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Triad testing center awarded key aerospace accreditation

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A materials test center of the **Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering** in Greensboro has received an accreditation that's expected to help it attract more business from existing and new aerospace customers.

The Gateway Materials Test Center, which works with aerospace companies, was awarded the certificate by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board. It indicates to customers that the center's testing is reliable and accurate.

The accreditation comes nearly two years of preparation that included proficiency testing, calibrations, and documentation of processes and test standards.

John Merrill, executive director of Gateway University Research Park Inc., which houses the Joint School on its south campus, said the test center has been working over the past 18 months on testing that does not require accreditation. But the new credential will attract testing business that requires it.



JOINT SCHOOL OF NANOSCIENCE AND NANOENGINEERING

Gateway Materials Testing Center Manager Dr. Evan Kimbro in front of our Instron mechanical test frame.

Having accreditation "raises the bar to be competitive with some of the national players that are out there," Merrill said. "When you talk about aerospace companies that are bound by the rules and regulations of the FAA, they are looking for the highest level of accreditation that you can get. The one that we pursued, 17025, just happens to be one that is perceived as a positive for the aerospace industry."

Aerospace companies can turn to the center for testing work on items such as composite material panels to ensure they meet federal specifications, he said. Merrill declined to name the aerospace firms for which the center currently does testing.

"That's the kind of testing that someone like a HondaJet might need," Merrill said. "Oftentimes, it's beneficial for a company like that to get third-party testing, so it's third-party validation."

The center operates in a 3,000-square-foot space in a building adjacent to the Joint School.

Merrill said the materials test center used some of the funding it was awarded from the city of Greensboro's Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) Challenge to fund the process of obtaining the accreditation. Last year, the test center was awarded second place in Phase I and third place in Phase II of the challenge.

The joint school is a collaboration between N.C. A&T State University and UNC-Greensboro.

Katie Arcieri
Reporter
Triad Business Journal

