Overview of Accreditation in the United States

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Topics

• Background on Laboratory Accreditation

• Government Involvement

• Accreditation Systems of Other Types of Conformity Assessment Bodies
Background

• Sector-specific lab accreditation programs go back 60+ years
• National lab accreditation programs started in the 1970’s
• NIST has identified:
  – Over 30 federal government programs
  – Over 50 state and local government programs
  – Over 20 professional/trade association programs
• Estimated to be over 150 lab accreditation programs
Sector-specific Programs

• Government (all levels)
  – environmental
  – medical
  – food safety
  – animal health
  – calibration
  – firearms
  – manure
  – etc.

• Private-sector
  – automotive
  – building materials
  – environmental
  – medical
  – forensic science
  – industrial hygiene
  – steel construction
  – solar equipment
  – safety equipment
  – kitchen cabinets
Government Programs

- Serve specific regulatory needs for health, safety, and environmental issues

- Some agencies recognize accreditation by others (NRC, DOD, DOE, DOJ, FCC, EPA)

- Some agencies are considering how accreditation can be used to support their programs (USDA, FDA)
Government Acronyms Used

DOD – Department of Defense
DOE – Department of Energy
DOJ – Department of Justice
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
FCC – Federal Communications Commission
FDA – Food and Drug Administration
NRC – Nuclear Regulatory Commission
USDA – US Department of Agriculture
Last 30+ Years

- National bodies intended to provide national and international recognition:
  - NVLAP, established in 1976
  - A2LA, established in 1978
  - Other bodies have emerged during the late 1990’s
- Most sector-specific programs have not been replaced by these national bodies
- Most of these do not use ISO/IEC standards
- NACLA with NIST is trying to coordinate for last 10+ years
About 4000 ISO/IEC 17025 Accreditations in USA as of February 15, 2007
ILAC MRA Signatories

A2LA – American Association for Laboratory Accreditation

ACLASS – Assured Calibration Laboratory Accreditation System Services

IAS – International Accreditation Services

NVLAP – National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program
Accreditation of Product Certification Bodies

• ANSI is the leader
• IAS and A2LA have similar programs
• Standards Council of Canada also accredits US-based product certification bodies
• All operating in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011
• No national coordination yet
• Over 40 accreditations
Accreditation of Inspection Bodies

• IAS is the leader
• A2LA has a similar program
• Both are signatories to the APLAC MRA
• No national coordination yet
• Over 60 accreditations
Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies

- ANAB is the sole US-based operator in the USA
- Operates in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011
- Internationally recognized in IAF and IAAC MLAs
- Over 30 accredited certification bodies for ISO 9001, 14001, and a number of industry specific requirements
Accreditation of Personnel Certification Bodies

- NOCA is the leader
- ANSI also has a program
- Both claim to operate to ISO/IEC 17011
- About 140 accreditations
Some Acronyms Used

A2LA – American Association for Laboratory Accreditation
ACLASS – Assured Calibration Lab. Accreditation System Services
AIHA – American Industrial Hygiene Association
ANAB – ANSI/ASQ National Accreditation Board
APLAC – Asia-Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ASQ – American Society for Quality
FQS-I – Forensic Quality Services International
IAF – International Accreditation Forum
IAS – International Accreditation Services
ILAA – International Laboratory Assessment and Accreditation
ILAC – International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
L-A-B – Laboratory Accreditation Bureau
NOCA – National Organization for Competency Assurance
NVLAP – National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program
PRI – Performance Review Institute
For More Information

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