



Standard Guide for Development of a Directory of Accredited Laboratories by an Accrediting Body¹

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INTRODUCTION

A laboratory accrediting body should develop and publish a directory that provides information on itself and the laboratories that it has accredited. Such information is useful to participating laboratories, users of laboratory services, government regulators, specification writers, and other interested parties.

A directory of accredited laboratories is an important element of the documentation system of an accrediting body. A directory may be useful when negotiating agreements between accrediting bodies or accreditation systems.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides guidance to laboratory accrediting bodies in the development of a directory containing information on laboratories that have been accredited by the body to a standard, such as Guide E 548.

1.2 This guide contains information supplied by established national laboratory accreditation systems and the International Laboratory Accreditation Conference (ILAC).

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

E 548 Guide for General Criteria Used for Evaluating Laboratory Competence²

E 994 Guide for Calibration and Testing Laboratory Accreditation Systems General Requirements for Operation and Recognition²

E 1187 Terminology Relating to Laboratory Accreditation²

E 1224 Guide for Categorizing Fields of Capability for Laboratory Accreditation Purposes²

3. Terminology

3.1 Except as noted, terms used in this guide are found in Terminology E 1187.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *Directory of Accredited Laboratories*—a document or data base containing relevant, accurate, current and complete information on the terms, conditions and scope of accreditation for all laboratories accredited by an accrediting body.

3.2.2 *Scope of Accreditation*—a comprehensive statement of the specific test methods, standards, testing or measurement capabilities for which a laboratory is formally accredited.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide should be useful for an accrediting body in documenting an accreditation system in accordance with Guide E 994.

4.2 This guide provides guidance to accrediting bodies on a means to catalog and disseminate information about accredited laboratories to interested parties.

5. Directory Development

5.1 *Preliminary Considerations*—The following items potentially influence the context and other factors of a directory and should be considered during the development of a directory.

5.1.1 *Users*—identify who would be the intended users.

5.1.2 *Medium*—What media are available and appropriate, for example, on-line electronic bulletin board, hard copy (bound or loose leaf), floppy disc, microfiche, CD-ROM, or some combination of these.

5.1.3 *Updating/Changing*—How the directory information will be maintained current and at what frequency.

5.1.4 *Cost Factors*—How much money is budgeted for maintaining and updating the directory. Should a fee be charged for the directory to recover costs?

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

5.1.5 *Number of Laboratories to be Included*—How large will the directory need to be?

5.1.6 *Content*—Amount of detail necessary and practicable for each entry.

5.1.7 *Future*—Consider whether the accreditation system is growing, declining or static?

5.1.8 *Other Systems*—Is compatibility with other systems important? Obtain and peruse directories of other systems for additional guidance.

5.1.9 *Other Languages*—Will the directory need to be translated into other languages?

5.2 *Information Presentation*:

5.2.1 All information must be presented in a clear, concise manner.

5.2.2 All information should be indexed and cataloged in a logical, easy to use fashion.

5.3 *General Information*—A directory should contain at least the following:

5.3.1 Instructions on how to use the directory.

5.3.2 Definitions of any special terms, acronyms or abbreviations used.

5.3.3 A brief description of the background, operation and requirements of the accrediting body.

5.3.4 General contact information, for example, names, addresses, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail access information for appropriate accrediting body personnel.

5.3.5 Issue date for the directory and all supplements.

5.4 *Laboratory Information*—Each entry for a specific laboratory should contain at least:

5.4.1 Laboratory name.

5.4.2 Address.

5.4.3 Scope of the accreditation granted specifying the actual test methods, or the fields of testing, or other specific descriptors.

5.4.4 Contact person.

5.4.5 Telephone/fax numbers, and e-mail access information.

5.4.6 Effective date of accreditation and expiration date.

5.5 *Additional Information*—Each entry for a specific laboratory may contain additional information to assist the directory's users and the accredited laboratories such as the

type of work the laboratory will accept (for example, in house only, general commercial, etc.).

6. Listing Format

6.1 *Laboratory Information*—Specific laboratory information may be sorted and listed in several different ways. Some examples are:

6.1.1 Alpha/numeric coding.

6.1.2 Alphabetic by laboratory name.

6.1.3 Alphabetic by field of testing.

6.1.4 Alphabetic by location.

6.1.5 Alphabetic by test method.

7. Fields of Testing Classifications

7.1 A classification system that satisfies the unique needs of the accrediting body must be selected.

7.2 *Classification Schemes Currently in Common Use*:

7.2.1 Guide E 1224.

7.2.2 The Harmonized Tariff Schedules.³

7.2.3 Standard Industrial Classification.⁴

7.2.4 Custom categories developed by individual accrediting bodies.

7.3 When selecting a classification scheme, consideration should be given as to whether or not maintaining compatibility with other systems is important.

8. User Feedback

8.1 A mechanism should be established and utilized to gather user feedback and comments about the directory once it has been distributed for use, for example, survey forms, service rating form, periodic polls of users.

9. Keywords

9.1 accreditation; accrediting body; directory; fields of testing; laboratory; testing

³ Available from U.S. International Trade Commission.

⁴ Available from U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

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