

P18 – CALA Corporate Profile  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	<b>WHAT IS CALA</b> .....	1
1.1	CALA’s Vision .....	1
1.2	CALA’s Mission .....	1
2.0	<b>LABORATORY ACCREDITATION</b> .....	2
2.1	What is accreditation?.....	2
2.2	Who provides accreditation?.....	2
2.3	What does accreditation involve for the laboratory? .....	2
2.4	What is accreditation based on? .....	2
2.5	Where are CALA accredited laboratories listed? .....	2
2.6	Why Accreditation? .....	3
2.7	Superior Performance From Accredited Laboratories .....	4
2.8	Laboratory Accreditation Process .....	5
3.0	<b>PROFICIENCY TESTING</b> .....	6
3.1	What is proficiency testing?.....	6
3.2	What does proficiency testing involve for the laboratory? .....	6
3.3	What happens when a laboratory participates successfully? .....	6
3.4	What happens when a laboratory participates unsuccessfully? .....	6
4.0	<b>TRAINING SERVICES</b> .....	7
4.1	Training service mission .....	7
4.2	Complex Issues; Difficult Solutions?.....	7
4.3	Priced for CALA Members.....	7
4.4	Web-based Online Training) .....	7
4.5	Training as part of the CALA Family of Services.....	7
5.0	<b>WEB PAGE REFERENCES</b> .....	8

# CALA CORPORATE PROFILE

## 1.0 WHAT IS CALA

The Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation, CALA:

- is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation;
- in an internationally-recognized accreditation body, and
- serves both public and private sector testing laboratories.

### 1.1 CALA's Vision

With competent partners, CALA is a well-respected laboratory accreditation body that provides international recognition, delivers services that inspire excellence in laboratories, promotes understanding in their clients, and earns the confidence of regulators.

### 1.2 CALA's Mission

To help laboratories achieve and demonstrate the highest levels of scientific and management excellence through the combined principles of Competence, Consistency, Credibility and Communication.

Note: To learn more about how CALA is implementing its Vision and Mission; visit the Corporate Strategic Plan on CALA's web site: [www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca)

## 2.0 LABORATORY ACCREDITATION

### 2.1 What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is the formal recognition of the competence of a laboratory to manage and perform specific tests. It covers a laboratory's overall quality system and its technical capability.

### 2.2 Who Provides Accreditation?

Accreditation of testing laboratories in Canada is delivered by organisations that have been successfully evaluated to international requirements, such as the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). CALA has been fully recognized in these agreements since 2005.

### 2.3 What Does Accreditation Involve for the Laboratory?

- Proficiency testing (inter-lab comparisons) at least twice per year, for those parameters which are offered in the CALA proficiency testing (PT) program; or an alternative plan as per the P02-03 - *CALA Program Description - Proficiency Testing Policy for Accreditation*
- An on-site assessment once every 2 years; and satisfactory completion of a surveillance questionnaire in the intervening year;
- Satisfactory response, within a specified timeframe, to corrective actions identified by the assessment.

### 2.4 What is Accreditation Based on?

Accreditation is based on international standards and requires demonstrated conformance to ISO/IEC 17025; *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*.

### 2.5 Where are CALA Accredited Laboratories Listed?

Accredited laboratories and their scopes of testing are listed on the CALA web site at [www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca).

## **2.6 Why Accreditation?**

### **2.6.1 Client Confidence**

- Accredited laboratories out-perform others.
- Test results based on internationally recognized standards.
- Accreditation fosters better decisions for the environment; and health, welfare and safety.
- Accreditation paves the way to more cost-effective solutions.

### **2.6.2 Laboratory Opportunities**

- Accreditation places the laboratory among the elite of proven technical competence.
- Accreditation sets excellence as the target and promotes continuous quality improvement for laboratory staff.
- Accreditation creates a gateway to markets.

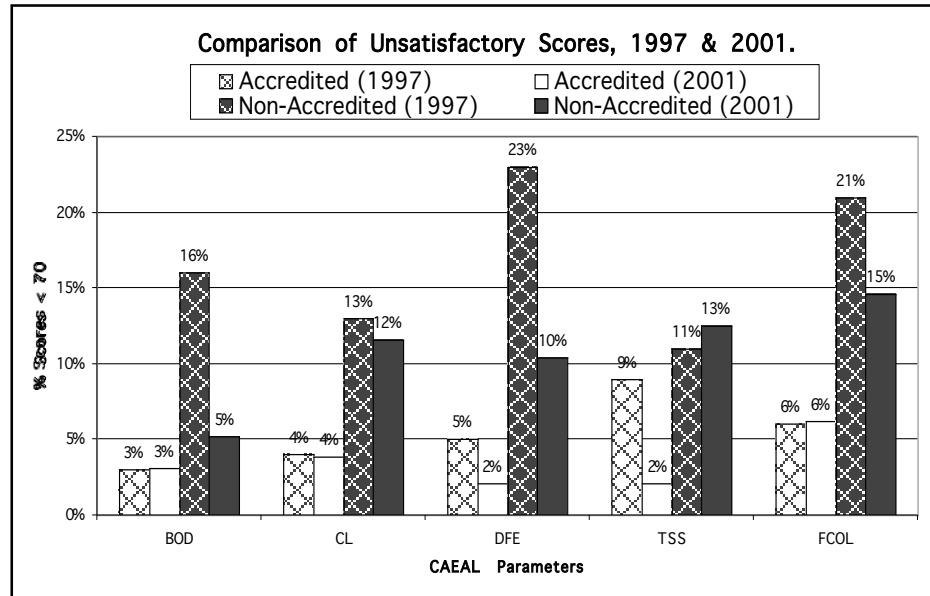
### **2.6.3 Recognition**

- Accredited laboratories are part of an internationally recognized program (ISO/IEC 17025).
- Regulatory agencies and private sector firms are increasingly turning to accredited laboratories for their testing.
- Environment Canada and most provincial ministries of environment contract only accredited laboratories.
- Accredited laboratories are increasingly stipulated for regulatory data (e.g. Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland).

## 2.7 Superior Performance From Accredited Laboratories

### 2.7.1 The Studies

The proficiency testing performance of accredited laboratories was compared to the performance of non-accredited laboratories that received identical proficiency testing samples. This comparison was done for two separate periods: 1994-1996 (1997 Study) and 1997-1999 (2001 Study). Six proficiency testing studies were available for each period and five proficiency testing parameters were chosen: Biochemical



Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Chloride (CL), Dissolved Iron (DFE) and Fecal Coliforms (FCOL). For the 1997 study, 528 sets of results from accredited laboratories were compared with the same number of results from non-accredited laboratories. The 2001 Study had 462 sets of results.

### 2.7.2 Results

In each study, accredited laboratories achieved higher mean scores, a greater number of perfect scores and fewer unsatisfactory scores. This pattern held for each of the five parameters as well as for the combined data set. In the illustration shown above, unsatisfactory results may be expected up to 5% of the time due to the statistical treatment of the data.

### 2.7.3 Details

See the Performance Comparison papers on CALA's web site at:

- [www.cala.ca/perfaced-1997.pdf](http://www.cala.ca/perfaced-1997.pdf)
- <http://www.cala.ca/perfaced-2001.pdf>
- [www.cala.ca/perfaced-2004.pdf](http://www.cala.ca/perfaced-2004.pdf)
- [www.cala.ca/pt\\_accred\\_vs\\_nonaccred.html](http://www.cala.ca/pt_accred_vs_nonaccred.html) (all studies from 2003)

## 2.8 Laboratory Accreditation Processes

- The laboratory submits an application for accreditation to CALA.
- The laboratory is scheduled for an on-site assessment and enrolled in proficiency testing (PT), where samples are offered by the CALA PT program. Assessments are normally scheduled between March and November.
- Assessors trained to international standards conduct an assessment of the laboratory. Assessments are typically conducted by 2 to 4 assessors over 3 to 4 days.
- An Assessment Report is submitted to CALA by the lead assessor.
- CALA sends a final report to the laboratory, which identifies Required (A) and Required (B) actions.
- The laboratory responds to the Required (A) actions within a specified time frame (maximum 90 days for a new accreditation; 45 days for maintenance of accreditation).
- The laboratory's response is verified by CALA staff, the lead assessor, and two members of the CALA Advisory Panel.
- The laboratory is formally notified when responses to required actions are completed satisfactorily.
- The CALA Accreditation Council approves both new accreditations and maintenance of accreditations.
- CALA notifies laboratories of accreditation (both new and maintenance), and grants a Certificate of Accreditation.
- Accredited laboratories and their scopes of testing are listed on the CALA web site at [www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca).

## 3.0 PROFICIENCY TESTING

### 3.1 What is Proficiency Testing?

- Proficiency testing (PT) is the use of interlaboratory comparisons for checking laboratory testing performance.

### 3.2 What Does Proficiency Testing Involve for the Laboratory?

- The laboratory receives PT samples at least two times per year from reference laboratories, which meet the applicable requirements and are contracted by CALA.
- In general, a laboratory must analyse 4 concentrations for every type of test in which they seek to demonstrate proficiency.
- The laboratory's performance is evaluated statistically.

### 3.3 What Happens When a Laboratory Participates Successfully?

- CALA grants the laboratory a Certificate of Laboratory Proficiency and posts a directory that lists all tests for which performance has been satisfactory ([www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca)).
- Successful participation in PT is one of the conditions of accreditation.

### 3.4 What Happens When a Laboratory Participates Unsuccessfully?

- After the first unsuccessful study for a specific test, a laboratory receives a Notice of Possible Suspension for that test.
- After the second consecutive unsuccessful study for a specific test, a laboratory's PT recognition and/or accreditation for that test is Suspended. Suspended tests are removed from CALA's Directory of Laboratories.
- After the third consecutive unsuccessful study for that test, a laboratory loses its recognition and/or accreditation for that test. This does not preclude the laboratory from reapplying for recognition or accreditation for that test at a later date.

## 4.0 TRAINING SERVICES

### 4.1 Training Service Mission

To identify, then develop or acquire, then deliver facilitated training to CALA members and other organizations, in accordance with the stated needs of these organizations, and in a manner that supports the integrity, credibility and viability of the Association.

### 4.2 Complex Issues; Difficult Solutions?

CALA Training Services delivers the training needed to help CALA members face these challenges with knowledge and confidence.

### 4.3 Priced for CALA Members

- Training is offered to CALA members at rates significantly reduced from comparable services offered elsewhere. If members can host a training session, rates can be further reduced.

### 4.4 Web-based Online Training)

- Online training makes courses more accessible to members. Participants can undertake learning wherever and whenever they may arrange Internet access, at any time of day. Sessions start every two weeks for available courses.
- <http://caaal.dameco.com/Coursesoffered.asp>

### 4.5 Training as part of the CALA Family of Services

CALA Training Services supports both the Proficiency Testing and the Accreditation programs to help CALA members to gain working knowledge of some of the complex issues that face testing laboratories.

- Accreditation & Quality System Seminar
- Training on Laboratory Standard ISO/IEC 17025
- QMS & Quality Control Training
- Lead Auditor & Internal Auditor Training
- Measurement Uncertainty Training
- Laboratory Internal Calibration Training
- Online Training Courses

## 5.0 WEB PAGE REFERENCES

### Accreditation

CALA Directory of Accredited Labs

- Estimation of Measurement Uncertainty Policy

**www.cala.ca/** ... followed by ...  
 cala\_directories.html  
 P19\_CALA\_Unce\_Pol.pdf

### Proficiency Testing

- Directory of Laboratories
- Policies and Procedures for the CALA Proficiency Testing Program

cala\_directories.html  
 PT15-PT\_Policies\_Procedures.pdf

### Accreditation and Proficiency Testing

- CALA Program Description (and Fee Schedule), CALA Application Form, CALA Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest
- PT Performance and Accreditation
- Program Requirements for Laboratories

progdocs.html#d1  
 accred\_program.html  
 program\_req.html

### Training Services

- Training Services Home Page
- Online Training (separate internet site)

t\_intro.html  
 http://cala.dameco.com

### International

- International Activities

international\_activities.html