



Purpose

This AASHTO Accreditation Program (AAP) Policy and Guidance document is intended to describe various acceptable and unacceptable situations for staffing for an AASHTO Accredited laboratory and how those staff members contribute to the quality management system (QMS).

Policy

1. This policy and guidance document supplements the policy from Section 4 of the [Procedures Manual for the AASHTO Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories](#). For multisite situations that are described in this document, refer to [AASHTO Accreditation Policy and Guidance on Multisite Personnel](#) for more details on how to have your situation considered by the AAP.
2. The standard acceptable staffing situation for an AASHTO Accredited laboratory is one in which the technical direction, management, and testing is conducted by full-time, dedicated employees of the laboratory at the accredited laboratory location. Field technicians are managed and dispatched from the accredited laboratory location, and their equipment is owned by the laboratory location and managed through that location's QMS.
3. Alternative situations shall be documented, and the documentation shall be submitted to the AAP to determine if the arrangement is suitable for the laboratory to maintain AASHTO Accreditation. Considerations include, but are not limited to, responsibilities for QMS implementation, management control of the operations, and effectiveness of the arrangement to result in quality testing and conformance of AAP requirements. The effectiveness is evaluated by assessments, proficiency sample testing, and may include out-of-sequence assessments or other methods of evaluation.
4. Falsification or duplication of proficiency sample data or other QMS documentation or any other ethical concerns will result in rejection of an alternative situation even if the situation would otherwise be acceptable.

Guidance

1. The following alternative situations have been determined to be acceptable:
 - 1.1. Governmental laboratories that have been subjected to hiring freezes or are required to use full-time, dedicated, contracted staffing to fulfill technician duties may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation if the management and technical direction is provided by full-time employees of the agency, the agencies are in charge of the implementation of the laboratory's QMS, and the situation has been proven to be effective through satisfactory adherence to the AAP requirements. These situations are not the same as subcontracting, which involves the entire organization filling the laboratory role.
 - 1.2. Laboratories that are staffed by technicians who work for their local union may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation if the laboratory-staffed Technical Director and management are responsible for the implementation of the laboratory's QMS and the situation has

been proven to be effective through satisfactory adherence to the AAP requirements.

- 1.3. Laboratories that hire a contractor or consultant to implement certain aspects of the QMS such as technician training, technician competency evaluations, internal audits, and equipment checks, standardization, and calibration, the laboratory may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation if the situation has been proven to be effective through satisfactory adherence to the AAP requirements.
- 1.4. Laboratories that are only carrying out field testing in which the technical direction, management, equipment management, QMS implementation, and deployment of the field technicians are carried out at the laboratory's location seeking accreditation may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation.
- 1.5. Laboratories that maintain several locations within a 100-mile radius with laboratory and field technician deployment based on project assignments may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation if the situation has been proven to be effective through satisfactory adherence to the AAP requirements and each laboratory location is normally staffed and operational as a testing laboratory or field-testing operation.
- 1.6. Seasonal laboratories may qualify for AASHTO Accreditation if the situation has been proven to be effective through satisfactory adherence to the AAP requirements. However, seasonal interns are not to be assigned to testing on projects that require accreditation unless they maintain the required certifications.

2. The following alternative situations have been determined to be unacceptable:
 - 2.1. Laboratories who have hired subcontractors to perform testing on their behalf cannot maintain accreditation for the testing conducted by subcontractors.
 - 2.2. Laboratories that use a consultant to carry out duties of a Professional Engineer (PE) cannot claim that the PE is their Technical Director and cannot use the PE's credentials to qualify for any accreditations requiring technical direction to be provided by a PE.
 - 2.3. Laboratories that use a contractor or consultant to carry out all laboratory activities, including technical direction and management, cannot qualify for accreditation. The contractor or consultant would qualify for accreditation under its own name and not under the name of the company that hired them though.
 - 2.4. Laboratories that hire a contractor or a consultant to occasionally perform testing on their behalf cannot include that testing in the scope of their accreditation, cannot have that testing performed during an assessment by the contractor or consultant, and cannot permit that contractor or consultant to perform testing on proficiency samples.
 - 2.5. Laboratories that hire a contractor or a consultant to maintain and implement its entire QMS cannot qualify for AASHTO Accreditation. Technical direction and management includes quality management, and it cannot be separated from laboratory operations.
 - 2.6. Laboratories that have no technical direction, management, and technicians working at their location and no field technicians managed and deployed from that location cannot maintain AASHTO Accreditation at that location.