

AC 15.0 Extensions and Variations

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define the procedures to be followed when an accredited organisation applies for extension of scope or when in case requests for variation(s).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to application for extensions and requests for variations to scope from the accredited conformity assessment bodies (CAB).

3. Responsibilities

The accreditation services manager and division managers are responsible to ensure this procedure is followed and implemented.

4. Procedures

If a CAB is looking to expand its scope of accreditation it is ideally required to file an application for extension of scope at least 3-months before it expects an extension assessment however in some case GAC may accept an application at short notices e.g., in cases when the scope is very common and assessors are available almost immediately.

The CAB is required to fill out the application form AC 2.1, in the application form CAB can mark the extension column and type only the details of scope for which it intends to sought accreditation.

When application for extension is received and after the application for extension of scope activity is adjudged valid and acceptable following the resource review the relevant division manager and or file manager are then responsible to initiate the accreditation process.

An extension assessment shall be planned and carried following the procedure AC 11.0 for assessment techniques.

When a CAB requests for extension of scope for equivalent standards/methods/procedures which accounts same and or similar techniques, equipment, technology, process, thereby depending on case-by-case scenarios GAC may decide to extend the scope on the basis of either of document review technique only, or by deciding any other adequate type of one of the assessment techniques from its procedure AC 11.0. GAC may require the comparison study along with the standards and the assessment team assigned for this task can request for additional records as necessary (e.g., trainings, reports/certificates, measurement uncertainty, PT, calibration data etc. all as applicable to the type of CAB and as per accreditation scheme).

A CAB requesting for variations in the scope of accreditation such as update of standard, procedure or regulation references for their edition/years/versions as applicable should ideally inform GAC 1-month prior to the date of assessment so that the appointed assessment team can take into consideration and make the necessary preparations which may cover the following aspects but not limited to;

- Liaising with GAC for appointment of additional team member or replacement as necessary to ensure assessment team has the expertise to cover those updates in the standards.
- Update of the assessment witnessing plan to include witnessing on newer standards
- To obtain additional documentation such as; copies of previous and new version of the standards, comparison study made by the CAB, updated Procedure/SOPs/Instructions as applicable, updated training & authorization records,

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It is also understandable that such a request can be made by a CAB during the assessment on which the assessment team leader will act to whether to accept the request or not, refer to section on scope extension assessment AC 11.0 procedure on assessment techniques.

In case of other variations such as change of location address, contact details, management changes, ownership etc. depending on the nature of variations case by case GAC will determine the action needed that can be, need of assessment type (assessment techniques e.g., special assessment) and be it onsite or remote or by means of document review.

Some variations could be such that it doesn't affect the accreditation scope and can be directly updated in the scope by the file manager e.g., updating the reference to the regulation (not to be confused with method or technique when that is updated being part of the regulation), others such as correction of mistakes, or adding elaboration or when specifying methodology applicable when the main standard method or SOP has sub-methodologies.

The GAC assessment team ensures that the assessment programme is provided for the parameters recommended for extension of scope so that this can be followed at the next due assessment as applicable, while the GAC file manager ensures that assessment programme from the preceding assessment (as applicable) and from this extension assessment is provided to the assessment team assigned for next due assessment.

5. Associated forms and documents

AC 11.0 assessment techniques

AC 5.0 Assessment preparation

AC 2.1 Application form and Accreditation Agreement

AC 4.2 – Tab 5 assessment programme and tab-10 accreditation decision.