

	<i>American Association for Laboratory Accreditation</i>	
	G109 – Template for Specifying Accredited Services	Document Revised: July 22, 2014
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Most organizations rely on outside suppliers for their external testing, calibration, inspection or certification services. When it comes to these external services, the trend for purchasing departments is to rely on a dependable third party accreditation program in order to qualify the service providers. This eliminates the need to assess multiple suppliers by the specifying organization, the cost of which may also be prohibitive. In addition, the specifying organization typically lacks the requisite competence to perform the necessary technical assessment.

The global economy, which has shown tremendous growth, has become an integral part of our everyday lives. Because of this, the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Arrangement has become **the third party accreditation program of choice** for eliminating barriers to trade, by providing a global system that ensures reliability in data reporting from any participating lab, worldwide.

For this reason, it is recommended that organizations choose services that are accredited by an accrediting body that is recognized by ILAC, meaning that the Purchase Order should include all four of the following elements in order to ensure that ILAC's comprehensive technical requirements have been met.

These elements are set forth in ISO 17011 and ISO/IEC 17025, which are the fundamental documents to which all Accreditation Bodies [ABs] and laboratories must adhere. These same fundamentals apply when requesting inspection services (ISO/IEC 17020) or certification services (ISO/IEC 17065).

Purchase Order Description Template:

1. The testing (or calibration) laboratory shall be accredited in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*.
2. The testing (or calibration) laboratory's Scope of Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 shall encompass testing (or calibration parameters) of *(list the test methods, parameter or service that is required)* (e.g., Testing: ASTM E54; Calibration: 1 PSI differential pressure with a measurement uncertainty of 0.05 PSI or better).
3. The accreditation of a testing or calibration laboratory shall be issued by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is an ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) Signatory (e.g., A2LA) and that operates in accordance with ISO 17011, *General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*.
4. The testing (or calibration) report or certificate must be endorsed by the recognized Accreditation Body's symbol (or must otherwise indicate accreditation status by a recognized Accreditation Body).

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Reasoning:

Paragraph #1 stipulates that the testing and calibration be accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025.

Paragraph #2 requires that the test or calibration services requested be listed on the service provider’s Scope of Accreditation.

Note: If this requirement is not stated, the laboratory could claim that it is ISO/IEC 17025 “compliant” (i.e., self-declared) even though the provider is not actually accredited for the test, calibration, or service requested. This is not to imply that a self-declared “accredited” organization is not technically competent or in compliance, but it should not be necessary for the customer to vet (assess) that organization if they are accredited by a recognized Accreditation Body. .

Paragraph #3 contains two important stipulations: [1] that the laboratory used be accredited to ISO/IEC 17025, and [2] that the Accreditation Body (AB) be an ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signatory. Without this paragraph, the laboratory could be accredited by an AB that has inadequate or misleading credentials.

Note: There are ABs in the USA that claim to be in compliance with ISO 17011 [so-called “self-declared ISO 17011 compliant ABs”]. Some ABs in the United States that offer what equates to "mail-order" accreditation services and never visit the lab to ensure implementation of ISO/IEC 17025 or other requirements, or to verify its staff's technical competence. Holding ILAC MRA signatory status indicates that the AB has been periodically peer-evaluated against the requirements of ISO 17011. This peer evaluation process ensures that ABs meet strict international requirements, thus affording a high level of confidence in the data and test reports produced by their accredited organizations.

Paragraph #4 is required to ensure that the test or calibration performed was consistent with the providing organization’s accredited criteria.

Note: Many organizations offer multiple levels of service at varying costs. Furthermore, the lab may meet the requirements for the first three elements of the template, but deliver a service not covered under their accredited services.

For more information about the ILAC Arrangement visit <http://www.ilac.org>.

Please contact Phil Smith, A2LA Director of Public Affairs, if you have any questions:

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Document Revision History

Date	Description
6/14/12	Initial Issue of Document
6/18/12	Changed “must” to “should” in third paragraph
7/22/14	Reworded introduction to apply to any type of service and clarified that the template can also be used for other types of services (e.g., inspection, certification).