

# A2LA today

The Newsletter of the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation

## A2LA Now Accepting “Signature Representations”

By Teresa C. Barnett, A2LA Quality Manager

On February 3, 2011, A2LA finalized and published a new form, *F121 – Request for Acceptance of Signature Representation*. The system described in this form is patterned on the system currently in use at the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. Through use of this system, a constituent of A2LA (such as assessors and accredited/enrolled organizations) may use a code (for example, /john\_doe1969/) to represent their signature on electronic documents. F121 captures the code of their choice and the full signature of the individual authorizing use of this code. A2LA will maintain this signed document on record for all individuals wishing to utilize this system.

Once the form has been completed and submitted to A2LA, the individual may then simply type their authorized code on assessment documents, application & other forms, etc. rather than physically signing and scanning documents, submitting hardcopies of signed documents or importing electronic signatures.

Use of this code is not mandatory, and if an individual has a scanned signature, digital signature, or other system already in use, they may certainly continue to use it. A2LA staff will be providing F121 with application forms and renewal and annual review of accreditation forms. It may also be accessed on the A2LA website through the Document Finder Category “General Forms” and may be completed and submitted to your A2LA Accreditation Officer at any time.

If you have any questions about this optional system or the instructions contained on F121, please contact your A2LA Accreditation Officer directly. ♦

### in this issue...

#### Updates on A2LA:

- A2LA Now Accepting Signature Representations
- New & Updated Documents

#### General Notices & Press Releases:

- Spring 2011 Training Schedule

#### Meeting Summaries:

- FDA Conference on Analytical Methods for Food Testing
- ASTM E30 and AAFS Meetings
- Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research Meeting

#### International Activities:

- IAAC Community Meets at NIST

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# New & Updated Documents

By Teresa Barnett, A2LA Quality Manager

The following documents have been updated within the controlled A2LA management system. All of these documents are available on the A2LA website ([www.A2LA.org](http://www.A2LA.org)) through the “Document Finder” option unless otherwise indicated.

- *R307 – General Requirements: Accreditation of ISO/IEC Guide 65 Product Certification Bodies* was updated on November 5, 2010. (Document Finder Category: General Requirements)
- *R308 – Specific Requirements: Telecommunication Certification Body Accreditation Program* was updated on November 5, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *R202 – Specific Requirements: Automotive EMC Laboratory Accreditation Program (AEMCLAP)* was updated on November 5, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *G106 – Guidance on Scopes of Accreditation for PCBs under the TCB Accreditation Program* was updated on November 5, 2010. (Document Finder Category: A2LA Guidance Documents)
- *C319 – Specific Checklist: Special Inspection Agencies New York City Requirements* is a new document created on November 5, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *R211 – Specific Requirements: Wyoming Storage Tank Remediation Testing Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on November 9, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *P103c – Annex: Policy on Estimating Measurement Uncertainty for Electro-Mechanical Testing Labs* was updated on November 9, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Policies)
- *R216 – Specific Requirements; Veterinary Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on November 9, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *C211 – Specific Checklist: Combined ISO/IEC 17025 and Veterinary Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on November 9, 2010. This checklist is available upon request only.
- *C315 – Specific Checklist: TNI SSAS Provider Accreditation Program* was updated on November 15, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *R303 – General Requirements: TNI Proficiency Testing and SSAS Provider Accreditation Program* was updated on November 15, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C320 – Specific Checklist: Special Inspection Agencies ASTM E329 Requirements* is a new document created on November 5, 2010. This checklist is available upon request only.
- *R205 – Specific Requirements: Calibration Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on November 19, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *P101 – Reference to A2LA Accredited Status-A2LA Advertising Policy* was updated on November 22, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Policies)
- *R205c – Annex to Specific Requirements: Dimensional Testing Parameters on Scopes of Accreditation* was updated on November 22, 2010. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *R102 – Conditions for Accreditation* was updated on January 1, 2011. (Document Finder Category: General Requirements)
- *P106 – Branch System Policy* was updated on January 1, 2011. (Document Finder Category: Policies)
- *C614 – Specific Checklist: ISO 15189:2007 Requirements for Protection of Laboratory Information Systems-Annex B* was updated on January 5, 2011. This checklist is available upon request only.
- *R206 – Specific Requirements: Environmental Testing Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with the 2007 version until July 1, 2011, per the published transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)

- *C205 – Specific Checklist: Combined ISO/IEC 17025 and Environmental Testing Laboratory Accreditation Program Requirements* was updated on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with the 2007 version until July 1, 2011, per the published R206 transition memorandum. This checklist is available upon request only.
- *C224 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 1 – Proficiency Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C225 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 3 – Quality Systems for Asbestos Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with C205f until July 1, 2011 per the published R206 transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C226 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 4 – Quality Systems for Chemical Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with C205c until July 1, 2011 per the published R206 transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C227 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 5 – Quality Systems for Microbiological Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with C205b until July 1, 2011 per the published R206 transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C228 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 6 – Quality Systems for Radiochemical Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with C205e until July 1, 2011 per the published R206 transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *C229 – Specific Checklist: NELAC TNI Standard Module 7 – Quality Systems for Toxicity Testing* is a new document created on January 13, 2011. This document remains in transition with C205d until July 1, 2011 per the published R206 transition memorandum. (Document Finder Category: Specific Checklists)
- *R209 – Specific Requirements: Harris County/City of Houston/Port Authority Geotechnical Engineering Testing Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on January 13, 2011. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *R213 – Specific Requirements: Putting Green Materials Testing Laboratory Accreditation Program* was updated on January 13, 2011. (Document Finder Category: Specific Requirements)
- *F106 – Request for Exception to the Policy on Measurement Traceability* was updated on January 31, 2011. (Document Finder Category: General Forms)
- *F121 – Request for Acceptance of Signature Representation* is a new document created on February 3, 2011. Please refer to the separate article in this issue of *A2LA Today* for more information on use of this form. (Document Finder Category: General Forms)
- *P108 – Technical Consensus Decisions from the Materials Testing Advisory Committee (MTAC)* is a new document created on February 8, 2011. Please refer to the article in the September 2010 issue of *A2LA Today* for more information regarding these consensus items. (Document Finder Category: Policies)
- *P109 – Technical Consensus Decisions from the Measurement Advisory Committee (MAC)* is a new document created on February 15, 2011. Please refer to the article in the September 2010 issue of *A2LA Today* for more information regarding these consensus items. (Document Finder Category: Policies)

If you have any questions about these updates, please contact A2LA at 301 644 3248 or your Accreditation Officer directly. ♦

# Spring 2011 Training Schedule

## Course:

**Title: Introduction to Measurement  
Uncertainty**

- June 6-7, 2011 - Minneapolis, MN  
(\$795.00 non-members,  
\$745.00 members)

**Title: ISO/IEC 17025 and  
Accreditation**

- June 8-10, 2011 - Minneapolis, MN  
(\$995.00 non-members,  
\$945.00 members)

**Title: Assessment of Laboratory  
Competence**

- April 18-22, 2011 - San Francisco, CA  
(\$1595.00 non-members,  
\$1545.00 members)

## Venues:

### April 18-22, 2011

The Westin St. Francis  
335 Powell Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
415 397 7000  
Rate: \$229.00 per Night

### June 6-10, 2011

Minneapolis Marriott  
City Center  
30 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612 349 4000  
Rate: \$180.00 per Night

For additional information, please contact Julie Collins, A2LA Training Program Manager, at 301 644 3235 or [jcollins@A2LA.org](mailto:jcollins@A2LA.org). ♦

## FDA Conference on Analytical Methods for Food Testing

By Peter Unger, A2LA President/CEO

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 2<sup>nd</sup> International Analytical Methods Conference, "An International Forum for Analytical Method Standards and Data Sharing Systems", was held on 8-11 February 2011 in Newport Beach, California.

The conference provided a unique opportunity for public health laboratory scientists and managers, all dedicated to global food safety, to identify common and disparate analytical practices, exchange ideas and establish collaborations to harmonize and integrate analytical food testing principles and practices.

FDA Director, Division of Field Science, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Carl Sciacchitano, stated the four topics of interest for this conference:

Laboratory Accreditation  
Proficiency Testing  
Method Validation  
Data Reporting

Introductory remarks were provided by Mark Roh, Pacific Regional FDA Director. He stated that FDA has the ambitious goal of tripling sample collection and analysis from 2010 (60K) to 2013 (200K) which will require new, more efficient methods and modern regulatory procedures. Dr. Jeffrey Farrar, Associate Commissioner for Food Protection, Office of Foods, Office of Commissioner, FDA, followed. Dr. Farrar summarized the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act of December 2010. He mentioned using "recognized accreditation bodies for foreign laboratories."

Dr. Steven Musser, FDA Director, Office of Regulatory Science, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, emphasized the need for new technology appropriate for food that must consider the entire continuum from sampling to final analysis, must be reproducible and comparable across labs, and must provide a greater level of performance in terms of sensitivity and specificity than is currently available.

Acting in his role as ILAC Chair, A2LA President & CEO, Peter Unger, provided the international perspective on lab accreditation, discussing the benefits for regulators of using the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). The FDA regulatory process will determine how FDA will recognize accreditation and accreditation bodies. However, the ILAC MRA should at least provide a key support tool. Cathy Burns provided FDA's perspective on laboratory accreditation required by the Food Safety Modernization Act. Some of the next steps include determining the universe of accreditation programs, comparing/contrasting requirements, identifying any gaps and then developing a set of accreditation guidelines for accreditation bodies.

There were 118 participants in this year's conference, 23 speakers, 66 FDA employees, one USDA representative and others from the public health authorities of 22 countries (compared to 14 last year) in addition to outside speakers such as AOAC International's Arlene Fox (speaking on method development for both microbiology and chemistry). ♦

# A2LA Attends ASTM E30 Committee Meeting and 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences

*By Karin Athanas, A2LA Accreditation Officer*

In February 2011 A2LA participated in the ASTM E30 committee meetings in Chicago, Illinois and exhibited at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

These two meetings are coordinated to be attended in series to allow for forensic scientists from around the world to attend both and provide their expertise and knowledge to the standards writing and research development processes.

A2LA Accreditation Officer, Karin Athanas, participated as a voting member in the criminalistics and interdisciplinary subcommittees and found all attendees to be well informed and knowledgeable in their given areas of expertise. During the ASTM E30 subcommittee meetings, votes regarding the status of unpublished standards were reviewed and addressed. In each case, changes to the documents were made and a vote was taken to resubmit the documents for review by the subcommittee. The process was very professional and ensured that all comments and concerns made by members were addressed before an ASTM document was approved.

During the ASTM E30 interdisciplinary subcommittee meeting, Ms. Athanas acted as the recording secretary and agreed to fill the position for the 2011 - 2012 year.

Following the ASTM E30 committee meetings, Ms. Athanas remained in Chicago to exhibit at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. While on-site she fielded many questions regarding our forensic programs and was able to provide information and resources for potential new applicants regarding application of ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17020 to a forensic organization, interpretation of the A2LA supplemental documents for forensic organizations and A2LA's ability to offer accreditation in multiple programs.

Through A2LA's mutual recognition agreements with ILAC, APLAC and IAAC for its programs to accredit proficiency testing providers, testing and calibration laboratories (including medical labs), reference material producers and inspection bodies, A2LA is uniquely capable of offering customers a 'one stop shop' to accreditation. Additionally, A2LA is the first accreditation body in the United States to offer internationally recognized accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020 to Crime Scene Units.

The A2LA forensic accreditation program was positively received by all attendees and many individuals were invited to attend and present at the 2011 A2LA Technical Forum and Annual Meeting. Additionally, Ms. Athanas, A2LA recording secretary for the Forensic Examination Advisory Committee (FEAC), met several new potential committee members and has already begun assembling agenda items for the September 2011 meeting.

A2LA will be exhibiting and presenting at 3 more forensic meetings this year:

- Tuesday, March 22, 2011 – Karin Athanas will present “Inspection Body Accreditation for Crime Scene Units” at the Chesapeake Bay Division of the IAI Spring Conference in Cambridge, Maryland.
- August 2011 – A2LA will exhibit at the International Association for Identification (IAI) Educational Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- September 2011 – A2LA will exhibit at the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

All interested parties are encouraged to visit our booth or contact Karin Athanas at [kathanas@A2LA.org](mailto:kathanas@A2LA.org) for additional information. ♦

### Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research Meeting

By Roger Brauning,  
A2LA Biosafety Program Manager

A2LA staff member, Roger Brauning, and A2LA Assessor, Dawn Metter, recently attended the 9th ASM Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research Meeting held 6-9 February 2011 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The keynote address was given by Donald Henderson of the Center for Biosecurity of UPMC, Baltimore, MD. He spoke on the issue of whether the known stocks of smallpox virus should be maintained for research or as a vaccine source or whether it should be destroyed as a further step in mitigating the likelihood of a smallpox recurrence. He indicated that the final decision will be made at the World Health Assembly in May 2011.

Other discussions throughout the conference centered on issues in microbial sciences related to biodefense and bioterrorism and ranged from presentations on the recent advances in analytical techniques used for identification of select agents to new information on preventive modalities, therapeutics, and clinical diagnoses related to biothreat agents. Poster sessions were held each day, allowing A2LA representatives to discuss the subject of accreditation with exhibitors.

The meeting was a beneficial opportunity to renew contacts in the biodefense area and to learn about the issues of concern to the biodefense community. ♦

### The IAAC Community Meets at NIST

By Peter Unger, A2LA President/CEO

The Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) convened meetings of its committees at the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) on 22-25 February 2011. Fifty persons attended.

In addition, a peer evaluator training course was held for senior staff of the North American accreditation body members of IAAC.

The IAAC MLA Group (signatories only) met to consider decisions on signatory status of some IAAC members and applications for signatory status of others. There are currently 16 signatories (including 6 USA accreditation bodies) from 11 countries in the region. IAAC has 30 accreditation body members from 22 countries and 11 stakeholder members.

The IAAC MLA Committee (all members) met to address several issues. Extension of the MLA was discussed as was possible ways to accelerate the process of recognition by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). IAAC's MLA for product certification accreditation appears to be in the final stage of approval by IAF. The Committee reviewed peer evaluators, their performance and training needs. Papers on handling conflict of interest and observers on peer evaluations were discussed.

The IAAC Laboratory and Proficiency Testing Subcommittee met to approve and review progress on several regional proficiency testing programs. The members also discussed activities at the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and proposed revisions to ILAC technical requirements such as measurement traceability. The MOU with the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation was also reviewed.

On the last day, the IAAC Executive Committee met. Numerous administrative and policy matters were addressed. The future of project funding was an important issue discussed as was finding ways of supporting training needs. Future budgets and membership dues were other important topics examined.

Finally, a dinner in remembrance of Bertha Munguia, who made countless contributions to IAAC, was held on Thursday per her wishes. Thornton Wilder perhaps said it best: *"All that we can know about those we have loved and lost is that they would wish us to remember them with a more intensified realization of their reality. What is essential does not die, but clarifies. The highest tribute to the dead is not grief, but gratitude."* ♦

