



Commissioner's Corner

July 2024

Question: What are Areas of Accreditation?

Answer: The ASHI Accreditation Program is established by the ASHI Bylaws and administered by the Accreditation Review Board (ARB). The Accreditation Program accredits laboratories for particular Areas of Accreditation (AoA) and testing categories and systems used by a laboratory to support the area of accreditation. Testing categories, such as HLA testing, crossmatching, etc., and systems, such as DNA testing, flow cytometry, etc., are easy to visualize and there are ASHI standards covering them. However, the only ASHI standards regarding AoAs are found in the laboratory director and technical supervisor standards, E.2.1 and E.3.1, respectively.

AoAs are defined and spelled out in the ARB Operations manual (OPS manual). The most current form of the OPS manual can be found on the ASHI website at https://www.ashi-hla.org/resource/resmgr/docs/accreditation/2024/2023_arb_operations_manual_.pdf.

Briefly, an area of accreditation is a clinical service-specific activity supported by the laboratory. The ASHI-defined AoAs are:

- a. HSC/BM Transplantation: Related Donor
- b. HSC/BM Transplantation: Unrelated Donor
- c. Solid Organ Transplantation: Deceased Donor
- d. Solid Organ Transplantation: Live Donor
- e. Histocompatibility Testing for Other Clinical Purposes
- f. Transfusion Support

The special requirements for Areas of Accreditation are spelled out in the OPS manual Chapter C, Section III.B (page 73 of the 2023 version). All lab personnel, directors-in-training, and ASHI exam takers are encouraged to know the AoAs and the requirements for each.

While there are 6 separate Areas of Accreditation, only one of them has no special requirements. That AoA is Histocompatibility Testing for Other Clinical Purposes (HTOCP). For the most part, HTOCP consists of HLA typing a patient for non-transplant purposes, such

as HLA-B27 testing for ankylosing spondylitis or HLA-DQ typing for celiac disease risk. However, any histocompatibility test, such as PRA testing, can fall under HTOCP if used for a clinical area other than transplant. Also, while other AoAs require clinical activity, HTOCP and transfusion support do not require clinical activity within the previous 12 months.