis of animal tissues for agricultural residues, microorganisms and molecular analysis

Calibration

- Laboratories performing calibration of equipment

Environment

- Analysis of waters, soils, sediments, sludges and air for chemical, microbiological contaminants and ionising radiation
- Asbestos
- Organic fibres
- Respirable quartz
- Respirable and Inhalable dusts
- Atmospheric pollution monitoring
- Ecotoxicology studies
- Meteorological monitoring

Food and Beverages

- Foods and beverages, including drinking waters
- Pesticides, fungicides and rodenticides
- Pharmaceutical residues and contaminants
- Meat and fish species testing
- Shelf life tests

Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Media Products

- Microbiology media
- Cosmetics, perfumes and essential oils
- Human and veterinary medicines including vaccines
- Medical devices
- Products containing human cells or tissues
- Biological materials intended for veterinary use

Human testing for Workplace monitoring and/or community screening

- Workplace monitoring for chemical and biological hazards
- Monitoring for biomarkers

Infrastructure and Asset Integrity

- Geotechnical and civil construction materials
- Lifting equipment
- Non-destructive testing
- Air control equipment
- Acoustic and vibration monitoring
- Pressure testing
- Evaluation of structures and equipment
- High voltage / power equipment and components

Legal

- Forensic Science
- Sports drugs and drug metabolites
- Medico legal drug testing
- Monitoring of animals for drugs, metabolites and other substances
- Genetic analysis (parentage testing)
- Chemical analysis for contamination of products used in animal husbandry

Manufactured Goods

- Performance testing of manufactured goods
- Software testing
- Performance evaluation of engine systems
- Products and appliances connected to the water supply
- Testing of gaming machines and gaming systems

Materials Testing

- Gases and aerosols
- Agricultural products and treatment materials
- Fuels and lubricants
- Bitumens
- Cements
- Coal, coke and charcoal
- Fats, oils and waxes
- Metals and alloys
- Ores and minerals
- Polymers
- Reagents
- Explosives
- Ceramics

We'll use the [Agribusiness folder](#) as an example.

If you're a lab working in Agribusiness, NATA designates you as being in the bigger Life Sciences Sector. We know, maybe you don't feel like you fit into Life Sciences because you are a lab testing for nutritional analysis of foods, but that's just the way it is in NATA's world!

Click on the **General NATA documents** arrow to find the *NATA Rules*, *Privacy Policy* and information about NATA and accreditation. The *Charter of Service* gives an indication of timeframes that clients can expect from NATA in its service delivery. These are informative only, they're not accreditation criteria.

The **NATA Rules** document is an important one. As well as listing the regulations NATA must adhere to, it includes details of your rights and obligations as a NATA member. There's a series of schedules including what makes up the NATA endorsement (it's not just the logo) and how you can use the NATA logo and endorsement.

The **General Accreditation Criteria** set has several useful documents including *Responsibilities of Authorised Representatives*, the *Proficiency Testing Policy* and *Metrological Traceability Policy*.

This is also where you'll find the **ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Standard Application Document** which also has the (somewhat unfortunate) acronym SAD. This document will provide you with further criteria for accreditation that are set by NATA and recommendations from the standard.

Specific Accreditation Criteria is exactly that – more detailed information on requirements for specific testing areas. The most important document here would be the **Life Sciences ISO/IEC 17025 Appendix**. It contains further requirements for accreditation for all Agribusiness labs. If you're in a different industry sector, as defined by NATA, then you will probably have a different ISO/IEC 17025 Appendix that applies to your lab.

General Accreditation Guidance documents include documents that are not mandatory. These documents provide guidance on topics such as equipment calibration and validation and verification of quantitative and qualitative test methods.

Specific Accreditation Guidance contains the detailed service descriptors for the sector. This is where you can check which industry sector your business falls into. Yes, we know it's at the end and is probably the first document you should look at. But that's just the way it is in NATA's world!

The **General Accreditation Forms** are for changes to your Scope of Accreditation, updating details for your lab and the **ISO/IEC 17025 Assessment Worksheet**. You don't have to fill in the ISO/IEC Assessment Worksheet, but it can be useful if you want to do your own gap analysis.

The General Accreditation Criteria and Specific Accreditation Criteria contain mandatory accreditation information. These are the things that must be satisfied in order to obtain accreditation. The documents you find under the General Accreditation Guidance and the Specific Accreditation Guidance are just recommendations.

If you've reached this point and it all sounds too hard... **we can help!**

We can carry out a gap analysis or audit of your system so that your assessment team will see the very best version of your system.

Our range of [training courses](#) will support you and your staff to ensure that things like your measurement uncertainty, traceability, internal audit and root cause analysis skills are up to scratch.

Plus, we can be there on assessment day to support your team and, if necessary, to advocate on your behalf.

Contact Maree on 0411 540 709, email info@masmanagementsystems.com.au to arrange a confidential discussion.

Remember you don't have to do this alone!



NATA ACCREDITATION PROCESS

STEP 1: ADVISORY VISIT

The advisory is a non-technical visit to identify any significant gaps in your organisation's accreditation requirements. It's done by a NATA Lead Assessor before the application.



STEP 2: APPLICATION

You'll need to submit an application form and pay the fee to progress through the accreditation process. You'll also need to nominate an official contact known as the Authorised Representative.



STEP 3: ASSESSMENT

The assessment is carried out by a NATA Lead Assessor and at least one Technical Assessor. This is a comprehensive process, examining documents and records against the relevant Standard and NATA requirements.



STEP 4: GRANTING ACCREDITATION

Once all requirements have been met, accreditation is granted by the NATA CEO following a recommendation by the relevant Accreditation Advisory Committee. **CONGRATULATIONS!!**




STEP 5: MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

Further assessments are carried out at regular intervals to ensure continued compliance with accreditation requirements.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE!

This may sound daunting but we can be with you every step of the way! Contact MAS Management Systems to find out how we can help make your accreditation journey as stress free as possible.

 0411 540 709

 INFO@MASMANAGEMENTSYSTEMS.COM.AU

WWW.MASMANAGEMENTSYSTEMS.COM.AU

NATA ACCREDITATION PROCESS

A helpful guide from MAS Management Systems



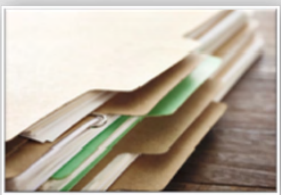
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DECISION TO PURSUE NATA ACCREDITATION



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GAP ANALYSIS



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DEVELOP DOCUMENTS AND SYSTEMS



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NATA ENQUIRY STAGE



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COMPLETE PRE-ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS



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NATA ADVISORY VISIT



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NATA INITIAL ASSESSMENT



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ADDRESS CONDITIONS FOR ACCREDITATION

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ACCREDITATION GRANTED

CONGRATULATIONS!

This can be a daunting process but we can be with you every step of the way!
Email info@masmanagementsystems.com.au or call Maree on 0411 540 709