

Proficiency Testing Programs

FAQ

This FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet provides general information about our Proficiency Testing Programs.

Do the programs meet NATA requirements ?

All our proficiency testing programs are designed to meet a laboratory's Quality Assurance Activities (QAA) needs of Construction Materials Testing laboratories NATA accredited to ISO/IEC 17025.

We are also hold NATA accredited to conduct proficiency testing programs to ISO/IEC 17043.

How experienced are the staff ?

Our staff offer friendly service and are take pride in satisfying client requests. All staff have over ten years of experience in the construction materials testing industry. Should you have any questions we would be pleased to offer assistance. Please see our website for contact details.

What is the aim of the program ?

The proficiency program helps meet a laboratory's obligation towards meeting ISO/IEC 17025 requirements in relation to proficiency testing. In addition proficiency testing outcomes can also be used to satisfy other NATA accreditation requirements e.g.

- Infrequently performed tests
- Staff competency
- Staff training

The aim of the program is to statistically compare each participant's performance against all other participants to provide a **robust** measure of their competency relative to all other participants. The program provides feedback and confidence to participants and the construction industry regarding the competency of laboratories to perform these tests.

Proficiency testing is an important part of a laboratory's overall quality assurance program.

How often are the programs run ?

Each program conducted is run on a regular basis usually annually. Please consult our proficiency testing program schedule located on our website for when a program is to be run next.

What test methods can be used ?

Each participant is supplied with detailed program instructions and a result log sheet. Testing is to be conducted to the nominated Australian test method. The most current issue of the test method should be used.

Equivalent test methods may be used but it up to each participant to confirm that any substituted method is indeed equivalent otherwise performance in the program could be compromised.

Who can participate ?

Both NATA accredited and non-accredited laboratories may apply for the program. Those facilities seeking to add an additional test to their scope of accreditation may also apply.

What are robust statistics ?

All our programs use “Robust Statistics”. Robust statistics ensures that ‘outlier results’ do not affect the overall program outcome. Further details can be found in “Participant Guide” on our website under publications.

How confidential are our results ?

Each participant in a proficiency program is assigned a unique code that enables anonymity to be maintained. Further details can be found in “Participant Guide” on our website under publications.

Can other test methods be used?

Other methods that are technically equivalent may be used. The responsibility for determining if an alternative method is equivalent is up to the participant. Significantly different results from using another method may result in the test results being rejected or noted as an outlier in the program.

What fees are applicable?

The proficiency program fees are generally significantly less than the cost of similar programs. Fees are based on a per site bases (i.e. Laboratory, Annex Laboratory, Mobile Laboratory etc). A range of discounts are available. Fees are subject to change so please contact us for the current fee or you can find it on the proficiency program order form available from our website. All fees include GST.

What happens to the results ?

A z-score summary sheet containing the statistical outcome is issued to all participants a few weeks following receipt of all participant results. This allows early feedback and an opportunity for laboratories to implement any corrective actions should this be needed.

A final report covering the proficiency program will be issued approximately four to six weeks after the program completion date. This provides a technical feedback and other information regarding the conduct of the program. Dates can be found on the application form. A hard copy of the report is posted to participants and a pdf version available from the LabSmart Services web site.

Should you have a NATA assessment prior to the issue of the final report please contact use to arrange a summary sheet.

Can LabSmart help with outliers?

Our commitment does not stop at the issue of the final proficiency program report!

Program reports are written to offer as much technical feedback as possible to assist laboratories who wish to improve by addressing any performance issues.

In addition should you have any questions about the program we are happy to assist free of charge.

We save a number of samples from each program to assist laboratories who obtained one or more outliers in a program. Please contact us should you require an additional sample. A small fee is charged to cover storage, handling and postage. We are happy to process your additional results free of charge.

What if I miss a program?

Should you miss a program or need to follow up on a corrective action request contact use to determine if we have retained a spare sample. We are happy to provide samples after a program at the same cost as the program. A supplementary report with the same statistical analysis is provided plus a copy of the original program report containing all the technical feedback. It satisfies all the requirements of participation in a proficiency program.

NATA want evidence of participation

Just contact us and we will supply a statement regarding your participation.

Where do I find more information?

More information is available from our website under publications. In particular detailed information regarding how proficiency programs are conducted can be found in the publication "Participants Guide". Participants should also be aware of the publication "Terms and Conditions".

How do I apply?

Please contact us for a registration form or download one from our website.

Publication & Contact Details

Please check www.labsmartservices.com.au for the most current version of documents and LabSmart Services contact details.

Thank you for finding out more about LabSmart Services proficiency program!