

Verification versus Calibration

Prepared by Thabo Chesalokile

SANAS has, over the past few years, emphasised the importance of differentiating between Verification and Calibration, especially on instruments used for trade purposes.

It has come to light that some of the SANAS accredited Verification Laboratories have been issuing Calibration Certificates despite the fact that they are only accredited as Verification Laboratories for weighing and/or volume measuring instruments. According to the Trade Metrology Act, Act 77 of 1973, Verification Laboratories are limited to verifying the accuracy of measuring instruments only.

Any Verification Laboratory carrying out calibrations is in fact conducting an unlawful activity unless doing so is part of its scope of accreditation. Should sufficient evidence be provided, SANAS will be forced to take legal action against those implicated. We discourage this practice in its entirety as there are credible Calibration Laboratories, whose function it is to do calibrations, which have expended resources to ensure their legal compliance and attain SANAS accreditation.

The table below explains the difference between Verification and Calibration:

Verification	Calibration
South African National Standard-SAN10378: General requirements for competence of verification laboratories in terms of the Trade Metrology Act.	International Standard-ISO17025: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories .
Accredited to verify specific instruments used for trade purposes. Instruments need to have gone through the Type Approval process as carried out by the Legal Metrology Department (NRCS).	Accredited to calibrate instruments used in industry within the laboratory's scope and BMC.
Verify: means to certify the accuracy of any measuring instrument on the basis of any relevant measuring standard.	Calibration: A set of operations that establish the relationship between values of quantities indicated by a measuring instrument, and the corresponding values realised by standards.
Verification operations do not require calculation of Measurement Uncertainty (MU) in terms of ISO GUM.	Involves calculation of MU in terms of ISO GUM method.
Not accredited to transfer traceability.	Involves transfer of traceability using actual values of standards as opposed to nominal values.
Verification certificates must state, inter alia, compliance with the requirements of the Trade Metrology Act and Regulations.	Calibration certificates to state, inter alia, the calculated Measurement Uncertainty in accordance with ISO GUM, and evidence that the measurements are traceable.
A verification certificate cannot be issued as a calibration certificate claiming compliance with the requirements of ISO 17025.	A calibration certificate cannot be issued as a verification certificate allowing/disallowing an instrument to be used for trade.
Verification intervals for instruments used in trade are prescribed in the Trade Metrology Act.	Calibration certificates shall not contain any recommendation on calibration interval unless agreed with the client.

SANAS has already addressed this issue with the NRCS whose inspectors have identified the scale of the problem. We will follow up with all Verification Laboratories which are implicated.

Change in Assessment Dates and Cycle Plan for Accredited Inspection Bodies

Prepared by Eben Smit

The relevant Regulators have indicated that in future they intend to issue their Approval Certificates with an expiry date, and that this expiry date will be linked to the SANAS accreditation cycle.

This will mean that Inspection Bodies will have to re-apply for Approval Certificates from the relevant Regulator once they have obtained a Certificate and Schedule from SANAS at the end of the re-assessment cycle (4-years).

In order to facilitate this process and to ensure that all SANAS Accreditation issues are resolved within the SANAS accreditation cycle period, the assessment date has been re-scheduled from 2012 onwards.

The current expiry dates were used and in future the SANAS assessment will be scheduled 6-months prior to the Certificate expiry date. This will ensure that the 25-Day and 51-Day deadlines for accreditation are met, and also allows ample time for Inspection Bodies to re-apply for Approval.

