



Performance Standard for Organisations Undertaking Sampling and Chemical Testing of Water - Part 1

**Version 1, briefing note 1
November 2008**

Since the publication of the standard in July 2008 several issues have arisen that require clarification. The Environment Agency and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) have agreed the following.

1) Validation of matrices

In section 5.3.3.2 of the standard it states:

The following wastewater matrices shall be validated as required:

- *Treated sewage effluent (mixed domestic and industrial)*
- *Untreated sewage*
- *Trade effluent discharges (from industry sector commonly encountered in the laboratory)*

If a laboratory does not require accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 for the MCERTS performance standard for the sampling and chemical testing of water for all three of these matrices, then initial validation shall be on a minimum of 3 matrices that best represent those received and analysed by the laboratory. For example, if a laboratory does not wish to become accredited for untreated sewage then it may substitute that matrix with a second treated sewage effluent or trade effluent discharge.

Accreditation will not be granted unless initial validation on at least 3 matrices has been carried out and demonstrates compliance with the targets in Annex A.

Schedules of accreditation will clearly show the matrix types for which Accreditation has been granted.

2) Previously validated methods

There may be a few instances where validation has not been carried out strictly in accordance with the MCERTS performance std in that the initial validation only included spiking at one level within the range of the method within the specified time period (3 months). In this instance it is acceptable to carry out further spiking experiments at the second level outside the 3 month time window provided this additional validation is completed in a timeframe not less than 6 days and not exceeding 3 months.

3) Sampling programme

Under the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 UKAS will assess sampling plans and procedures. But they will not be able to assess the plans held by a water company that has outsourced sampling to an organisation accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 for the MCERTS performance standard for the sampling and chemical testing of water. However, UKAS will assess that the sampling plan is used correctly by the accredited organisation carrying out the sampling activity.

4) Auditing of sampling officers

All samplers engaged in accredited sampling activities must be audited by their own organisation at least once annually.