



PAD

Proficiency
Assessment
on Demand





What is PAD?

PAD, or Proficiency Assessment on Demand, is a service provided by Fapas® to allow maximum flexibility for your independent quality assessment programme. There is no substitute for a carefully considered and planned programme of proficiency testing for your laboratory, but there will always be occasions when even the most meticulous planning can't provide for every eventuality. This is where PAD complements the proficiency testing plan you already have in place.

What is PAD?

Proficiency testing is defined by ISO/IEC 17043:2010 Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing:

“Interlaboratory comparison: organization, performance and evaluation of measurements or tests on the same or similar items by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions”

So, PAD does not fit the definition, because typically only one laboratory is analysing the material. However, the PAD materials have previously been used in our accredited PT rounds and have been analysed by multiple laboratories.

This means they have an intrinsic assigned value, which combined with the proven stability of the material, means a performance assessment (z score) can be calculated for your results using the original round data. The key difference is of course the 'on demand' part of PAD. Proficiency testing rounds are scheduled with fixed start, testing and result submission dates, so you may have to wait for a long time to participate and receive your assessment. With PAD, the whole process can be completed typically in just 3 weeks from enquiry to receiving your assessment, providing we have a suitable material in stock at Fapas®.

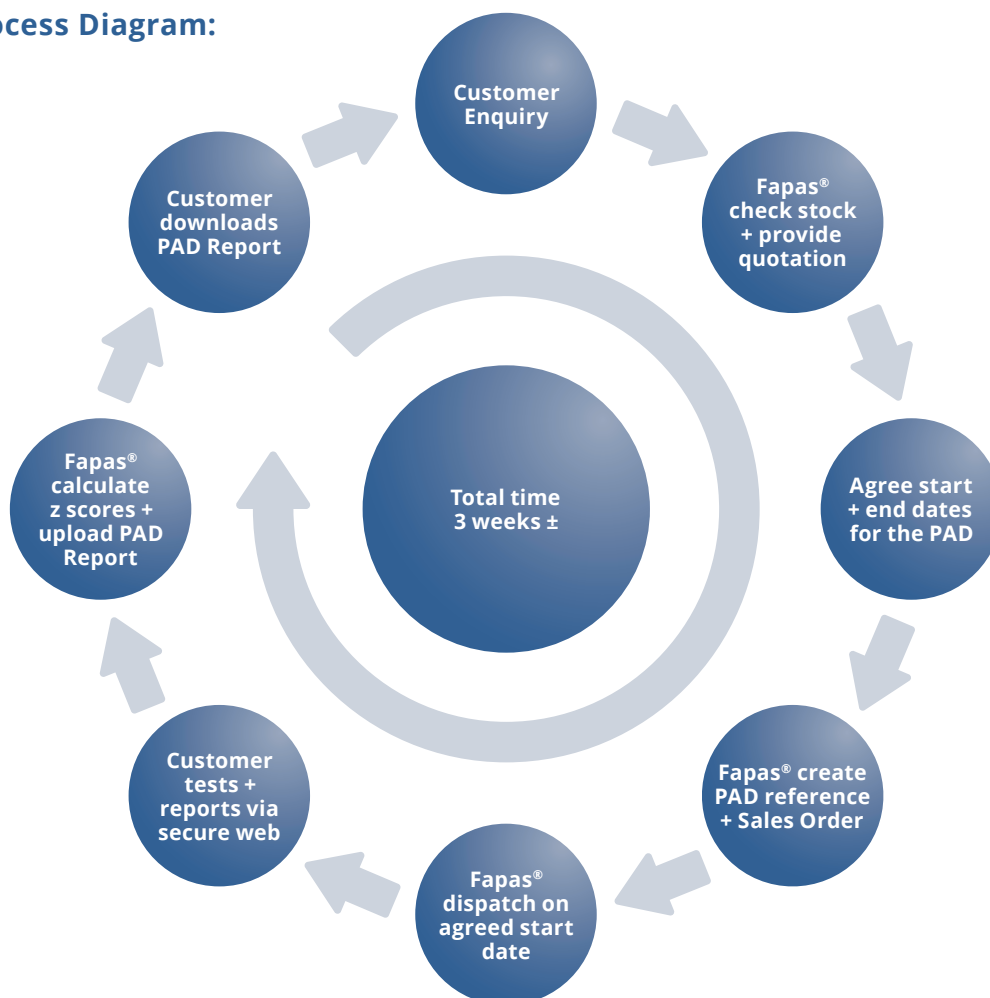
How does PAD work?

If you need a proficiency assessment urgently, the simplest way is to visit www.fapas.com/new-features and complete the PAD request form which is linked to the page. You could also check the available Proficiency Tests in case there is something suitable, which is available within your timescale, using our search function.

Once we receive your enquiry via email, (direct or the emailed PAD request form), we will check both our available Proficiency Tests and our stock of available past test materials to find a match. We will always suggest a 'live' PT if one is available, as this provides a full report rather than the limited assessment available with PAD. If we do not believe there is anything suitable, either in our current PTs or stock of test materials, we will say so, or suggest possible alternatives for you to consider.

If suitable, we will then provide a quote and agree the dispatch date and the end date by which the test results should be submitted. The end date can be shorter or longer to suit your needs. The PAD is then created with a unique reference and we process the order and issue the invoice for pre-payment. We then dispatch on the agreed date and you test and report results using the secure web portal as normal. Once the results are received by Fapas® we calculate the z scores and upload the PAD report for you to download (in the usual way for all Fapas® reports).

PAD Process Diagram:



Example PAD Report

Customer details

Contact Name
addr 1
addr 2
etc

COUNTRY



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PAD reference no.

dd Month Year

Dear Contact Name,

Fapas® PADNNNNNnnnn

Brief description

Your organisation recently submitted results in the above Fapas® Proficiency Assessment on Demand (PAD). This letter provides your z-scores for this PAD. The PAD has been provided in lieu of a full proficiency test where this was not immediately available and it provides a standalone external quality assurance. The PAD sample was provided blind (without prior disclosure of assigned values) with reporting of results required according to a fixed timeframe and using the Fapas® secure website.

Disclaimer: PAD is not accredited to ISO/IEC 17043

The test material provided was maize for the determination of Aflatoxin B₁, Ochratoxin A, Deoxynivalenol (DON) and Zearalenone (ZON).

The table below summarises your laboratory's performance in this assessment. Please note that this PAD is not a proficiency test according to the ISO 17043 definition and is not within scope of Fapas® accreditation to ISO 17043 (general requirements for proficiency testing providers).

The assigned values and standard deviations for proficiency were taken from the original proficiency test, from which this PAD test sample was provided. Your results were not included in the calculation of the consensus assigned values. The z-scores should only be used for evaluative purposes in consultation with your accreditation body.

Test materials and analytes

Origin of the data used in the PAD to calculate the assessment (z scores)

analyte	your result µg/kg	assigned value <i>x_a</i> , µg/kg	standard deviation for proficiency, <i>σ_p</i> , µg/kg	z-score
Aflatoxin B ₁	9.5	8.44	1.86	0.6
Ochratoxin A	5.34	6.35	1.40	-0.7
Deoxynivalenol (DON)	1340	1123	177	1.2
Zearalenone (ZON)	418	428	77.8	-0.1

Summary table of performance

Additional information from the original PT report

figures in italics indicate for information only

The consensus assigned values were derived from recovery corrected data.

[Fapas® Analyst name]
Proficiency Assessment on Demand Co-ordinator
On behalf of Fapas®

Advantages of PAD

PAD can be used whenever there is a need to demonstrate competence in analysis but there is no PT round available at the time when this competence needs to be demonstrated, for example, to auditors, internal management, or external customers. PAD may also be required if a method must be re-validated for any reason (perhaps due to instrument replacement or repair), as it can be used as the final confirmation that valid results are returned from an unknown sample.

PAD is also extremely useful if you are ready to have a new method accredited, but there is no available PT round to demonstrate the output of valid test results from a blind sample. This may also apply if you are seeking accreditation for the first time and require several test protocols to be assessed together, and possibly across several laboratories, at the same time.

PAD is therefore an extension of the proficiency testing services available from Fapas®; one that increases the flexibility of our PT programme and fills the gap between a full PT round and a Reference Material or QC material.



Sitting between QC material and a full round, PAD is also an extremely useful training tool for preparing to participate in full PT rounds. Whilst every effort is made by the providers to make proficiency tests as close to the real thing as possible, there are always differences, normally in the specific instructions provided for the preparation of the sample. It can be useful, therefore, to practise the analysis of a PT material outside an official round. This allows analysts to become familiar with any differences from the routine testing normally carried out in the laboratory and increase confidence when participating in full PT rounds. With PAD the assessment of performance is strictly private to the laboratory, it is not included in any kind of published report (normal PT round reports are published to all participants but keep the results confidential by using only numbers to identify laboratories).

PAD is not technically a proficiency test and it is not accredited to ISO/IEC 17043, but it can demonstrate the valid analysis of a blind test sample, with independent assessment, ready for when the next accredited proficiency test becomes available.












Real-World Use of PAD

Fapas® was approached by a group of laboratories working towards their ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation who were not able to find an available PT round to participate in. We were able to offer specific matrix and analyte combinations to meet their needs from our extensive range of prior proficiency tests and send these as blind test materials to the laboratories for analysis. These were dispatched in mid-December with an agreed deadline to report results by 25th January (6 weeks). PAD reports were issued to the participating laboratories on 28th January. This enabled the laboratories to receive independent feedback on their performance and allowed them to evaluate their readiness to apply for accreditation much earlier than if they had to wait for an appropriate PT round to become available.

The rapid turnaround of PAD reports means that laboratories receive the assessment as quickly as possible and can instigate any investigations (if necessary) in a timely manner after the analysis has been performed.

Proficiency Assessment on Demand

-  Is a flexible assessment of performance
-  Is complementary to your proficiency testing plan
-  Is a QA tool between PT and QCs/RMs
-  Is ready when you are*
-  Is blind testing
-  Is an independent assessment
-  Is *not* a proficiency test as defined in ISO / IEC 17043
-  Is *not* accredited to ISO / IEC 17043
-  Is available from Fapas®

*Subject to stock availability



PROFICIENCY TESTING

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