

Flexible Scope Option:

This option is only available to laboratories in the chemical field of testing.

There are circumstances in which a laboratory must perform testing activities in which it can not identify either standard test methods prepared by national, international, and professional standards writing bodies or in-house developed non-standard methods on their fixed scope of accreditation. These situations usually arise when the laboratory requires flexibility in allowing for changes in the matrices within a product area (*flexibility concerning object/matrix/sample*) or with respect to parameters (*flexibility concerning parameters/components/analytes*).

If a laboratory wishes accreditation under the flexible scope option, then the laboratory must:

- Demonstrate that a fixed scope is too restrictive for the work they are currently undertaking and that a flexible scope is justified.
- Demonstrate that it has a management system which will control the flexible scope so that all tests are carried out in accordance with the requirements of accreditation.
- Demonstrate that it has the technical competence and depth of experience to support the granting of a flexible scope.
- Control and maintain on record the modifications and updates of its test methods or development activities. The laboratory must retain the underlying results and other relevant data (normally in the form of a validation and/or verification report) and to make it available for review upon request at any time.
- Periodically provide A2LA with an update on the methods for which they have validated since the last assessment and to regularly update their Proficiency Testing Plan accordingly.
- Have previously demonstrated to A2LA their competence by having been first accredited to a defined set of methods. As such, a transition to the flexible scope option could not occur until their surveillance or first reassessment visit.
- Ensure that such modifications to methodology **not** incorporate new measurement principles that were not previously identified in their scope of accreditation unless the laboratory notifies A2LA via the formal Scope expansion process.