

DoD Environmental Data Quality Workgroup Fact Sheet

Subject: QSM 6.0 Accreditation/Implementation Guidance

December 13, 2023



The DoD Environmental Data Quality Workgroup (EDQW) is releasing the DoD/DOE Quality Systems Manual for Environmental Laboratories (QSM) version 6.0. The QSM provides requirements for accreditation to the DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP). Laboratories will be required to comply with the requirements of QSM 6.0 as part of their routine accreditation cycle beginning six months after the release date, with all laboratories having to meet the requirements 30 months after the release date. The six-month period between release and the implementation start date allows laboratories to adjust their quality systems to meet the new requirements, and Accrediting Bodies to adjust their processes for DoD ELAP accreditation. Beginning six months after the release date, laboratories will then have 24 months to become accredited as part of their routine accreditation cycle. Following the routine accreditation cycle eases the burden on both laboratories and Accrediting Bodies without compromising data quality or defensibility.

Although QSM 6.0 is a significant rewrite of QSM requirements, data quality and defensibility under earlier QSM versions will be comparable, and projects do not need to routinely require the “latest version” of the QSM when developing Performance Work Statements (PWS) or Statements of Work (SOW). Many of the QSM 6.0 changes are a result of a reorganization of the document to incorporate the latest version of the underlying ISO/IEC 17025 standard, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*. The bulk of the remaining edits removed language that was redundant or not assessable. There are some updated technical requirements, including how sensitivity limits are determined, maintained, and reported, and some specific method requirements have been edited, but the EDQW has determined these changes do not affect overall data quality. The QSM presents minimum requirements laboratories must meet to become accredited. Projects must determine appropriate technical requirements for decision making during project planning and document those requirements in the Quality Assurance Project Plan.

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The EDQW recommends that a PWS/SOW require maintaining DoD ELAP accreditation for laboratory testing rather than accreditation to a specific version of the QSM. Participation in the DoD ELAP ensures that laboratory accreditation is monitored and complies with the appropriate QSM version throughout the life of a project. There is no need or advantage to becoming accredited to a new version of the QSM outside of the routine accreditation cycle. The EDQW also recommends communicating to prime contractors that ELAP accreditation to the latest version of the QSM is not an advantage and that technical requirements should be developed and documented as part of the planning process, not as part of laboratory accreditation.

The following is a suggested statement for inclusion in the PWS/SOW: Laboratories performing environmental testing shall be accredited under the DoD ELAP for the method used for testing and the matrix and analyte tested.

**CLEARED
For Open Publication**

Dec 18, 2023

Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW