



Specifying accreditation as part of COVID-19 testing

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As economies begin to consider lifting travel restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic immigration agencies and border force regulators may be considering the need for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) testing as part of traveller screening protocols.

Specifying accreditation of the testing laboratory as one of the requirements will help ensure the competence and capability of the testing laboratory and the reliability of the results thereby supporting those making decisions in relation to the development, implementation and outcomes of screening protocols. Accreditation from accreditation bodies that are signatories to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement will underpin acceptance of test results internationally.

Many regulators are already using accreditation effectively to support their regulatory and policy objectives in areas of national interest including health <https://publicsectorassurance.org/topic-areas/healthcare/> and trade and are therefore familiar with specifying accreditation. For those not previously involved in this process, the following are some key points that should be considered to ensure the testing is carried out in a laboratory that has been assessed and found to be competent to carry out SARS-CoV-2 testing.



1. The laboratory shall be accredited in accordance with the requirements of *ISO 15189 Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence*.
2. The testing laboratory's scope of accreditation shall include SARS-CoV-2 testing.
3. The accreditation of a medical laboratory shall be issued by an accreditation body, operating in accordance with *ISO/IEC 17011, General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies* and signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement.



Laboratories involved in this testing may be using commercially produced test kits or fully validated in-house test procedures. In some economies, there may be government/regulatory requirements in relation to the testing protocols and/or the need for accreditation.

The contact details for laboratories accredited to ISO 15189 for SARS-CoV-2 testing are available from the on-line directories of the accreditation bodies that are signatories to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement and accessible from <https://ilac.org/signatory-search/>

CONTACT
The ILAC Secretariat
PO Box 7507 Silverwater
NSW 2128 Australia

Phone: + 61 2 9736 83 74
Email: ilac@nata.com.au

Website: www.ilac.org
Twitter: @ILAC_official
YouTube: IAFandILAC