

	DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National Institute of Standards and Technology National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program	ISSUE DATE: 2011-06-02
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SUBJECT: Amendments to NIST Handbook 150:2006, 3.4.1		

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to publish revisions to NVLAP proficiency testing procedures as found in NIST Handbook 150, 3.4.1. Policy Guides augment NIST Handbook 150 in between its formal revisions and are included in a laboratory's management system documentation.

In 2010, ISO/IEC 17043, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing*, was published to specify general requirements for the competence of providers of proficiency testing, as well as for the development and operation of proficiency testing programs. This standard replaced ISO/IEC Guide 43 (1997), *Proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons, Part 1 and Part 2*, which was a guidance document.

NVLAP does not accredit proficiency testing providers; however, its proficiency testing procedures are consistent with the requirements contained in ISO/IEC 17043, where applicable. Accordingly, NIST Handbook 150, *NVLAP Procedures and General Requirements*, is being amended to reflect the transition from ISO/IEC Guide 43 to ISO/IEC 17043. Subclause 3.4.1 of NIST Handbook 150 is revised as follows:

3.4.1 General

3.4.1.1 Proficiency testing, along with document review and on-site assessment, is an integral part of the NVLAP accreditation process. The performance of tests or calibrations and reporting of results from proficiency testing assists NVLAP with determining a laboratory's competence and the effectiveness of its management system. Information obtained from proficiency testing helps to identify technical problems in a laboratory and assists in maintaining the quality of laboratory performance.

3.4.1.2 NVLAP's proficiency testing is consistent with the requirements contained in ISO/IEC 17043, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing*, where applicable. Proficiency testing may be organized by NVLAP itself or by an external provider of proficiency testing services.

3.4.1.3 Where applicable, requirements regarding the minimum level and frequency of participation in proficiency testing by accredited laboratories and other information about proficiency testing programs are provided in NVLAP's program-specific documentation.

Please retain this Policy Guide with your copy of NIST Handbook 150 for future reference. Questions concerning this revision should be directed to the NVLAP Program Manager assigned to your program. For a listing of NVLAP program staff, visit our website at <http://www.nist.gov/nvlap>.

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