



In 2013, the medical regulatory bodies of the four western Canadian provinces embarked on a journey to consider opportunities for diagnostic laboratory accreditation resource sharing and collaboration. It is a well-recognized fact that standards and accreditation process development is a resource intensive initiative. The ultimate goal of sharing resources would also culminate in the enhanced standardization of accreditation processes across the member provinces.

To this end, the Western Canadian Diagnostic Accreditation Alliance (WCDAA) was formed. The initial and primary focus of the group was to join forces in the development of a common set of laboratory accreditation standards. The 4 member provinces in a fair and collaborative process, determined the key elements that were felt to be essential in a diagnostic accreditation standard. One of these critical elements was the certification of the standards by ISQua as the value of achieving international recognition and validation of the standards was universally recognized and supported by all members.

Provincial representatives from each of the 4 member provinces utilized these elements to compare and evaluate each one of the provincial base documents. The unanimous group consensus was to use the newly minted Alberta standards as the foundation documents based on this evaluation process.

The Alliance members developed the framework for a formal “Memorandum of Agreement” (MOA). This agreement outlines the operating parameters for the use of the common standards by those jurisdictions choosing to accept them as the standards used by their accreditation program. Specifically, the MOA outlines strict guidelines for standards revision management, control, protection and distribution of standards. In addition, the MOA also requests that each WCDAA member province actively commit to promoting the WCDAA to its provincial stakeholders to encourage participation of assessors in cross-jurisdictional assessments.

To date, three of the four western provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) have committed to the WCDAA initiative by signing the MOA.

The WCDAA logo has been developed which is tailored for each provincial jurisdiction. The standards in each province incorporate both the WCDAA logo and the provincial regulatory body logo.

On-going revision of the standards incorporates stakeholder feedback from all WCDAA member organizations and facilities.