



The NLA Personnel Certification Scheme for Metrologists

MetCert

Background

The original NLA Certificate of Competence (CoC) was taken over by SANAS in 1998 and has continued to run until the present time. The current program, although still active, is not as popular as was the case a number of years ago, principally because the CoC is no longer a prerequisite to becoming a Technical Signatory in a Calibration Laboratory.

In principle ISO17025 only requires proof of competence of the individual in a laboratory. The old CoC provided a system where the assessor was able to know that the technical signatory had at least passed the pre-requisite theoretical examination and had demonstrated practically in a laboratory, their ability to apply the theory to the real work being done. This base line “qualification” of a CoC assisted in maintaining a high level of competence in our laboratories. This is no longer the case and many technical signatories have demonstrated during assessments that they are not competent to do the calibrations at the level expected of them.

The result of this is that the SANAS assessors are required to spend more time in a laboratory assessing the competence of a technical signatory which costs both SANAS and the laboratory time and money. The NLA thus believe there is a need to re-introduce a voluntary, formalised CoC scheme which will maintain the expected level of competence, and differentiate between certified members and those who are new to the industry. It is also expected that this can form a method for SANAS assessors to either increase or reduce the depth of the evaluation, and this could ultimately have a positive impact on the assessment fee. In addition, it will provide laboratory owners with a formalised scheme to rate their employees and demonstrate that they have taken reasonable precautions to ensure that their staff are appropriately qualified for the tasks in the laboratory.

The current International regulations do not allow SANAS to be involved in a registration scheme as well as being the relevant assessor of the competence of that individual in the laboratory, during assessment by SANAS. In principle, the two activities need to be totally separate, where there is no chance of a conflict of interests. In addition to the above requirements, there has also been a raised profile with regard to various regulatory requirements or certified personnel in various areas such the new Engineering Natural Scientists Act, which requires formal assessment and registration of laboratory personnel as well as a scheme of continuous training to ensure that they remain up to date with current technology and practices.

With this as a background the NLA was approached to consider establishing a suitable Personnel Certification Scheme and has established MetCert (Metrologist Certification) with the view that it will replace the current CoC. It is also envisaged that the NLA will in due course be accredited to ISO/IEC 17024, an International standard for Personnel Certification Schemes, which will bring greater value to the MetCert scheme.

Scheme Outline

The scheme comprises of 3 levels and is aimed at the following categories of metrologists.

Level 0 – Individuals who have just been employed into a laboratory position, or who have little experience in a laboratory.

Level 1 – Individuals who have satisfied the basic requirements as specified by the scheme and who on a day to day basis perform calibrations in a laboratory or in their work situation – Refer to scheme requirements.

Level 2 – Experienced metrologists who in general fulfil the requirements of a Senior Metrologist, typically in a SANAS Accredited Laboratory – Refer to scheme requirements.

How to become certified?

Step 1: The applicant should establish what role they currently fulfil in the laboratory. This will provide a very good indication as to what level they might be in a position to be certified.

Step 2: Applicant completes the NLA MetCert application form (NF 01 -01) and together with the following certified copies of the required evidence, submits the application to the NLA Offices)

- Updated CV applicable to the application
- Relevant academic & other applicable theoretical qualifications
- Signed “Code of Conduct” on application form
- Evidence of recent witnessing or current SANAS CoC status
- Proof of payment or cheque attached for the initial level 0 registration

Step 3: The Application will be evaluated by the Scheme Administrator. Should there be any information or evidence missing, the applicant will be contacted to update the application.

Step 4: The Application will be passed to the Evaluation Committee which will comprise of discipline specific experts for review. This evaluation will be conducted against the requirements at the specific level pertaining to the application.

Step 5: If the application indicates that there is sufficient evidence that all the requirements are met it will be sent to the Certification Committee for registration.

Step 6: If the application indicates that all educational and experiential requirements are met, but a practical assessment is required, the evaluation committee will instruct the Scheme Administrator to arrange for a witnessing to take place. It is envisaged that in order for this process to operate as efficiently and as cost effectively as possible, the NLA will arrange for multiple witnessings to take place on a specific day. Successful completion of the witnessing will result in the application being forwarded to the Certification Committee for registration.

Step 7: Either as a result of Step 5 or Step 6, the Certification Committee will review the application and certify the applicant.

Step 8: The Scheme Administrator will arrange for an appropriate invoice to be sent to the applicant (if higher than level 0), and when payment is received, a Certificate to be produced and sent to the applicant.

Costs (2009)

Application (Initial)	(Must be paid on submission of application)	R 150 – 00
Initial Registration Fee	(Includes evaluation and 3yr registration)	R 1350 – 00
Witnessing (if required)		
Level 1 or 2	(Minimum no of applicants 3)	R 1500 – 00
Upgrade Level 1 to Level 2	(except where level 2 is applied for in the initial application and granted)	R 1000 – 00
Renewal (3yr)	(If an upgrade is requested at the same time as a renewal, no additional fee will be charged)	R 1000 – 00

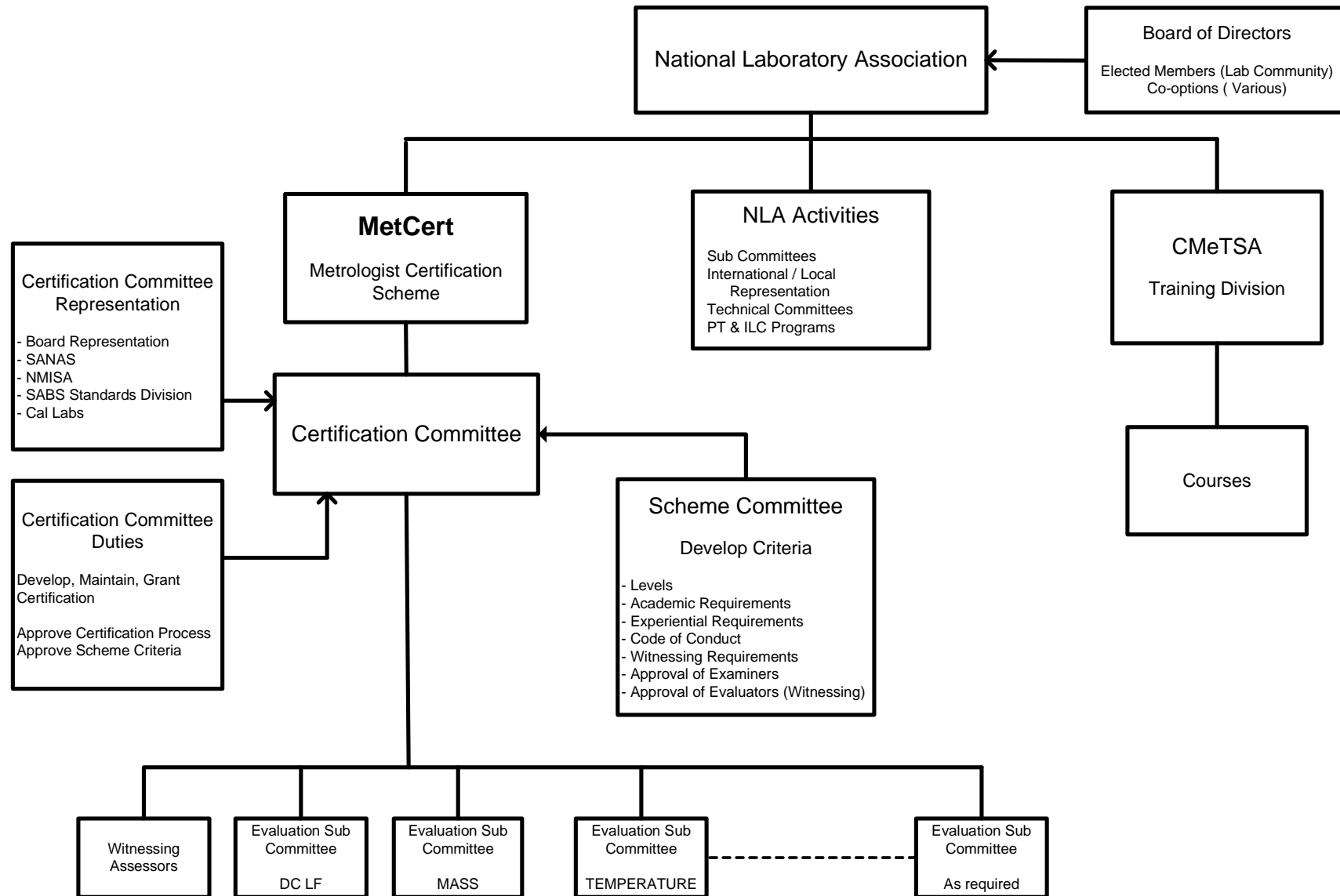
Notes:

1. Witnessings will be carried out on a regular basis initially and the dates can be obtained from the NLA. In the event that not all of the evaluations can be carried out, the NLA will endeavour to schedule an additional evaluation date/s.
2. Witnessings will, as far as possible, take place at either the NLA Offices or a convenient location in order to be cost effective. Should there be a need to conduct these witnessings elsewhere, additional costs may be incurred.
3. Applicants are reminded that MetCert Certification does not provide for automatic SANAS Technical Signatory status.
4. Successfully certified applicants may use the term MetCert Certified with their MetCert Number on Calibration Certificates/Reports, Business Cards, Quotations and general promotional material.
5. The requirement of a witnessing will be waived for current holders of SANAS CoC's. This moratorium will extend for 2 years after the date of introduction of each MetCert discipline for which there is an equivalent SANAS CoC.
6. Should a SANAS Technical Signatory who does not have a current SANAS CoC make an application for registration; all the discipline specific requirements will need to be met before registration can take place.

Why become Certified

- Obtain independent 3rd party acknowledgement of your competence
- Provides an internationally benchmarked assessment which can be used by HR to justify level and salary scales
- Registration is in line with the "Identification of Work for Compulsory Registration" as envisaged by government.
- Will enable SANAS to implement a more harmonised approach to technical evaluations whilst conducting calibration laboratory assessments
- Recognises the difference in skills and competence by having a multi-level system
- Helps to provide a career path for metrologists
- Assessment criteria are in line with SAQA registered unit standards

Appendix A



MetCert – Metrologist Certification Scheme