Claims

1. A method of determining a tool path to machine a component, the method comprising the steps of: securing the component to a fixture having a zero point alignment datum, the component and the fixture having respective mobile reference points; aligning the fixture mobile reference points to target reference points on a machine tool; aligning a digitized model of the component to the component mobile reference points; determining the position of the component on the fixture from the component mobile reference points and the fixture mobile reference points; and adjusting a nominal tool path for the machine tool dependent on the position of the component, wherein the nominal tool path is adjusted before the fixture is located on the machine tool.

2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of locating the fixture on the machine tool using the zero point alignment datum and machining the component using the adjusted tool path.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the mobile reference points may be detected without contact of a detector.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the mobile reference points emit or reflect radiation.

5. A method according to any one of claims 1, wherein the location of one or more of the mobile reference points is determined by a touch probe.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the component is an aerofoil having a foot, a tip, a first flank and an opposing second flank, wherein the fixture has a foot clamp for clamping the foot of an aerofoil and a tip clamp for clamping the tip of the aerofoil, and further having an array of supports between the foot clamp and the tip clamp, each support within the array being independently addressable to one of the aerofoil flanks when the aerofoil is secured to the fixture.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the tip of the aerofoil has a surplus of material with the tip clamp clamping the surplus material.

8. A method according to claim 6, wherein each support is functionally connected to pneumatic or hydraulic actuator.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein each support has a locking device which locks the support against the aerofoil flank.

10. A method according to claim 6, wherein the fixture comprises at least three alignment pillars that is located beyond the array of supports and which may be detected by non contact means to provide mobile reference points.