ANAB and ASCLD/LAB Merger of Forensic Accreditation Programs

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will this affect our accreditation status?

No. The accreditation status of ASCLD/LAB and ANAB customers remains valid under the respective programs. The ASCLD/LAB program will maintain international recognition as part of ANAB's international recognition.

2. Will my ASCLD/LAB accreditation certificate be reissued (change)?

Your ASCLD/LAB accreditation certificate remains valid. There is no immediate plan to reissue certificate and scope documents. We will standardize the formats of the ANAB and ASCLD/LAB scope documents as we move forward with an integrated program to ensure that forensic service providers and their customer know which services are covered under the accreditation.

3. What happens to my ASCLD/LAB delegate assembly membership?

We will continue to operate the ASCLD/LAB-*International* program as part of ANAB, but the ASCLD/LAB Bylaws and Delegate Assembly no longer exist.

4. Will the assessment costs increase?

We are currently evaluating the fee structures of ANAB and ASCLD/LAB. Our goal is to mesh the two keeping total cost neutral to the customer.

5. We just trained a number of our staff as ASCLD/LAB technical assessors, are you still going to use voluntary technical assessors?

At this time the ASCLD/LAB-*International* program will continue to use volunteer technical assessors from the forensic community.

6. Will our assessment schedule be the same?

Yes. The current assessment and surveillance activity schedules for ASCLD/LAB and ANAB accredited forensic service providers will stay the same.

7. Will you have the same Lead Assessors?

Yes. We will maintain separate ANAB and ASCLD/LAB lead assessor pools until we complete the integration of the two accreditation programs and provide training, then the lead assessor pools will be combined. The ASCLD/LAB part-time staff assessor positions will continue through December and we will complete our transition to contract lead assessors beginning in 2017.

8. Who do I contact with questions regarding our current ASCLD/LAB accreditation?

Use the QualityMatters@ascld-lab.org email address. You don't need to figure out who the question should go to, we will take care of that for you. The email is monitored on weekdays and we will route your question to the proper person for a response.

You can also call the ASCLD/LAB Office at 919-773-2600.

9. Will ASCLD/LAB maintain an office in NC?

Yes, ASCLD/LAB will maintain an office in North Carolina.

10. What happens to the ASCLD/LAB Board of Directors?

The ASCLD/LAB Board of Directors ceased to exist on April 22, 2016. Current ASCLD/LAB Board members all expressed interest in continuing to work with the ASCLD/LAB accreditation programs and have been appointed to the ANAB Forensic Accreditation Council. In order to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, the Council will be comprised of interested parties who will review and advise on recommended changes to and implementation of forensic policy. The Council will not be responsible for making accreditation decisions. Those decisions will be made by appropriate ANAB staff.

11. Is the name going to change? What about the accreditation symbol?

While we are now part of ANAB, at this time we are keeping the ASCLD/LAB name, acronym, logo, accreditation symbol and QualityMatters trademark. You are encouraged to continue to use the accreditation symbol for the program (ANAB or ASCLD/LAB-*International*) under which you were accredited. Please review the applicable policy on use of the accreditation symbol.

12. Where does ASCLD/LAB fit in the larger ANAB organization?

ANAB has three Strategic Business Units: management systems accreditation, laboratory-related accreditation (non-forensics) and forensics accreditation. The ANAB and ASCLD/LAB forensic programs will make up the forensics accreditation strategic business unit.

13. Who will be running the forensic accreditation programs?

The forensic management team will include the current ASCLD/LAB and ANAB management staff. Former ASCLD/LAB Executive Director Pam Bordner has become the Vice President for Forensics of the combined businesses.

14. Will the forensic accreditation programs change?

Yes, but not right away. The combined ASCLD/LAB and ANAB management team will integrate the two programs over the next several months. We will take the best of both programs to develop a single program and increase the level of service that we provide to the forensic community. Once the program revisions are complete, a transition period will be established to give you time to come into conformance with any changes.

15. What policies on measurement uncertainty, measurement traceability, and sampling do we follow?

ANAB accredited customers will continue to follow the current ANAB policies and ASCLD/LAB accredited customers will continue to follow the current ASCLD/LAB policies (this is true for all applicable policies, including the three listed in the question). Once we have established a single set of program requirements, a transition period will be established to allow customers time to come into conformance with any changes.

16. Will we follow the same supplemental requirements?

ANAB accredited customers will continue to follow the current ANAB supplemental requirements and ASCLD/LAB accredited customers will continue to follow the ASCLD/LAB supplemental requirements for the time being. The ASCLD/LAB supplemental requirements for testing laboratories are currently under revision and we will look at combining the best of both programs into a single set of supplemental requirements. Once the revisions are complete, a transition period will be established for all ANAB and ASCLD/LAB accredited forensic testing laboratories to come into conformance with the requirements. The recently released ASCLD/LAB supplemental requirements for calibration laboratories focused on breath alcohol measuring instruments will be reviewed for any needed revisions to maintain consistency with the testing supplemental requirements. Again, a transition period for implementation will be established if necessary.

17. Who will approve supplemental requirements for forensic accreditation programs?

A working group comprised of technical experts and the new ANAB forensic management team will continue drafting revised supplemental requirements for testing laboratories. The draft document will be posted for public comment. Please use this opportunity to provide input and suggest clarification where that is needed. After the public comments have been considered and any additional changes have been completed, the ANAB forensic management team will review, consider and approve the new supplemental requirements. This same process will be used for significant revisions to any supplemental requirements document.

18. What will happen to the current ASCLD/LAB Program Applications, Guidance and Board interpretations?

Those related to the testing program are being reviewed as the supplemental requirements are being revised. The language of the requirements is being modified to eliminate the need for separate interpretations. Our focus is on clearly stating the requirement while not prescribing how the requirement must be met.

19. Will there be new accreditation requirements?

Integration of the ANAB and ASCLD/LAB forensic accreditation programs may result in modifications to improve the combined forensic accreditation programs. Notification of any changes and a transition period to implement the changes will be provided, as appropriate.

20. Will ASCLD/LAB maintain their website?

Yes, we will maintain the ASCLD/LAB website at this point in time. This is another aspect that we will need to integrate as we move forward.

21. Will you use ANAB assessors on teams for laboratories assessed under the current ASCLD/LAB program? Will you use ASCLD/LAB assessors on teams for laboratories assessed under the current ANAB program?

Until we fully integrate the current ASCLD/LAB and ANAB accreditation processes, we will maintain two separate assessor pools. This is because assessors need to be trained in the program that they are assessing. While the assessors in both pools have received ISO/IEC 17025 training, our supplemental requirements and program requirements (e.g., the forms we use and records we retain) are different. Once we have established a single program, we will provide additional training to the assessors so we can combine the assessor pools.

22. Is the assessment cycle still going to be 4 years?

Yes, the maximum length of the assessment cycle will be 4 years. We can conduct a full reassessment sooner than 4 years based on customer needs. Please contact us for a cost estimate.

23. Will ASCLD/LAB (ANAB) still be doing QAS assessments?

Yes. QAS audits will be required for all NDIS participating laboratories during each full assessment. QAS audits can also be scheduled in conjunction with a surveillance visit, extension of scope assessment or as a separate activity. Please contact us for a cost estimate.

24. Will conformance file requirements be the same?

The current requirements for the ANAB and ASCLD/LAB programs will remain in place. Until we integrate the two programs, we will not know what specific changes will take place. We will communicate any changes prior to implementation.

25. Who do I send an ASCLD/LAB Performance Declaration to?

Please continue to submit your ASCLD/LAB Performance Declaration to QualityMatters@ascld-lab.org. We monitor this email account on weekdays for questions, applications for accreditation or scope extension, Performance Declarations, notifications, etc.

26. Who do I notify regarding nonconformities or significant events?

ASCLD/LAB accredited customers should send notifications to the QualityMatters@ascld-lab.org email address. We monitor this email account on weekdays for questions, applications for accreditation or scope extension, Performance Declarations, notifications, etc. ANAB accredited customers will continue to submit through the online portal or email to their Accreditation Manager.

27. Will you post a timeline of events for the transition period on the ASCLD/LAB website? Or send this to the ASCLD/LAB delegate assembly members?

We will post any notifications necessary to communicate with our customers on the ANAB and ASCLD/LAB websites and also notify the primary point of contact(s) for each customer. This is generally the director and/or quality manager.

28. Why did ASCLD/LAB and ANAB merge?

The merger will allow ASCLD/LAB to increase our reach in the forensic community as part of our ongoing commitment to improve the quality of forensic science and strengthen the operation of forensic service providers. By combining the infrastructure and technical expertise of ASCLD/LAB and ANAB, we will be able to provide the forensic community with accreditation to harmonized requirements, which will in turn increase the confidence that the public and forensic service provider customers have in the results being provided to the criminal justice system.

Together, ANAB and ASCLD/LAB will have a stronger presence in the national and international communities as we participate in the development of forensic standards and accreditation policies and procedures.

29. Why was the ASCLD/LAB Delegate Assembly not informed of the merger discussions and provided an opportunity for input?

Both ANAB and ASCLD/LAB are *private* companies. Both organizations followed their respective by-laws and operating agreements to complete the merger. We were also bound by a confidentiality agreement to not disclose details of the proposed transaction or that the discussions were even taking place. Because it was necessary to share confidential business information in order to fully evaluate this strategic business opportunity, confidentiality had to be ensured so as not to impact the ongoing business operations of either company.

30. Will the ASCLD/LAB program of accreditation for calibration laboratories stay within the ANAB forensic accreditation strategic business unit or be merged with the larger calibration program?

The ASCLD/LAB accreditation program for customers calibrating breath alcohol measuring instruments will stay within the forensic accreditation strategic business unit. Eventually, customers accredited to manufacture breath alcohol reference materials will be transitioned to the ANAB program for reference material producers based on ISO Guide 34 (soon to be ISO 17034). Notification of changes, training and a transition period will be provided. Until that transition is complete, ASCLD/LAB will perform all assessment activities necessary to maintain current accreditation.

31. Will program specific training continue?

Currently scheduled training courses for the ANAB and ASCLD/LAB programs will be provided as scheduled. Integration of the two training programs will also occur. Notification of future training opportunities will continue to be provided through email and by posting on both the ASCLD/LAB and ANAB websites.