

Meaning of ACCREDIA (Italian accreditation body) accreditation pursuant to the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard

Accreditation pursuant to the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard represents formal recognition not only that the laboratory complies with the requirements of the system for all testing activities but also of technical competency concerning the accredited tests.

Accreditation guarantees users, through periodic technical checks made by the accreditation body, of the competency and impartiality of laboratories in carrying out the accredited tests.

In Italy, this function is performed by ACCREDIA (Italian Accreditation Body), the only national accreditation body recognised by the State on 22 December 2009, set up following the merger of SINAL and SINCERT as a non-profit organisation which carries out a public interest service. Through ACCREDIA, Italy complies with Regulation n° 765 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 which, since 1st January 2010, applies to accreditation and market surveillance in all EU countries.

Accreditation of test laboratories is granted by ACCREDIA based on compliance with the requirements established in the UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17025 standard and with the ACCREDIA requirements and only refers to the tests for which the laboratory has requested and obtained accreditation. Moreover, accreditation ensures that qualified and competent staff are employed, efficient and calibrated instruments are used, as well as suitable materials, environmental conditions are maintained so as not to invalidate the tests, a preliminary study is made of the performance of the method implemented by the laboratory, through validation and an estimate of the repeatability and uncertainty of the result, where applicable. These guarantees are periodically verified through sample checks on the accredited tests and on the quality management system.

Furthermore, ACCREDIA:

- publishes the accreditation rules and procedures, the lists of accredited test laboratories and the types of tests for which accreditation has been granted, as well as any accreditation suspension and/or withdrawal measures;
- takes part in the works of the international/supranational bodies operating in the sector of test laboratory accreditation;
- collaborates with national standardisation bodies to promote pertinent developments or updating of the technical rules;

- promotes studies, meetings and initiatives in the sector of specific competency, in conjunction with organisms and associations, of national and international interest;
- stipulates mutual recognition and/or reciprocity agreements with equivalent bodies in other countries.

Access to accreditation is voluntary and open to all test laboratories, whether an independent body or part of a much larger organisation (industry, research institute, university, etc.).

ACCREDIA guarantees that the laboratory is able to perform the accredited tests according to the pertinent rules or test methods but cannot be held responsible for the outcome of the tests. Accreditation doesn't imply the approval of a product by the Laboratory or ACCREDIA.

Accreditation is only granted by ACCREDIA for the test activities performed by the laboratory. Therefore, it does not include other activities such as expressing opinions or giving advice based on the test results. The laboratory is required to inform its clients of these limitations and to ensure they are abided by.

The official, up-to-date list of the laboratory's tests accredited by ACCREDIA is available on request, at any time, from the laboratory, on the Railway Certification Laboratory site and on the ACCREDIA site (www.accredia.it).

The accreditation contract with ACCREDIA is renewed every 4 years: on the basis of this contract, the laboratory can indicate that a certain number of tests have been "accredited". In particular, accreditation guarantees that the test reports with the ACCREDIA mark have been issued in compliance with the strictest, international requirements on conformity assessment and based on constant and close surveillance of operator behaviour through periodic checks. The test reports will only have the ACCREDIA mark if they contain at least one accredited test.

The laboratory is at the disposal of its clients for any further clarification concerning the meaning of "accredited test", ACCREDIA accreditation and the mandatory requirements.