Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

MSL973001A Perform basic tests

Revision Number: 1

MSL973001A Perform basic tests

Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

Unit descriptor	This unit of competency covers the ability to perform tests and measurements using standard methods with access to readily available advice from supervisors.

Application of the Unit

Application of the unit	This unit of competency is applicable to laboratory/field assistants working in all industry sectors. In general, they do not calibrate equipment and make only limited adjustments to the controls. They do not interpret or analyse results or troubleshoot equipment problems. Industry representatives have provided case studies to illustrate the practical application of this unit of competency and to show its relevance in a workplace setting. These are found at the end of this unit of competency under the section 'This competency in practice'.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Prerequisite units		

Employability Skills Information

Employability skills	This unit contains employability skills.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.	Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where bold italicised text is used, further information is detailed in the required skills and knowledge section and the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. Interpret test requirements	1.1. Review test request to identify samples to be tested, test method and equipment involved 1.2. Identify hazards and enterprise controls associated with the sample, preparation methods, reagents and/or equipment
2. Prepare sample	2.1. Record sample description, compare with specification, record and report discrepancies 2.2. Prepare sample in accordance with appropriate standard methods
3. Check equipment before use	3.1. Set up test equipment in accordance with test method 3.2. Perform pre-use and safety checks in accordance with enterprise procedures and manufacturer's instructions 3.3. Identify faulty or unsafe equipment and report to appropriate personnel 3.4. Check calibration status of equipment and report any out of calibration items to appropriate personnel
4. Perform tests on samples	4.1. Identify, prepare and weigh or measure sample and standards to be tested 4.2. Conduct tests in accordance with enterprise procedures 4.3. Record data in accordance with enterprise procedures 4.4. Perform calculations on data as required 4.5. Identify and report out of specification or atypical results promptly to appropriate personnel 4.6. Shut down equipment in accordance with operating procedures
5. Maintain a safe work environment	5.1. Use established safe work practices and personal protective equipment to ensure personal safety and that of other laboratory personnel 5.2. Minimise the generation of wastes and environmental impacts 5.3. Ensure safe disposal of laboratory and hazardous wastes 5.4. Clean, care for and store equipment and reagents as required

Required Skills and Knowledge

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This section describes the skills and knowledge required for this unit.

Required skills

Required skills include:

- interpreting enterprise procedure or standard methods accurately
- using safety information, such as material safety data sheets (MSDS) and performing procedures safely
- checking test equipment before use
- completing all tests within required timeline without sacrificing safety, accuracy or quality
- calculating, recording and presenting results accurately and legibly
- maintaining security, integrity and traceability of all samples, data/results and documentation
- cleaning and maintaining equipment

Required knowledge

Required knowledge includes:

- concepts of metrology
- the international system of units (SI)
- purpose of test
- principles of the standard method
- pre-use equipment checks
- relevant standards/specifications and their interpretation
- sources of uncertainty in measurement and methods for control
- enterprise and/or legal traceability requirements
- interpretation and recording of test result, including simple calculations
- procedures for recognition/reporting of unexpected or unusual results
- relevant health, safety and environment requirements

Evidence Guide

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
The Evidence Guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.	
Overview of assessment	
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	Assessors should ensure that candidates can: • accurately interpret enterprise procedures or standard methods • complete all tests within the required timeline without sacrificing safety, accuracy or quality • demonstrate close attention to the accuracy and precision of measurements and the data obtained • maintain the security, integrity and traceability of all samples, data/results and documentation.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or simulated workplace environment. This unit of competency may be assessed with: • *MSL922001A Record and present data*. Resources may include: • standard laboratory equipped with appropriate equipment standards and materials • enterprise procedures and standard methods, and equipment manuals • MSDS.
Method of assessment	The following assessment methods are suggested: • review of the quality of test data/results achieved by the candidate over time • inspection of records and workplace documentation completed by the candidate • feedback from peers and supervisors • observation of the candidate performing a range of basic tests • oral or written questioning to check underpinning knowledge of test procedures. In all cases, practical assessment should be supported by questions to assess underpinning knowledge and those aspects of competency which are difficult to assess

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	directly. Where applicable, reasonable adjustment must be made to work environments and training situations to accommodate ethnicity, age, gender, demographics and disability. Access must be provided to appropriate learning and/or assessment support when required. The language, literacy and numeracy demands of assessment should not be greater than those required to undertake the unit of competency in a work like environment.
This competency in practice	Industry representatives have provided the case studies below to illustrate the practical application of this unit of competency and to show its relevance in a workplace setting. **Manufacturing** Standard testing methods may be viewed as legal requirements that must be followed to ensure that a product manufactured in a chemical plant meets the specification by which it is sold to the customer. Technical assistants perform tests in a quality control laboratory to ensure that material meets legal requirements and the material is safe and effective in use. Peroxides may be present in ether as a result of light-catalysed air oxidation. Peroxides are toxic and can give rise to mixtures which are explosive when distilled. Technical assistants test ether to ensure that the level of peroxide is within acceptable limits. The test is done by shaking ether with a solution of potassium iodide. After standing for 30 minutes in the dark the yellow colour of the aqueous phase, due to the liberation of iodine, must not be more intense than a prepared standard solution. These tests ensure the quality and safety of the ether. **Food processing** A snack food company produces a range of high quality, impulse purchase snack foods. Some of these products are moisture and/or oxygen sensitive and are therefore packaged in multi-layer flexible packaging to provide optimum shelflife. The packaging must also be able to withstand the rigours of the production and distribution process. While the packaging is purchased to meet the shelflife and distribution specifications, the quality

EVIDENCE GUIDE	
	assurance program requires the periodic evaluation of the packaging materials against these specifications. A laboratory assistant uses standard methods to test the tearing resistance, bursting strength, impact resistance and permeability and/or leakage of the snack food packaging. Tests are also conducted on aspects of the manufacturing process that can affect shelflife. These tests involve the measuring of the heat-seam strength and the sealing performance of the closure process. The test results are recorded by the laboratory assistant to verify the conformance of the materials to the supplier specifications and of the process to the manufacturing specifications. The assistant reports any anomalies or non-conformances to the appropriate personnel. **Construction materials testing** A technician performs an Aggregate Stripping Test (AS 1141.50) and enters the results in the laboratory's information management system (LIMS). The resulting 20-30% stripped values (i.e. 70-80% adhering) indicate a 'fail' result. The technician notes that he has repeated the test and obtained the same 'fail' result. The laboratory manager reviews the results and asks the technician to explain how he performed the test. He describes how he prepared 3-4 mm thick plates of bitumen and binding agent in the mould and then placed 50 small clean pieces of aggregate on top. After treatment in an oven for 24 hours and a 50°C water bath in accordance with the test method, the technician had then carefully pulled out the pieces of aggregate and avoiding any twisting motion. He then estimated the % of bitumen adhering to each of the stones with the expectation that the stripped value would be about 5% (i.e. 95% adhering). The manager is satisfied that the technician has performed the test in accordance with the method and suggested that he now re-run the test with a known aggregate as a control. This test gives a stripped value of 5-7% (i.e. 93-95% adhering). The manager is now sufficiently confident of the laboratory's results to sign and issue the test report and explain the aggregate's 'test failure' to the client.

Range Statement

RANGE STATEMENT	
The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.	
Codes of practice	Where reference is made to industry codes of practice, and/or Australian/international standards, it is expected the latest version will be used

Standards, **codes**, **procedures and/or enterprise requirements**	Standards, codes, procedures and/or enterprise requirements may include:
	• Australian and international standards, such as:
	  • AS ISO 1000-1998 The international system of units (SI) and its application
	  • AS ISO 17025-2005 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories
	  • AS/NZS 2243 Set:2006 Safety in laboratories set
	• Australian code of good manufacturing practice for medicinal products (GMP)
	• calibration and maintenance schedules
	• enterprise recording and reporting procedures
	• equipment manuals
	• equipment startup, operation and shutdown procedures
	• MSDS and safety procedures
	• material, production and product specifications
	• national measurement regulations and guidelines
	• principles of good laboratory practice (GLP)
	• production and laboratory schedules
	• quality manuals
	• standard operating procedures (SOPs)

Concepts of metrology	Concepts of metrology may include: • that all measurements are estimates • measurements belong to a population of measurements of the measured parameters

RANGE STATEMENT	
	• repeatability • precision • accuracy • significant figures • sources of error • uncertainty • traceability
Preparation of samples	Preparation of samples may include: • sub-sampling or splitting using procedures, such as riffling, coning and quartering, manual and mechanical splitters • diluting samples • physical treatments, such as ashing, dissolving, filtration, sieving, centrifugation and comminution • moulding, casting or cutting specimens

Typical tests carried out by laboratory/field assistants	Typical tests carried out by laboratory/field assistants may include:
	• visual/optical tests of appearance, colour, texture, identity, turbidity, refractive index (alcohol content and Baume/Brix)
	• physical tests:
	  • density, specific gravity and compacted density
	  • moisture content and water activity
	  • particle size, particle shape and size distribution
	• chemical tests:
	  • gravimetric
	  • colorimetric
	  • electrical conductivity (EC) and pH
	  • specific ions using dipsticks and kits
	  • nutrients (e.g. nitrates and orthophosphates) using basic kits
	  • ashes, including sulphated ashes
	• biological/environmental tests:
	  • pH, oxygen reduction potential (ORP), dissolved oxygen (DO) and (EC)
	  • E coli using test kits

RANGE STATEMENT	

	• surface hygiene/presence of microbes
	• packaging tests:
	  • tearing resistance, bursting strength and impact resistance
	  • permeability and/or leakage
	• mechanical tests:
	  • Emerson class
	  • concrete slump

Measurements	Measurements may include: • simple ground surveys • meteorological parameters, such as wind direction/strength, rainfall, maximum/minimum temperature, humidity and solar radiation • simple background radiation survey • production/process parameters, such as temperature, flow and pressure • gas levels in a confined space
Common measuring equipment	Common measuring equipment may include: • dimension apparatus • DO and EC • analogue and digital meters and charts/recorders • basic chemical and biological test kits • dipsticks and site test kits (e.g. HACK) • timing devices • temperature measuring devices, such as thermometers and thermocouples
Hazards	Hazards may include: • electric shock • biohazards, such as microbiological organisms and agents associated with soil, air, water, blood and blood products, and human or animal tissue and fluids • solar radiation, dust and noise • chemicals, such as sulphuric acid, fluorides and hydrocarbons • aerosols • sharps, broken glassware and hand tools

RANGE STATEMENT	
	• flammable liquids • dry ice and liquid nitrogen • fluids under pressure • sources of ignition • occupational overuse syndrome, slips, trips and falls • manual handling, working at heights and working in confined spaces • crushing, entanglement and cuts associated with moving machinery or falling objects
Enterprise controls to address hazards	Enterprise controls to address hazards may include: • use of MSDS • use of signage, barriers and service isolation tags • use of personal protective equipment, such as hard hats, hearing protection, sunscreen lotion, gloves, safety glasses, goggles, face guards, coveralls, gowns, body suits, respirators and safety boots • use of appropriate equipment, such as biohazard containers and cabinets and laminar flow cabinets • recognising and observing hazard warnings and safety signs • labelling of samples, reagents, aliquoted samples and hazardous materials • handling and storage of all hazardous materials and equipment in accordance with labelling, MSDS and manufacturer's instructions, and enterprise procedures and regulations • cleaning and decontaminating equipment and work areas regularly using recommended procedures • following established manual handling procedures for tasks involving manual handling
Minimising environmental impacts	Minimising environmental impacts may involve: • recycling of non-hazardous waste, such as chemicals, batteries, plastic, metals and glass • appropriate disposal of hazardous waste • correct disposal of excess sample/test material • correct storage and handling of hazardous

RANGE STATEMENT	
	chemicals
Occupational health and safety (OHS) and environmental management requirements	OHS and environmental management requirements: • all operations must comply with enterprise OHS and environmental management requirements, which may be imposed through state/territory or federal legislation - these requirements must not be compromised at any time • all operations assume the potentially hazardous nature of samples and require standard precautions to be applied • where relevant, users should access and apply current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and State and Territory Departments of Health

Unit Sector(s)

Unit sector	Testing

Competency field

Competency field	

Co-requisite units

Co-requisite units		