

IAS Cannabis Laboratory Accreditation Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should a cannabis laboratory become accredited by the International Accreditation Service (IAS)?

Accreditation demonstrates to stakeholders (regulators, growers, manufacturers, distributors and public) that laboratories are in compliance with international standard ISO/IEC 17025 and industry specific standards. It also establishes built-in processes to educate laboratories to assess their own competence and personnel. Finally, accreditation increases health, safety, confidence and ethical reporting practices.

Accreditation is objective because the International Accreditation Service (IAS), an independent, third party accreditation body performs regular assessments to verify the laboratory's system is meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025. Through, the application of national and international technical standards and regulations, everyone can have a higher level of assurance in the test results provided by accredited laboratories.

In addition, accreditation enhances the acceptance of test reports across both state and national borders. This process supports the acceptance of the testing data, reduces the need for repeat testing, and can potentially decrease cost in getting product to market.

2. Are regulators requiring laboratories to be accredited?

There are currently 26 states in the U.S. that require medical or adult-use cannabis to be tested as of January 2019. Of those states, 18 require cannabis testing laboratories to be accredited – with the vast majority requiring ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. States that require testing laboratories to attain ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation represent some of the largest and most sophisticated cannabis regulatory structures in the country including California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, and Ohio.

3. What is the standard to which a cannabis lab can be accredited to?

Cannabis laboratories are accredited to the international standard, *ISO/IEC 17025: 2017 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*. Laboratories are also required to conform to the applicable state (US) or federal (CAN) regulatory requirements for cannabis testing laboratories.

4. What are the disciplines cannabis labs seeking accreditation can apply for?

The scope of IAS accreditation currently available for applicants and accredited cannabis laboratories are: Cannabinoid testing & potency (CBC, CBD, CBDa, CBG, CBN, THC, THCa, THCv, etc.), pesticides/fungicides/plant growth regulators, residual solvents, heavy metals, and microbiological contaminants (mold, yeast, bacteria, etc.), aflatoxins: B1, B2, G1, G2, and ochratoxin A.

5. Are there any specific and/or critical items that a cannabis laboratory needs to pay attention to when pursuing accreditation?

For accreditation of cannabis laboratories, compliance to all requirements of ISO/IEC 17025: 2017 is essential. However, it is advised that labs pay specific attention to calibration of its analytical equipment in order to ensure technically valid results. Also important is the continued use of quality control (QC) samples to provide confidence it its everyday or routine examination/testing. A key activity required as part of the compliance process in ISO/IEC 17025 and the IAS Proficiency Testing policy is the participation in

proficiency testing programs for the various analytes within the parameters of the scope of IAS accreditation.

6. How long does it typically take to gain accreditation from IAS?

The amount of time taken for a cannabis laboratory to get accredited by IAS depends on the readiness of the laboratory. IAS usually schedules the onsite assessment after the laboratory submits the application for accreditation, pre-assessment questionnaire and all relevant laboratory documentation to demonstrate their readiness and compliance with ISO/IEC 17025 and any relevant industry specific technical standards.

Following the IAS assessment and closure of all corrective actions by the laboratory, IAS issues a certificate of accreditation and the associated scope of accreditation. The scope of accreditation is uploaded onto the IAS website and remains in the public domain as long as the laboratory meets all the required criteria for accreditation.

The entire process may generally take two months for laboratories that are prepared for the assessment and meet the requirements of the standards.

7. How long is the accreditation valid?

Cannabis laboratory accreditation is valid for one year. Accredited cannabis laboratories must participate in a surveillance assessment one year after the initial date of accreditation and then a reassessment once every two years from the date of initial assessment.

8. Can we use the IAS Accreditation Symbol to demonstrate accreditation?

Yes, IAS accredited laboratories can use the IAS 'Accredited Symbol' within their approved scope of accreditation listed on their test reports. IAS also strongly encourages the use of the IAS Accreditation Symbol to demonstrate their accreditation status and compliance with ISO/IEC Standard 17025. The IAS symbol can be used to promote laboratory compliance with the accreditation standard in both domestic and international arenas.

9. Are there other regulatory requirements for laboratories?

- A. Laboratories seeking testing for Cannabis are also required to obtain testing licence from the appropriate state regulatory authorities (in US) and Health Canada (in Canada). Sampling and subsampling are generally part of this licence.
- B. Cannabis testing should be conducted in a separate location away from other testing activities – as per specific regulatory requirements.
- C. The laboratory must be a distinct entity that functions and reports independently of the licence holder requesting the testing.

This FAQ sheet is not meant to be a comprehensive list of requirements for accreditation.

About IAS

The International Accreditation Service is a non-profit, globally recognized accreditation body. Established in 1975, the IAS headquarters is in Brea, California. IAS is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) for testing laboratories, calibration laboratories and inspection agencies. Some of the federal agencies that accept IAS accreditation programs include the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

International Accreditation Service

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