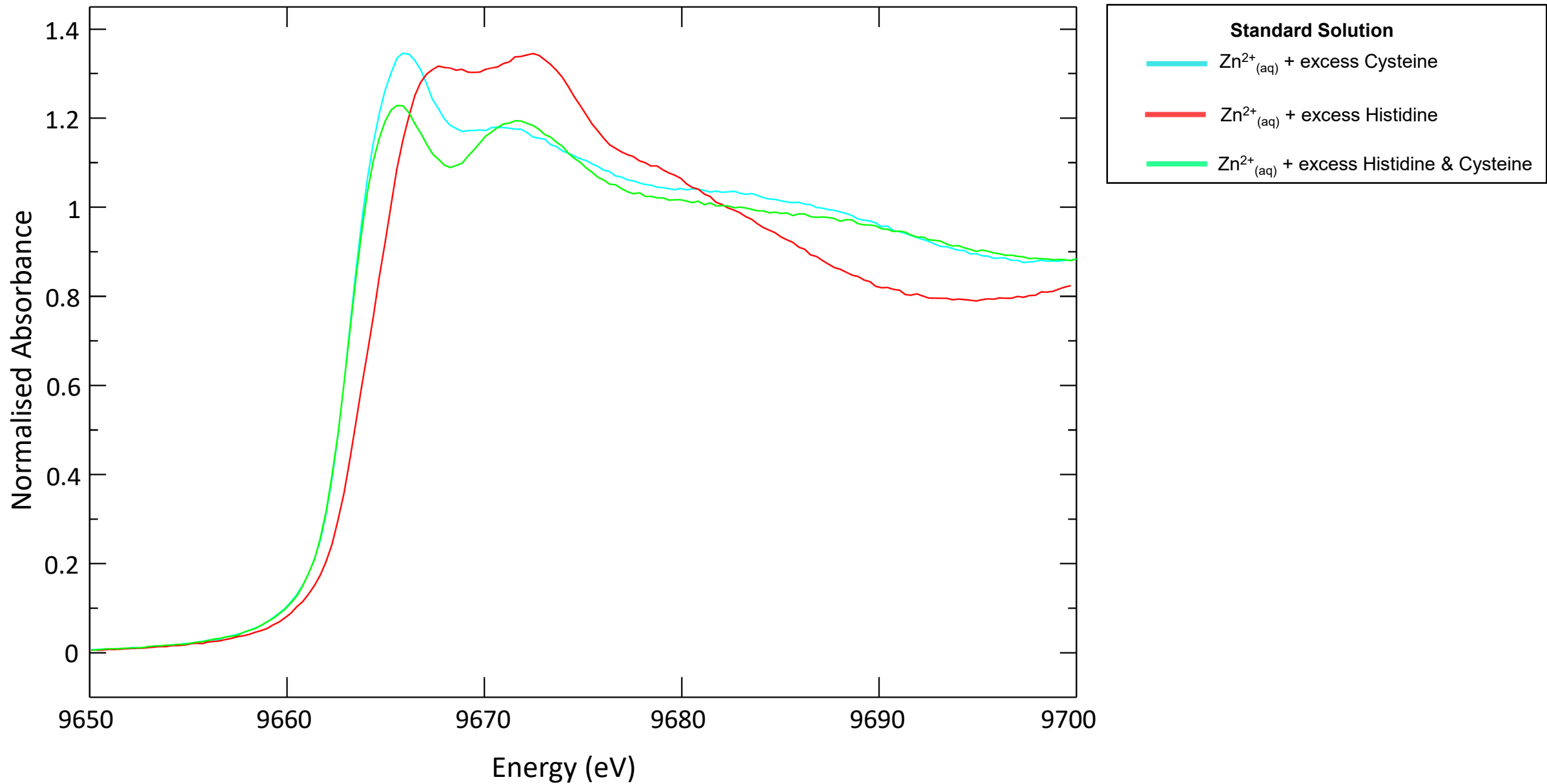
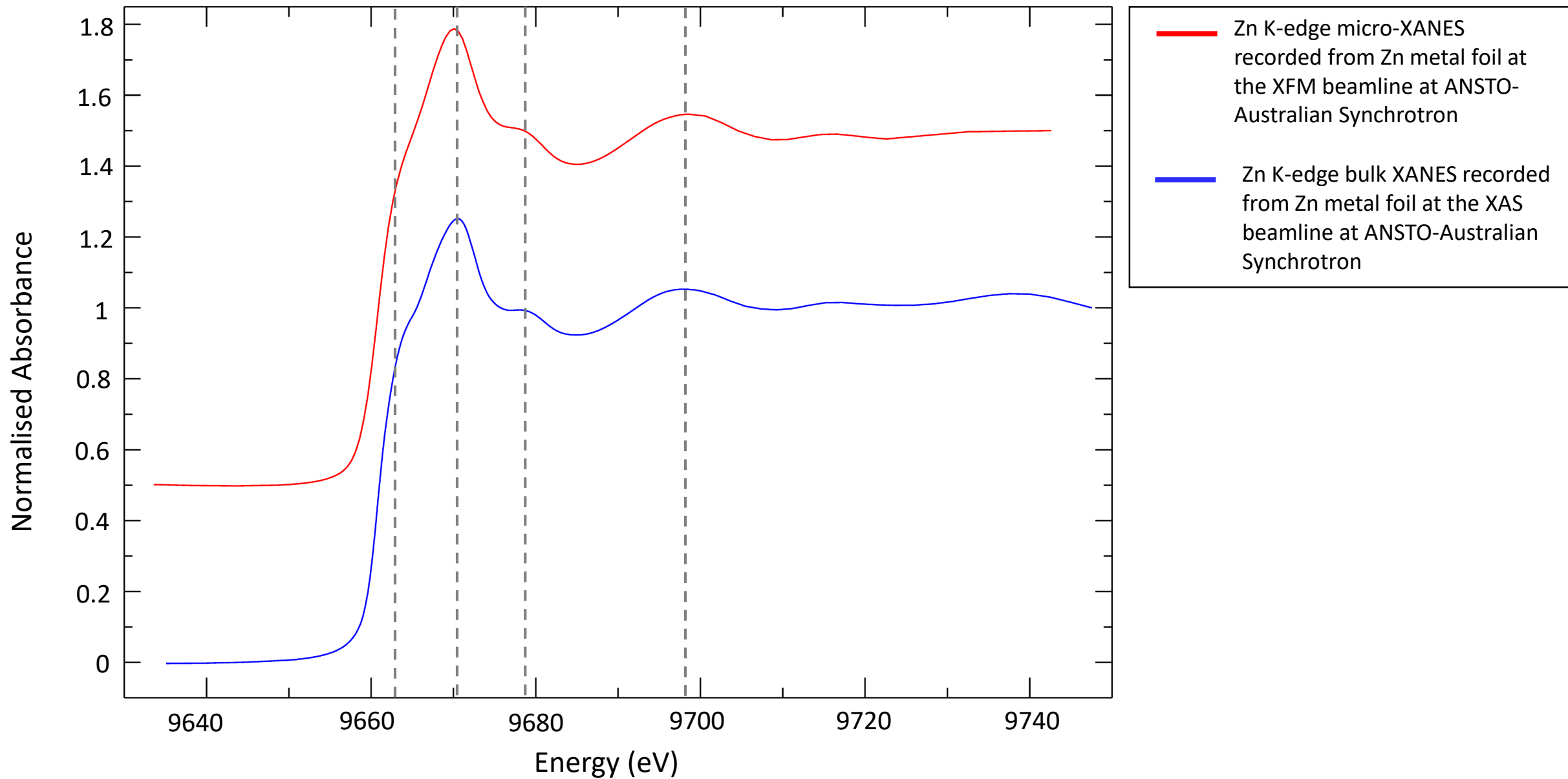


**Supporting Figure 1:** Visible appearance of Zn<sup>2+</sup> standard solutions after (A) the addition of concentration OH<sup>-</sup> as undertaken for synchrotron experiment, or (B) dilute OH<sup>-</sup>. The latter shows the appearance of a white precipitate attributed to Zn(OH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>s</sub>, which is known to have low solubility at pH 7. Dynamic light scattering, DLS (C) did not indicate increased presence of particles in standard solution A, relative to the Zn<sup>2+</sup> (Zinc nitrate hexahydrate solution). DLS measurements recorded on a Malvern Zetasizer Nano ZS.



**Supporting Figure 2:** Zn K-edge XANES of standard solutions of Zn<sup>2+</sup><sub>(aq)</sub> in the presence of excess histidine, excess cysteine, or a mixture of excess cysteine & histidine.



**Supporting Figure 3:** Zn K-edge XANES recorded from Zn metal energy calibration foils at the XFM and XAS beamlines at the ANSTO-Australian Synchrotron. Spectra are vertically offset for clarity.