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**Guidance for the use of repeatability,  
reproducibility and trueness  
estimates in measurement uncertainty  
evaluation**

*Lignes directrices relatives à l'utilisation d'estimations de la  
répétabilité, de la reproductibilité et de la justesse dans l'évaluation  
de l'incertitude de mesure*



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# Contents

Page

Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
<b>1 Scope</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4 Symbols</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Principles</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1 Individual results and measurement process performance	7
5.2 Applicability of reproducibility data	7
5.3 Basic equations for the statistical model	8
5.4 Repeatability data	9
<b>6 Evaluating uncertainty using repeatability, reproducibility and trueness estimates</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1 Procedure for evaluating measurement uncertainty	9
6.2 Differences between expected and actual precision	10
<b>7 Establishing the relevance of method performance data to measurement results from a particular measurement process</b>	<b>10</b>
7.1 General	10
7.2 Demonstrating control of the laboratory component of bias	10
7.2.1 General requirements	10
7.2.2 Methods of demonstrating control of the laboratory component of bias	10
7.2.3 Detection of significant laboratory component of bias	13
7.3 Verification of repeatability	13
7.4 Continued verification of performance	13
<b>8 Establishing relevance to the test item</b>	<b>13</b>
8.1 General	13
8.2 Sampling	14
8.2.1 Inclusion of sampling process	14
8.2.2 Inhomogeneity	14
8.3 Sample preparation and pre-treatment	14
8.4 Changes in test-item type	14
8.5 Variation of uncertainty with level of response	14
8.5.1 Adjusting $s_R$	14
8.5.2 Changes in other contributions to uncertainty	15
<b>9 Additional factors</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>10 General expression for combined standard uncertainty</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>11 Uncertainty budgets based on collaborative study data</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>12 Evaluation of uncertainty for a combined result</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>13 Expression of uncertainty information</b>	<b>18</b>
13.1 General expression	18
13.2 Choice of coverage factor	18
13.2.1 General	18
13.2.2 Level of confidence desired	18
13.2.3 Degrees of freedom associated with the estimate	18
<b>14 Comparison of method performance figures and uncertainty data</b>	<b>19</b>
14.1 Basic assumptions for comparison	19
14.2 Comparison procedure	19
14.3 Reasons for differences	20
<b>Annex A (informative) Approaches to uncertainty evaluation</b>	<b>21</b>

<b>Annex B (informative) Experimental uncertainty evaluation</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex C (informative) Examples of uncertainty calculations</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>37</b>

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 69, *Applications of statistical methods*, Subcommittee SC 6, *Measurement methods and results*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 21748:2010), of which it constitutes a minor revision.

The changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- minor change in the title (estimation to evaluation) to reflect preferred use of terms (see third list item);
- minor changes in wording and format to conform to current ISO Directives, which included the addition of [Clause 2](#) and renumbering of subsequent clauses;
- the phrases “estimation of measurement uncertainty” (and similar usage of “estimate”) and “evaluation of measurement uncertainty” (and similar usage of “evaluate”) have been amended to distinguish quantitative estimates of the components of uncertainty from the process of evaluations of measurement uncertainty, which can include additional relevant considerations;
- the word “standard” has been added before “uncertainty” where appropriate, for clarity;
- redundant definitions of terms defined as squared quantities, where the standard deviation was also defined [ $s^2_b$ ,  $s^2_{inh}$ ,  $s^2_L$ ,  $s^2_r$ ,  $s^2_W$ ,  $u^2(y)$ ,  $\sigma^2_L$ ,  $\sigma^2_r$ ] have been removed;
- in the definition of  $r_{ij}$ , “in the interval -1 to +1” was removed;
- in the definition of the term  $s_{inh}$ , “uncertainty” was changed to “standard deviation”;
- in the definitions for  $u(y)$ ,  $u_i(y)$  and  $u(Y)$ ,  $U(y)$ , equations were removed (not necessary for standard terms);
- the symbols from all definitions of terms where they had been included (combined standard uncertainty, coverage factor, expanded uncertainty, standard uncertainty) have been removed;

- the definition of  $y_0$  has been removed because the term is not used in the document;
- in 7.4, first dash, “quality control charts” has been replaced with “control charts”;
- a note has been added to [Clause 10](#) (previously Clause 9);
- in [13.1](#), [14.1](#) and [14.3](#) (previously 12.1, 13.1 and 13.3), “combined” has been added before “standard uncertainty”;
- in [13.2.1](#) and [13.2.2](#) (previously 12.2.1 and 12.2.2), the word “combined” has been removed before “expanded uncertainty”;
- in [A.1](#), changed italics “standard uncertainties” to standard text;
- in [A.1](#), 7th paragraph (3rd from end), “combined standard uncertainties  $u(x_i)$ ” has been changed to “additional standard uncertainties  $u(y)$ ”;
- in [C.3](#), title, “Uncertainty for AOAC method 990.12” has been replaced with “Uncertainty for measurements obtained by AOAC method 990.12”;
- in [C.3.2](#), “eight laboratories” has been replaced with “twelve laboratories”;
- in [C.4.4](#), “0,07 g/kg (0,7 % as mass fraction)” has been changed to “7 g/kg (0,7 % as mass fraction)”;
- References [\[27\]](#) and [\[28\]](#) have been updated.

## Introduction

Knowledge of the uncertainty associated with measurement results is essential to the interpretation of the results. Without quantitative evaluations of uncertainty, it is impossible to decide whether observed differences between results reflect more than experimental variability, whether test items comply with specifications, or whether laws based on limits have been broken. Without information on uncertainty, there is a risk of misinterpretation of results. Incorrect decisions taken on such a basis can result in unnecessary expenditure in industry, incorrect prosecution in law, or adverse health or social consequences.

Laboratories operating under ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation and related systems are accordingly required to evaluate measurement uncertainty for measurement and test results and report the uncertainty where relevant. ISO/IEC Guide 98-3 is a widely adopted standard approach. However, it applies to situations where a model of the measurement process is available. A very wide range of standard test methods is, however, subjected to collaborative study in accordance with ISO 5725-2. This document provides an appropriate and economic methodology for estimating uncertainty associated with the results of these methods, which complies fully with the relevant principles of the GUM, while taking account of method performance data obtained by collaborative study.

The general approach used in this document requires the following.

- Estimates of the repeatability, reproducibility and trueness of the method in use, obtained by collaborative study as described in ISO 5725-2, be available from published information about the test method in use. These provide estimates of the intra-laboratory and inter-laboratory components of variance, together with an estimate of uncertainty associated with the trueness of the method.
- The laboratory confirms that its implementation of the test method is consistent with the established performance of the test method by checking its own bias and precision. This confirms that the published data are applicable to the results obtained by the laboratory.
- Any influences on the measurement results that were not adequately covered by the collaborative study be identified and the variance associated with the results that could arise from these effects be quantified.

An uncertainty estimate is made by combining the relevant variance estimates in the manner prescribed by the GUM. This estimate can serve, with other contributions, in the evaluation of uncertainty, or in some cases can be the final, stated, uncertainty.

The general principle of using reproducibility data in uncertainty evaluation is sometimes called a “top-down” approach.

The dispersion of results obtained in a collaborative study is often also usefully compared with measurement uncertainty evaluated using GUM procedures as a test of full understanding of the method. Such comparisons will be more effective given a consistent methodology for estimating the same parameter using collaborative study data.





# Guidance for the use of repeatability, reproducibility and trueness estimates in measurement uncertainty evaluation

## 1 Scope

This document gives guidance for

- evaluation of measurement uncertainties using data obtained from studies conducted in accordance with ISO 5725-2, and
- comparison of collaborative study results with measurement uncertainty (MU) obtained using formal principles of uncertainty propagation (see [Clause 14](#)).

ISO 5725-3 provides additional models for studies of intermediate precision. However, while the same general approach may be applied to the use of such extended models, uncertainty evaluation using these models is not incorporated in this document.

This document is applicable to all measurement and test fields where an uncertainty associated with a result has to be determined.

This document does not describe the application of repeatability data in the absence of reproducibility data.

This document assumes that recognized, non-negligible systematic effects are corrected, either by applying a numerical correction as part of the method of measurement, or by investigation and removal of the cause of the effect.

The recommendations in this document are primarily for guidance. It is recognized that while the recommendations presented do form a valid approach to the evaluation of uncertainty for many purposes, it is also possible to adopt other suitable approaches.

In general, references to measurement results, methods and processes in this document are normally understood to apply also to testing results, methods and processes.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

NOTE Reference is made to “intermediate precision conditions”, which are discussed in detail in ISO 5725-3.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>