

Memorandum

Date: 3/31/2009
To: A2LA Calibration Assessors
From: Pamela Wright
Re: Summary of Actions from the 2008 MAC meeting as well as other changes made since the meeting

Dear Colleagues,

- A. I hope to see all of you at the 2009 Conclave in April 2009. I wanted to point out that it is especially important that you attend the morning session of the 2009 Measurement Advisory Committee [MAC] meeting as we will be providing formal training for accreditation to Z540.3 by Mr. Stephen Doty who was involved in the writing of the NCSLI Z540.3 Handbook. Once the training is complete you will be identified in our database with the necessary code to allow assignments for accreditation to Z540.3. ***Please note that we will be unable to assign an assessor where the laboratory has requested accreditation to Z540.3 until you have completed this training.***
- B. Based on the discussions at the 2008 Measurement Advisory Committee [MAC] meeting, the following decisions were made regarding the action items from the meeting:
1. **Hardness Uncertainties:** A consensus agreement was reached regarding the minimal uncertainty contributors for hardness. Based on the agreement it was determined that repeatability, resolution and the uncertainty of the block are required in the uncertainty budget. It is important to note that an additional sub-committee was formed to review the issue of requiring the inclusion of both the repeatability and the resolution in the uncertainty analysis. Their proposal is expected in March 2009.
 2. **Humidity Salts:** It was decided that humidity salts “mixed on demand” could be treated like an intrinsic standard with the exception of meeting the proficiency testing portion of *R205: Specific Requirements: Calibration Laboratory Accreditation Program*, section 2.1.2.a. Since the meeting this information was incorporated into R205 as a note in section 2.1.2. The publication of this revision of R205 has been approved by the Criteria Council and is set for public announcement in April.
 3. **Fluke 50-turn coils.** A consensus agreement was reached regarding a laboratory wanting to calibrate their 50-turn coils in-house in order to meet *P102 – A2LA Policy on Measurement Traceability* for coils. It was agreed that a laboratory would be allowed to perform an in-house calibration of their coil as long as they meet the requirements of T9 from *P102* but they would be limited by the range from the original calibration certificate for that coil.

4. Fluke 5700/5720A Artifact Calibration: A consensus agreement was reached that A2LA would accept the artifact calibration with a full calibration being performed every two years. An article regarding this decision is scheduled for publication in the February 2009 issue of *A2LA Today*.
5. Laboratories claiming uncertainties smaller than the National Metrology Institute [NMI]: We would like to remind all assessors to be conscious of the *CIPM Appendix C* (<http://kcdb.bipm.org/appendixC/default.asp>) that details the recognized uncertainties (CMCs) for the NMIs. The uncertainties published in this database are the basis for traceability. A2LA as well as other Accrediting Bodies [ABs] that are signatories to the ILAC arrangement do not recognize “special” calibrations performed by NMIs that report uncertainties lower than those recognized by the CIPM for the purpose of meeting traceability. If a laboratory is reporting lower uncertainties than the NMI for their economy, the assessor will need to include information in the assessment deliverables to document how the laboratory is achieving traceability.
6. Statements of Compliance and “Zero-guardbanding”: It was noted that there is a discrepancy between the R205 that states when making a statement of compliance the uncertainty must be taken into account and allowing the laboratory to essentially take no uncertainty into account due to the common and usual practice in the USA. Upon further investigation into this matter we determined that we would follow *ILAC-G8:1996 Guidelines on Assessment and Reporting of Compliance with Specification* in order to resolve the discrepancy. ILAC-G8, Section 2.1 states:

“These guidelines require that, when a test is carried out to a stated specification and the client or the specification requires a statement of compliance, the report must contain a statement indicating whether the test results show compliance with the specification.”

Furthermore, Section 2.3 states:

“More often, the specification requires a compliance statement in the certificate or report but makes no reference to taking into account the effect of uncertainty on the assessment of compliance. In such cases it may be appropriate for the user to make a judgment of compliance, based on whether the test result is within the specified limits with no account taken of the uncertainty. This is often referred to as *shared risk* since the end-user takes some of the risk that the product may not meet the specification after being tested with an agreed measurement method. In this case there is an implicit assumption that the uncertainty of the agreed measurement method is acceptable and it is important that it can be evaluated when necessary.”

And Section 2.4 states:

“An agreement between the client and the laboratory...may state that uncertainty can be ignored when judging compliance.”

A2LA has determined that, based on this guidance, as long as the laboratory indicates in their contract with their client that their results will be reported without factoring in the effect of uncertainty on the assessment of compliance, and the client agrees to the contract, then the uncertainty does not need to be factored in when making that statement of compliance on the calibration certificate. In effect, both parties share the risk that the results may or may not meet the specification since the uncertainty was not included when the results were determined. If you encounter a situation during an assessment where a laboratory is making a statement of compliance without taking the uncertainty into account, please check their contract to the client to be certain the client agreed to this practice. Only if there is no provision is a deficiency warranted. This has been made effective immediately. A newsletter article is set for publication in the February 2009 edition of *A2LA Today* to alert the laboratories and this has been added to the 2009 Conclave Assessor Committee Meeting agenda for notification to all assessors.

7. As a result of the actions taken at the 2008 Conclave, several documents were updated and recently published. I want to point out that:
 - a. *R218 –Applications for Calibration Scopes of Accreditation* and *R218a – Annex A – General and Editorial Considerations* have replaced *G101 – Mandatory Guidance on Editorial Principles for Calibration Scopes of Accreditation*. Please be sure to familiarize yourselves with these two documents.
 - b. R205- Specific Requirements – Calibration Laboratory Accreditation Program has been updated to include the information on humidity salt calibrations and accreditation to Z540.3. This will be released in April 2009 as soon as Conclave 2009 has commenced and the formal training of our calibration assessor corps has been completed for Z540.3.
- C. Recently there has been some confusion expressed on how to record information regarding quality control [QC]checks that are performed to meet section 5.9 as part of the assessment documentation. Per section 2.3.2 from 500.14.7 of the AIM, “If there are no new PT results to report (all had been incorporated in the database printout) the assessor shall note this in the matrix.” The intention here was in cases where the laboratory only performs some form of QC check to also have our assessors indicate this information on the PT Matrix. Furthermore, it is vitally important that in cases where the laboratory only meets section 5.9 of 17025 for QC checks that the acceptability of their information is documented in the method review matrix under section 5.9 “Quality Checks”.

Finally I would like to thank you all for your generous support of my transition to “Acting” Accreditation Manager. My virtual “door” is always open.

Please let me know if you have any questions.