

Accreditation of Medical Laboratories

The greatest challenge of today is the successful provision of health and social care. With the expanding global population growth and increased life expectancy, the need to provide reassuring, consistent and cost-effective health and social care will only grow in its magnitude and complexity.

The health and social care sector is not unique in its goal of striving to deliver a balance of quality, economic, social and environmental needs, ultimately aiming for excellence. Health and social care excellence is driven by the need to provide confidence in the delivery of a competent service to patients, families and regulators.

Accreditation within the health and social care sector supports this assurance. It provides an essential tool for healthcare providers to demonstrate that they have undergone a rigorous process to ensure that their patients consistently receive high quality services delivered by competent staff working in safe environments.

What is accreditation of medical laboratories?

Accreditation is a tool to demonstrate the competence of medical laboratories and ensure the delivery of timely, accurate and reliable results.

What are the assessment criteria for accreditation of medical laboratories?

The laboratory must meet the requirements of *ISO 15189*: Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence and PAB specific technical requirements.

What are the benefits of accreditation?

For Healthcare Regulators

Accreditation can be used as a tool to support the commissioning or specification of medical laboratory services that are technically competent, safe and reliable, and that continually improve the experience for patients by:

- providing an independent assurance of quality and safety that supports world-class decisions on how to deliver better care and value for patients;
- providing a mechanism for measuring quality improvement;
- supporting consistency in the quality of care; and
- encouraging innovation.

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For Patients

Accreditation requires that the laboratory assesses the value and relevance of the testing in relation to the patient's clinical management and needs. It demonstrates that medical laboratories comply with an international standard, confirming that:

- there is consistency in the quality of care;
- the service has up-to-date-technologies and its procedures and techniques reflect current best practices; and
- staff providing the service are competent to undertake the tasks they perform.

For Medical Laboratories

Accreditation provides proof that a laboratory complies with best practices. It also offers authoritative assurance of the technical competence of a laboratory to undertake specified analysis or measurements according to validated methods. Accreditation:

- provides an opportunity for an external and independent assessment (perspectives) on) of the laboratory's (practice) procedures;
- can prevent the unnecessary duplication of information gathering on performance often required by regulatory bodies;
- encourages the sharing of best practices;
- stimulates innovation;
- reduces risks; and
- provides international recognition.

International Recognition

Through a system of international agreements, accredited laboratories receive a form of international recognition which allows their data to be more readily accepted in overseas markets. Such international agreements, called mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), are crucial in enabling test data to be accepted between different economies. In effect, each partner in such an MRA recognizes the other partner's accredited laboratories as if they themselves had undertaken the accreditation of the other partner's laboratories.

Source: www.ilac.org



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