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The NLA-SA Certification of Persons Scheme for Stack Testers, ETCert

General Information

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1. Purpose

This document describes the NLA-SA Persons Certification Scheme for ETCert under the auspices of the South African Stack Testers Association.

2. Scope of the Certification Scheme

ETCert is a personnel certification scheme for personnel involved in emission measurements, run by the National Laboratory Association – South Africa (NLA-SA).

It offers formal recognition of the knowledge, experience and skills of stack testers working in emission testing laboratories.

Simply put, certification involves a process whereby applicants provide a portfolio of evidence demonstrating that they meet specified criteria, undertake to abide by a code of ethics, and then once certified, from time to time provide evidence that their skills are kept up to date in order to remain certified.

Initially all portfolios submitted to the NLA-SA are administratively evaluated against specified criteria by the Scheme Administrator. At lower certification levels, applications that are approved by an independent technical expert are submitted to the Director of the NLA-SA for final certification. At expert level, the applicant is technically evaluated by a selected Review Panel who makes a recommendation to the Director of the NLA-SA for final certification. Once certified, the ETCert Tester is then required to submit evidence on a three yearly basis in order to demonstrate that the ETCert Tester continues to meet the criteria while simultaneously indicating that the ETCert skills sets remain relevant and up to date with modern times.

3. References

NLA-ET-I-02-XX	Pricelist
NLA-ET-F-01-XX	Application form
NLA-ET-I-10-XX	ETCert Certification Requirements Matrix

4. Areas of responsibility

Changes to this document can only be approved by the Director of the NLA-SA.

5. Benefits of being certified

- Provides an opportunity for independent 3rd party recognition of competence,
- Provides an internationally benchmarked assessment which can be used by HR to justify level and salary scales,
- Improves marketability and employment opportunity as a certified emission testing professional,
- Registration is recognised by the Department of Environment Affairs,
- Enables SANAS to implement a more harmonised approach to technical competence evaluations whilst conducting emission testing laboratory assessments,
- Recognises the difference in skills and competence by having a multi-level system,
- Helps to provide a career path for Emission Testers,
- Encourages ethical behaviour and professional development.

6. Scheme Structure

Applicants are referred to the ETCert Certification Requirements Matrix (NLA-ET-I-10-XX, available on the NLA-SA website) for more details on the requirements for each of the certification levels.

The Scheme currently consists of four levels as follows:

Level A: Assistant

This is for individuals who are new entrants into the field with little or no experience. Applicants are required to have a basic safety qualification to allow introduction to and training in the field of emission testing.

Level 1: Team Member

This is for individuals who meet all the requirements for Level 1 certification and are actively involved in measurements as a team member.

Applicants should provide evidence of:

- Basic scientific and method understanding confirmed by evidence of successfully completed written tests (available online on the NLA-SA website).
- Basic understanding of legal framework for emission testing.
- Experience demonstrated through log book presentation using the template available.
- Independent review by a technical expert

Level 2: Supervisor

This is for individuals who meet all the requirements for Levels 1 and 2 certification and/or have the necessary experience requirements.

Applicants should provide evidence of:

- Successfully completed written tests (available online on the NLA-SA website) to verify technical knowledge.
- Advanced knowledge of legal framework.
- Further technical and management experience. Experience demonstrated through log book presentation using the template available.
- Independent review by a technical expert

Level 3: Expert

This is for individuals who meet all the requirements for Levels 1 and 2 certification or who have the necessary experience demonstrated through a portfolio of evidence.

Applicants will be evaluated technically in an interview by a panel of peers (Review Panel), where after a portfolio of evidence will be submitted to demonstrate competence.

Persons certified at expert level will be responsible for reviewing and approving applications up to Level 2 (either internally and/or as requested by the NLA-SA as independent technical experts).

7. Certification Process

For Levels 1 and 2, applicants will complete the necessary courses in accordance with the ETCert Certification Requirements Matrix (NLA-ET-I-10-XX, available on the NLA-SA website) and maintain evidence of experience, approved by an internal expert-level certified Stack Tester. Certification will only be granted after an independent review and approval of the application portfolio by a technical expert.

For Level 3 or expert level Stack Testers, certification depends on the outcome of a technical interview by a panel of peers and certification authorisation by the Director of the NLA-SA.

The following steps are to be followed:

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

Step 2: The applicant completes, signs and submits the NLA-SA ETCert application form (NLA-ET-F-01-XX). Copies of the required evidence shall be submitted to the NLA-SA Offices.

Step 3: The Scheme Administrator will arrange for an appropriate registration invoice to be sent to the applicant, and when payment is received, the application will be administratively evaluated by the Scheme Administrator. Should there be any information or evidence missing, the applicant will be notified by e-mail to submit the missing evidence. Once all evidence is on file to comply with the specified requirements, the Scheme Administrator will submit the application to the independent expert evaluator (Levels 1 and 2) or Review Panel (Level 3).

Step 4: For Levels 1 and 2, the application is independently evaluated by an expert evaluator who will make a recommendation to the NLA-SA Director for a final certification decision.

Level 3 applicants are evaluated in an interview by the Review Panel. If the Review Panel is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that all the requirements are met, they make a recommendation to the NLA-SA Director for a final certification decision.

Step 5: The Scheme Administrator will arrange for an appropriate certification invoice to be sent to the applicant, and when payment is received, a Certificate will be produced and sent to the applicant.

8. Application Requirements

Applicants are referred to the ETCert Certification Requirements Matrix (NLA-ET-I-10-XX, available on the NLA-SA website) for details regarding prerequisites and requirements for each certification level.

In summary, the ETCert certification of stack testers consists of three main components. Firstly, a foundational knowledge and code of conduct adoption component, secondly a practical competence component and thirdly a continuous professional development component required to maintain certification.

The requirements are divided into the areas as described below. It is important to note in cases where the applicants' technical compliance with the requirements are assessed purely on the paperwork evidence submitted (Levels 1 and 2), it is critical that sufficient detail is available from the documentation submitted. Applicants are referred to the application form (NLA-ET-F-01-XX) for details of evidence required.

8.1 Qualifications and experience

The applicant is required to provide evidence of having obtained a *complete* tertiary qualification *and/or* demonstrate sufficient testing experience working in an emission testing laboratory.

Copies of certificates, diplomas or degrees of *completed* qualifications from recognised institutions are required. In cases where the institution is not recognised, the Review Panel/Approval Committee reserve the right to request additional evidence to support the credibility of the institution.

Years of experience claims must be supported by evidence of having worked actively in an emission testing laboratory. Any evidence is acceptable, including a letter signed by a Stack Tester certified at Level 2 or higher with knowledge of the claims.

8.2 Knowledge based training

The candidate will need to hold an appropriate higher qualification or evidence of progressive experience in the field. They will also be required to pass industry-standard tests that are administered within their companies. At Level 3 (Expert) level, the candidate will need to successfully demonstrate knowledge to a panel of peers.

8.3 Required abilities

The candidate will need an appropriate medical clearance for safe work on an industrial site.

8.4 Practical experience

The candidate will need to present an approved log book to demonstrate experience in practical emission testing projects, where applicable. Levels of experience may substitute for or be augmented by recognised educational qualifications.

8.5 Code of Conduct

The application (NLA-ET-F-01-XX) includes a Code of Conduct which governs all membership.

Since emissions data rely heavily on the integrity of the team conducting the measurements, ethical behaviour is a critical component of being a “Certified Emission Tester”. It is therefore a requirement of the ETCert scheme that applicants undertake to abide by a code of conduct, and confirm this willingness by signing a copy of the Code of Conduct contained in the application form.

Should a certified ETCert Tester be found to be conducting themselves in a manner contrary to the adopted Code of Conduct, a disciplinary process could lead to their de-certification.

8.6 Recertification

Recertification requirements will be confirmed once the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme is finalised. Recertification may include on site assessment, professional development, structured interview, examination and/or checks on physical ability (where applicable).

9. Assessment process

The manner of assessment will depend on the Level that the candidate applies for and is separately defined.

The following tools will be used:

1. An approved log book kept by the tester to confirm experience.
2. Industry-standard and NLA-developed electronic tests.
3. Records of generally-accepted health and safety courses applicable to working at heights and emission testing.
4. Independent review conducted by an appointed expert (Levels 1 and 2) or interview by an expert panel familiar with aspects of the subject (Level 3).

10. Criteria for suspension or withdrawal of certification

Certification may be suspended or withdrawn or scope of certification reduced in cases where a certified person:

- is found to have acted in an incompetent or unethical manner;
- has impaired ability due to physical or mental impairment;
- does not comply with the requirements of the Certification Scheme;
- makes unauthorised or misleading claims or statements regarding his/her certification;

- uses his/her certification in a misleading manner;
- fails to resolve issues that have resulted in suspension in the timeframe established by the NLA – SA.

11. Criteria for changing the scope or level of certification

The scheme is currently limited to stack emission testing for compliance utilizing internationally validated methods.

An applicant may register at any certification level if able to demonstrate that requirements at lower level(s) are satisfied.

12. The Applicant’s rights

The applicant, candidate or certified person has the right to appeal in writing any decisions made regarding certification or recertification within one calendar month (30 days) of the event leading to the appeal. The appeals procedure can be downloaded from the NLA – SA website.

A certified person, upon being granted certification status and whilst the certificate is current, will be entitled to make claims in accordance with the scope of certification awarded.

13. Duties and responsibilities of the certified person

A certified person:

- shall sign an agreement to be bound by the Code of Conduct as part of the application process and shall be committed to:
 - respect the dignity of other individuals
 - act on the basis of well-informed conscience
 - act in the interest of the community
 - uphold the principles of the Code.
- must comply with the requirements of the Certification Scheme.
- may make claims regarding his/her certification only with respect to the scope for which certification has been awarded.
- shall not use his/her certificate in a misleading manner.
- shall not make any unauthorised or misleading statements regarding his/her certification.
- may not use his/her certification in such a manner as to bring the NLA – SA into disrepute.
- shall inform the NLA – SA without delay of matters that may affect his/her capability to fulfil certification requirements.
- must maintain skills in the scope for which certification has been awarded to remain certified.
- shall immediately discontinue any claim to hold certification upon suspension, withdrawal or expiry of his/her certification and shall return all certificates to the NLA – SA under such circumstances.

14. What does it cost?

The costs associated with being certified and re-certified can be found in the most recent version of the ETCert Scheme Pricelist, NLA-ET-I-02-XX, which can be downloaded from the NLA – SA website.