
**Conformity assessment — General
requirements for bodies operating
certification of persons**

*Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences générales pour les
organismes de certification procédant à la certification de personnes*



COPYRIGHT PROTECTED DOCUMENT

© ISO 2012

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and microfilm, without permission in writing from either ISO at the address below or ISO's member body in the country of the requester.

ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction.....	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 General requirements	3
4.1 Legal matters	3
4.2 Responsibility for decision on certification.....	3
4.3 Management of impartiality	4
4.4 Finance and liability	4
5 Structural requirements.....	4
5.1 Management and organization structure	4
5.2 Structure of the certification body in relation to training.....	5
6 Resource requirements	5
6.1 General personnel requirements	5
6.2 Personnel involved in the certification activities	6
6.3 Outsourcing	7
6.4 Other resources	7
7 Records and information requirements	7
7.1 Records of applicants, candidates and certified persons	7
7.2 Public information	8
7.3 Confidentiality.....	8
7.4 Security	8
8 Certification schemes	9
9 Certification process requirements.....	10
9.1 Application process	10
9.2 Assessment process.....	10
9.3 Examination process	11
9.4 Decision on certification.....	11
9.5 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification	12
9.6 Recertification process.....	12
9.7 Use of certificates, logos and marks	13
9.8 Appeals against decisions on certification	14
9.9 Complaints	14
10 Management system requirements	15
10.1 General	15
10.2 General management system requirements	15
Annex A (informative) Principles for certification bodies for persons and their certification activities	19
Bibliography.....	21

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) is responsible for the development of International Standards and Guides.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft International Standards are circulated to the national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO/IEC 17024, was prepared by the *ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO)*.

It was circulated for voting to the national bodies of both ISO and IEC, and was approved by both organizations.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 17024:2003), which has been technically revised.

Introduction

This International Standard has been developed with the objective of achieving and promoting a globally accepted benchmark for organizations operating certification of persons. Certification for persons is one means of providing assurance that the certified person meets the requirements of the certification scheme. Confidence in the respective certification schemes for persons is achieved by means of a globally accepted process of assessment and periodic re-assessments of the competence of certified persons.

However, it is necessary to distinguish between situations where certification schemes for persons are justified and situations where other forms of qualification are more appropriate. The development of certification schemes for persons, in response to the ever increasing velocity of technological innovation and growing specialization of personnel, can compensate for variations in education and training and thus facilitate the global job market. Alternatives to certification can still be necessary in positions where public services, official or governmental operations are concerned.

In contrast to other types of conformity assessment bodies, such as management system certification bodies, one of the characteristic functions of the certification body for persons is to conduct an examination, which uses objective criteria to measure competence and scoring. While it is recognized that such an examination, if well planned and structured by the certification body for persons, can substantially serve to ensure impartiality of operations and reduce the risk of a conflict of interest, additional requirements have been included in this International Standard.

In either case, this International Standard can serve as the basis for the recognition of the certification bodies for persons and the certification schemes under which persons are certified, in order to facilitate their acceptance at the national and international levels. Only the harmonization of the system for developing and maintaining certification schemes for persons can establish the environment for mutual recognition and the global exchange of personnel.

This International Standard specifies requirements which ensure that certification bodies for persons operating certification schemes for persons operate in a consistent, comparable and reliable manner. The requirements in this International Standard are considered to be general requirements for bodies providing certification of persons. Certification of persons can only occur when there is a certification scheme. The certification scheme is designed to supplement the requirements included in this International Standard and include those requirements that the market needs or desires, or that are required by governments.

This International Standard can be used as a criteria document for accreditation or peer evaluation or designation by governmental authorities, scheme owners and others.

In this International Standard, the following verbal forms are used:

- “shall” indicates a requirement;
- “should” indicates a recommendation;
- “may” indicates a permission;
- “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

Further details can be found in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

1 Scope

This International Standard contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements, and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons.

NOTE For the purposes of this International Standard, the term "certification body" is used in place of the full term "certification body for persons", and the term "certification scheme" is used in place of the full term "certification scheme for persons".

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

3.1

certification process

activities by which a certification body determines that a person fulfils **certification requirements** (3.3), including application, assessment, decision on certification, recertification and use of **certificates** (3.5) and logos/marks

3.2

certification scheme

competence (3.6) and other requirements related to specific occupational or skilled categories of persons

NOTE For other requirements, see 8.3 and 8.4.

3.3

certification requirements

set of specified requirements, including requirements of the scheme to be fulfilled in order to establish or maintain certification

3.4

scheme owner

organization responsible for developing and maintaining a **certification scheme** (3.2)

NOTE The organization can be the certification body itself, a governmental authority, or other.

**3.5
certificate**
document issued by a certification body under the provisions of this International Standard, indicating that the named person has fulfilled the **certification requirements** (3.3)

NOTE See 9.4.7.

**3.6
competence**
ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results

**3.7
qualification**
demonstrated education, training and work experience, where applicable

**3.8
assessment**
process that evaluates a person's fulfilment of the requirements of the **certification scheme** (3.2)

**3.9
examination**
mechanism that is part of the **assessment** (3.8) which measures a **candidate's** (3.14) **competence** (3.6) by one or more means, such as written, oral, practical and observational, as defined in the **certification scheme** (3.2)

**3.10
examiner**
person competent to conduct and score an **examination** (3.9), where the examination requires professional judgement

**3.11
invigilator**
person authorized by the certification body who administers or supervises an **examination** (3.9), but does not evaluate the **competence** (3.6) of the **candidate** (3.14)

NOTE Other terms for invigilator are proctor, test administrator, supervisor.

**3.12
personnel**
individuals, internal or external, of the certification body carrying out activities for the certification body

NOTE These include committee members and volunteers.

**3.13
applicant**
person who has submitted an application to be admitted into the **certification process** (3.1)

**3.14
candidate
applicant** (3.13) who has fulfilled specified prerequisites and has been admitted to the **certification process** (3.1)

**3.15
impartiality**
presence of objectivity

NOTE 1 Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist, or are resolved, so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the certification body.

NOTE 2 Other terms that are useful in conveying the element of impartiality are: independence, freedom from conflict of interests, freedom from bias, lack of prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment, balance.

3.16

fairness

equal opportunity for success provided to each **candidate** (3.14) in the **certification process** (3.1)

3.17

validity

evidence that the **assessment** (3.8) measures what it is intended to measure, as defined by the **certification scheme** (3.2)

NOTE In this international Standard, validity is also used in its adjective form "valid".

3.18

reliability

indicator of the extent to which **examination** (3.9) scores are consistent across different examination times and locations, different examination forms and different **examiners** (3.10)

3.19

appeal

request by **applicant** (3.13), **candidate** (3.14) or certified person for reconsideration of any decision made by the certification body related to her/his desired certification status

3.20

complaint

expression of dissatisfaction, other than **appeal** (3.19), by any individual or organization to a certification body, relating to the activities of that body or a certified person, where a response is expected

NOTE Adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2004, definition 6.5.

3.21

interested party

individual, group or organization affected by the performance of a certified person or the certification body

EXAMPLES Certified person; user of the services of the certified person; employer of the certified person; consumer; governmental authority.

3.22

surveillance

periodic monitoring, during the periods of certification, of a certified person's performance to ensure continued compliance with the certification scheme

4 General requirements

4.1 Legal matters

The certification body shall be a legal entity, or a defined part of a legal entity, such that it can be held legally responsible for its certification activities. A governmental certification body is deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its governmental status.

4.2 Responsibility for decision on certification

The certification body shall be responsible for, shall retain authority for, and shall not delegate, its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding and reducing the scope of the certification, and suspending or withdrawing the certification.

4.3 Management of impartiality

4.3.1 The certification body shall document its structure, policies and procedures to manage impartiality and to ensure that the certification activities are undertaken impartially. The certification body shall have top management commitment to impartiality in certification activities. The certification body shall have a statement publicly accessible without request that it understands the importance of impartiality in carrying out its certification activities, manages conflict of interest and ensures the objectivity of its certification activities.

4.3.2 The certification body shall act impartially in relation to its applicants, candidates and certified persons.

4.3.3 Policies and procedures for certification of persons shall be fair among all applicants, candidates and certified persons.

4.3.4 Certification shall not be restricted on the grounds of undue financial or other limiting conditions, such as membership of an association or group. The certification body shall not use procedures to unfairly impede or inhibit access by applicants and candidates.

4.3.5 The certification body shall be responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality.

4.3.6 The certification body shall identify threats to its impartiality on an ongoing basis. This shall include those threats that arise from its activities, from its related bodies, from its relationships, or from the relationships of its personnel. However, such relationships do not necessarily present a body with a threat to impartiality.

NOTE 1 A relationship that threatens the impartiality of the body can be based on ownership, governance, management, personnel, shared resources, finances, contracts, marketing (including branding) and payment of a sales commission or other inducement for the referral of new applicants, etc.

NOTE 2 Threats to impartiality can be either actual or perceived.

NOTE 3 A related body is one which is linked to the certification body by common ownership, in whole or part, and has common members of the board of directors, contractual arrangements, common names, common staff, informal understanding or other means, such that the related body has a vested interest in any certification decision or has a potential ability to influence the process.

4.3.7 The certification body shall analyse, document and eliminate or minimize the potential conflict of interests arising from its certification activities. The certification body shall document and be able to demonstrate how it eliminates, minimizes or manages such threats. All potential sources of conflict of interest that are identified, whether they arise from within the certification body, such as assigning responsibilities to personnel, or from the activities of other persons, bodies or organizations, shall be covered.

4.3.8 Certification activities shall be structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality. This shall include balanced involvement of interested parties (see definition 3.21).

4.4 Finance and liability

The certification body shall have the financial resources necessary for the operation of a certification process and have adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover associated liabilities.

5 Structural requirements

5.1 Management and organization structure

5.1.1 The certification body activities shall be structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality.

5.1.2 The certification body shall document its organizational structure, describing the duties, responsibilities and authorities of management, certification personnel and any committee. When the

certification body is a defined part of a legal entity, documentation of the organizational structure shall include the line of authority and the relationship to other parts within the same legal entity.

The party/parties or individuals responsible for the following shall be identified:

- a) policies and procedures relating to the operation of the certification body;
- b) implementation of the policies and procedures;
- c) finances of the certification body;
- d) resources for certification activities;
- e) development and maintenance of the certification schemes;
- f) assessment activities;
- g) decisions on certification, including the granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding, reducing, suspending or withdrawing of the certification;
- h) contractual arrangements.

5.2 Structure of the certification body in relation to training

5.2.1 Completion of training may be a specified requirement of a certification scheme (see 8.3). The recognition/approval of training by the certification body shall not compromise impartiality or reduce the assessment and certification requirements.

5.2.2 The certification body shall provide information regarding education and training if they are used as pre-requisites for being eligible for certification. However, the certification body shall not state or imply that certification would be simpler, easier or less expensive if any specified education/training services are used.

5.2.3 Offering training and certification for persons within the same legal entity constitutes a threat to impartiality. A certification body that is part of a legal entity offering training shall:

- a) identify and document the associated threats to its impartiality on an ongoing basis: the body shall have a documented process to demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes those threats;
- b) demonstrate that all processes performed by the certification body are independent of training to ensure that confidentiality, information security and impartiality are not compromised;
- c) not give the impression that the use of both services would provide any advantage to the applicant;
- d) not require the candidates to complete the certification body's own education or training as an exclusive prerequisite when alternative education or training with an equivalent outcome exists;
- e) ensure that personnel do not serve as an examiner of a specific candidate they have trained for a period of two years from the date of the conclusion of the training activities: this interval may be shortened if the certification body demonstrates it does not compromise impartiality.

6 Resource requirements

6.1 General personnel requirements

6.1.1 The certification body shall manage and be responsible for the performance of all personnel involved in the certification process.

6.1.2 The certification body shall have sufficient personnel available with the necessary competence to perform certification functions relating to the type, range and volume of work performed.

6.1.3 The certification body shall define the competence requirements for personnel involved in the certification process. Personnel shall have competence for their specific tasks and responsibilities.

6.1.4 The certification body shall provide its personnel with documented instructions describing their duties and responsibilities. These instructions shall be kept up-to-date.

6.1.5 The certification body shall maintain up-to-date personnel records, including relevant information, e.g. qualifications, training, experience, professional affiliations, professional status, competence and known conflicts of interest.

6.1.6 Personnel acting on the certification body's behalf shall keep confidential all information obtained or created during the performance of the body's certification activities, except as required by law or where authorized by the applicant, candidate or certified person.

6.1.7 The certification body shall require its personnel to sign a document by which they commit themselves to comply with the rules defined by the certification body, including those relating to confidentiality, impartiality and conflict of interests.

NOTE Where permitted by law, other methods, including electronic signature, are acceptable.

6.1.8 When a certification body certifies a person it employs, the certification body shall adopt procedures to maintain impartiality.

6.2 Personnel involved in the certification activities

6.2.1 General

The certification body shall require its personnel to declare any potential conflict of interest in any candidate.

6.2.2 Requirements for examiners

6.2.2.1 Examiners shall meet the requirements of the certification body. The selection and approval processes shall ensure that examiners:

- a) understand the relevant certification scheme;
- b) are able to apply the examination procedures and documents;
- c) have competence in the field to be examined;
- d) are fluent, both in writing and orally, in the language of examination; in circumstances where an interpreter or a translator is used, the certification body shall have procedures in place to ensure that it does not affect the validity of the examination;
- e) have identified any known conflicts of interest to ensure impartial judgements are made.

6.2.2.2 The certification body shall monitor the performance of the examiners and the reliability of the examiners' judgements. Where deficiencies are found, corrective actions shall be taken.

NOTE Monitoring procedures for examiners can include, for example, on-site observation, review of examiners' reports, feedback from candidates.

6.2.2.3 If an examiner has a potential conflict of interest in the examination of a candidate, the certification body shall undertake measures to ensure that the confidentiality and impartiality of the examination are not compromised. These measures shall be recorded.

6.2.3 Requirements for other personnel involved in the assessment

6.2.3.1 The certification body shall have a documented description of the responsibilities and qualifications of other personnel involved in the assessment process (e.g. invigilators).

6.2.3.2 If other personnel involved in the assessment have a potential conflict of interest in the examination of a candidate, the certification body shall undertake measures to ensure that confidentiality and impartiality of the examination is not compromised. These measures shall be recorded.

6.3 Outsourcing

6.3.1 The certification body shall have a legally enforceable agreement covering the arrangements, including confidentiality and conflict of interests, with each body that provides outsourced work related to the certification process.

NOTE For the purposes of this International Standard, the terms “outsourcing” and “subcontracting” are considered to be synonyms.

6.3.2 When a certification body outsources work related to certification, the certification body shall:

- a) take full responsibility for all outsourced work;
- b) ensure that the body conducting outsourced work is competent and complies with the applicable provisions of this International Standard;
- c) assess and monitor the performance of the bodies conducting outsourced work in accordance with its documented procedures;
- d) have records to demonstrate that the bodies conducting outsourced work meet all requirements relevant to the outsourced work;
- e) maintain a list of the bodies conducting outsourced work.

6.4 Other resources

The certification body shall use adequate premises, including examination sites, equipment and resources for carrying out its certification activities.

7 Records and information requirements

7.1 Records of applicants, candidates and certified persons

7.1.1 The certification body shall maintain records. The records shall include a means to confirm the status of a certified person. The records shall demonstrate that the certification or recertification process has been effectively fulfilled, particularly with respect to application forms, assessment reports (which include examination records) and other documents relating to granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding and reducing the scope, and suspending or withdrawing certification.

7.1.2 The records shall be identified, managed and disposed of in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the information. The records shall be kept for an appropriate period of time, for a minimum of one full certification cycle, or as required by recognition arrangements, contractual, legal or other obligations.

7.1.3 The certification body shall have enforceable arrangements to require that the certified person informs the certification body, without delay, of matters that can affect the capability of the certified person to continue to fulfil the certification requirements.

7.2 Public information

7.2.1 The certification body shall verify and provide information, upon request, as to whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification, except where the law requires such information not to be disclosed.

7.2.2 The certification body shall make publicly available without request information regarding the scope of the certification scheme and a general description of the certification process.

7.2.3 All pre-requisites of the certification scheme shall be listed and the list shall be made publicly available without request.

7.2.4 Information provided by the certification body, including advertising, shall be accurate and not misleading.

7.3 Confidentiality

7.3.1 The certification body shall establish documented policies and procedures for the maintenance and release of information.

7.3.2 The certification body shall, through legally enforceable agreements, keep confidential all information obtained during the certification process. These agreements shall cover all personnel.

7.3.3 The certification body shall ensure that information obtained during the certification process, or from sources other than the applicant, candidate or certified person, is not disclosed to an unauthorized party without the written consent of the individual (applicant, candidate or certified person), except where the law requires such information to be disclosed.

7.3.4 When the certification body is required by law to release confidential information, the person concerned shall, unless prohibited by law, be notified as to what information will be provided.

7.3.5 The certification body shall ensure that the activities of related bodies do not compromise confidentiality.

7.4 Security

7.4.1 The certification body shall develop and document policies and procedures necessary to ensure security throughout the entire certification process and shall have measures in place to take corrective actions when security breaches occur.

7.4.2 Security policies and procedures shall include provisions to ensure the security of examination materials, taking into account the following:

- a) the locations of the materials (e.g. transportation, electronic delivery, disposal, storage, examination centre);
- b) the nature of the materials (e.g. electronic, paper, test equipment);
- c) the steps in the examination process (e.g. development, administration, results reporting);
- d) the threats arising from repeated use of examination materials.

7.4.3 Certification bodies shall prevent fraudulent examination practices by:

- a) requiring candidates to sign a non-disclosure agreement or other agreement indicating their commitment not to release confidential examination materials or participate in fraudulent test-taking practices;
- b) requiring an invigilator or examiner to be present;

- c) confirming the identity of the candidate;
- d) implementing procedures to prevent any unauthorized aids from being brought into the examination area;
- e) preventing candidates from gaining access to unauthorized aids during the examination;
- f) monitoring examination results for indications of cheating.

8 Certification schemes

8.1 There shall be a certification scheme for each category of certification.

8.2 A certification scheme shall contain the following elements:

- a) scope of certification;
- b) job and task description;
- c) required competence;
- d) abilities (when applicable);
- e) prerequisites (when applicable);
- f) code of conduct (when applicable).

NOTE 1 Abilities can include physical capabilities such as vision, hearing and mobility.

NOTE 2 A code of conduct describes the ethical or personal behaviour required by the scheme.

8.3 A certification scheme shall include the following certification process requirements:

- a) criteria for initial certification and recertification;
- b) assessment methods for initial certification and recertification;
- c) surveillance methods and criteria (if applicable);
- d) criteria for suspending and withdrawing certification;
- e) criteria for changing the scope or level of certification (if applicable).

8.4 The certification body shall have documents to demonstrate that, in the development and review of the certification scheme, the following are included:

- a) the involvement of appropriate experts;
- b) the use of an appropriate structure that fairly represents the interests of all parties significantly concerned, without any interest predominating;
- c) the identification and alignment of prerequisites, if applicable, with the competence requirements;
- d) the identification and alignment of the assessment mechanisms with the competence requirements;
- e) a job or practice analysis that is conducted and updated to:
 - identify the tasks for successful performance;

- identify the required competence for each task;
- identify prerequisites (if applicable);
- confirm the assessment mechanisms and examination content;
- identify the recertification requirements and interval.

NOTE Where the certification scheme has been developed by an entity other than the certification body, the job or practice analysis might already be available as part of that work. In this case, the certification body can obtain details from the scheme documentation for verification.

8.5 The certification body shall ensure that the certification scheme is reviewed and validated on an on-going, systematic basis.

8.6 When the certification body is not the scheme owner of a certification scheme it implements, the certification body shall ensure that the requirements contained in this clause (Clause 8) are met.

9 Certification process requirements

9.1 Application process

9.1.1 Upon application, the certification body shall make available an overview of the certification process in accordance with the certification scheme. As a minimum, the overview shall include the requirements for certification and its scope, a description of the assessment process, the applicant's rights, the duties of a certified person and the fees.

9.1.2 The certification body shall require the completion of an application, signed by the applicant seeking certification, which includes as a minimum the following:

- a) information required to identify the applicant, such as name, address and other information required by the certification scheme;
- b) the scope of the desired certification;
- c) a statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the certification requirements and to supply any information needed for the assessment;
- d) any supporting information to demonstrate objectively compliance with the scheme prerequisites;
- e) notice to the applicant of his/her opportunity to declare, within reason, a request for accommodation of special needs (see 9.2.5).

NOTE Where permitted by law, other methods, including electronic signature, are acceptable.

9.1.3 The certification body shall review the application to confirm that the applicant complies with the application requirements of the certification scheme.

9.2 Assessment process

9.2.1 The certification body shall implement the specific assessment methods and mechanisms as defined in the certification scheme.

9.2.2 When there is a change in the certification scheme which requires additional assessment, the certification body shall document and make publicly accessible without request the specific methods and mechanisms required to verify that certified persons comply with changed requirements.

NOTE Recertification can be used to achieve this verification.

9.2.3 The assessment shall be planned and structured in a manner which ensures that the scheme requirements are objectively and systematically verified with documented evidence to confirm the competence of the candidate.

9.2.4 The certification body shall verify the methods for assessing candidates. This verification shall ensure that each assessment is fair and valid.

9.2.5 The certification body shall verify and accommodate special needs, within reason and where the integrity of the assessment is not violated, taking into account national regulation [see 9.1.2 e)].

9.2.6 Where the certification body takes into account work performed by another body, it shall have appropriate reports, data and records to demonstrate that the results are equivalent to, and conform with, the requirements established by the certification scheme.

9.3 Examination process

9.3.1 Examinations shall be designed to assess competence based on, and consistent with, the scheme, by written, oral, practical, observational or other reliable and objective means. The design of examination requirements shall ensure the comparability of results of each single examination, both in content and difficulty, including the validity of fail/pass decisions.

9.3.2 The certification body shall have procedures to ensure a consistent examination administration.

9.3.3 Criteria for conditions for administering examinations shall be established, documented and monitored.

NOTE Conditions can include lighting, temperature, separation of candidates, noise, candidate safety, etc.

9.3.4 When technical equipment is used in the examination process, the equipment shall be verified or calibrated where appropriate.

9.3.5 Appropriate methodology and procedures (e.g. collecting and maintaining statistical data) shall be documented and implemented in order to reaffirm, at justified defined intervals, the fairness, validity, reliability and general performance of each examination, and that all identified deficiencies are corrected.

9.4 Decision on certification

9.4.1 The information gathered during the certification process shall be sufficient:

- a) for the certification body to make a decision on certification;
- b) for traceability in the event, for example, of an appeal or a complaint.

9.4.2 Decisions for granting, maintaining, recertifying, extending, reducing, suspending or withdrawing certification shall not be outsourced.

9.4.3 The certification body shall confine its decision on certification to those matters specifically related to the requirements of the certification scheme.

9.4.4 The decision on certification of a candidate shall be made solely by the certification body on the basis of the information gathered during the certification process. Personnel who make the decision on certification shall not have participated in the examination or training of the candidate.

9.4.5 The personnel who make certification decisions shall have sufficient knowledge of and experience with the certification process to determine if the certification requirements have been met.

9.4.6 Certification shall not be granted until all certification requirements are fulfilled.

9.4.7 The certification body shall provide a certificate to all certified persons. The certification body shall maintain sole ownership of the certificates. The certificate shall take the form of a letter, card or other medium, signed or authorized by a responsible member of the personnel of the certification body.

9.4.8 The certificates shall contain, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) the name of the certified person;
- b) a unique identification;
- c) the name of the certification body;
- d) a reference to the certification scheme, standard or other relevant documents, including issue date, if relevant;
- e) the scope of the certification including, if applicable, validity conditions and limitations;
- f) the effective date of certification and date of expiry.

9.4.9 The certificate shall be designed to reduce the risks of counterfeiting.

9.5 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification

9.5.1 The certification body shall have a policy and (a) documented procedure(s) for suspension or withdrawal of the certification, or reduction of the scope of certification, which shall specify the subsequent actions by the certification body.

9.5.2 Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension, in a time established by the certification body, shall result in withdrawal of the certification or reduction of the scope of certification.

9.5.3 The certification body shall have enforceable arrangements with the certified person to ensure that, in the event of suspension of certification, the certified person refrains from further promotion of the certification while it is suspended.

9.5.4 The certification body shall have enforceable arrangements with the certified person to ensure that, in the event of withdrawal of certification, the certified person refrains from use of all references to a certified status.

9.6 Recertification process

9.6.1 The certification body shall have (a) documented procedure(s) for implementation of the recertification process, in accordance with the certification scheme requirements.

9.6.2 The certification body shall ensure during the recertification process that it confirms continued competence of the certified person and ongoing compliance with current scheme requirements by the certified person.

9.6.3 The recertification period shall be based upon the scheme requirements. The rationale for the recertification period shall take into account, where relevant, the following:

- a) regulatory requirements;
- b) changes to normative documents;
- c) changes in the relevant scheme requirements;
- d) the nature and maturity of the industry or field in which the certified person is working;

- e) the risks resulting from an incompetent person;
- f) ongoing changes in technology, and requirements for certified persons;
- g) requirements of interested parties;
- h) the frequency and content of surveillance activities, if required by the scheme.

9.6.4 The selected recertification activity/activities shall be adequate to ensure that there is impartial assessment to confirm the continuing competence of the certified person.

9.6.5 In accordance with the certification scheme, recertification by the certification body shall consider at least the following:

- a) on-site assessment;
- b) professional development;
- c) structured interviews;
- d) confirmation of continuing satisfactory work and work experience records;
- e) examination;
- f) checks on physical capability in relation to the competence concerned.

NOTE "Physical capability" can require an evaluation by a health professional, or by a professional qualified to evaluate physical skills such as dexterity, strength and endurance, as well as the technical performance skills required for the certification.

9.7 Use of certificates, logos and marks

9.7.1 A certification body that provides a certification mark or logo shall document the conditions for use and shall appropriately manage the rights for usage and representation.

NOTE ISO/IEC 17030 provides requirements for use of third-party marks.

9.7.2 The certification body shall require that a certified person signs an agreement for the following reasons:

- a) to comply with the relevant provisions of the certification scheme;
- b) to make claims regarding certification only with respect to the scope for which certification has been granted;
- c) not to use the certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute, and not to make any statement regarding the certification which the certification body considers misleading or unauthorized;
- d) to discontinue the use of all claims to certification that contain any reference to the certification body or certification upon suspension or withdrawal of certification, and to return any certificates issued by the certification body;
- e) not to use the certificate in a misleading manner.

NOTE Where permitted by law, other methods, including electronic signature, are acceptable.

9.7.3 A certification body shall address, by means of corrective measures, any misuse of its certification mark or logo.

9.8 Appeals against decisions on certification

9.8.1 The certification body shall have a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals. The appeals-handling process shall include at least the following elements and methods:

- a) the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals;
- b) tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them;
- c) ensuring that, if applicable, appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken.

9.8.2 The policies and procedures shall ensure that all appeals are dealt with in a constructive, impartial and timely manner.

9.8.3 A description of the appeals-handling process shall be publicly accessible without request.

9.8.4 The certification body shall be responsible for all decisions at all levels of the appeals-handling process. The certification body shall ensure that the decision-making personnel engaged in the appeals-handling process are different from those who were involved in the decision being appealed.

9.8.5 Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

9.8.6 The certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal and shall provide the appellant with progress reports and the outcome.

9.8.7 The certification body shall give formal notice to the appellant of the end of the appeals-handling process.

9.9 Complaints

9.9.1 The certification body shall have a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints.

9.9.2 A description of the complaints-handling process shall be accessible without request. The procedures shall treat all parties fairly and equitably.

9.9.3 The policies and procedures shall ensure that all complaints are handled and processed in a constructive, impartial and timely manner. The complaints-handling process shall include at least the following elements and methods:

- a) an outline of the process for receiving, validating, investigating the complaint and deciding what actions are to be taken in response to it;
- b) tracking and recording complaints, including actions undertaken in response to them;
- c) ensuring that, if applicable, appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken.

9.9.4 Upon receipt of a complaint, the certification body shall confirm whether the complaint relates to certification activities for which it is responsible and, if so, shall respond accordingly.

9.9.5 Whenever possible, the certification body shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and shall provide the complainant with progress reports and the outcome.

9.9.6 The certification body receiving the complaint shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the complaint.

9.9.7 Whenever possible, the certification body shall give formal notice of the end of the complaints-handling process to the complainant.

9.9.8 Any substantiated complaint about a certified person shall also be referred by the certification body to the certified person in question at an appropriate time.

9.9.9 The complaints-handling process shall be subject to requirements for confidentiality, as it relates to the complainant and to the subject of the complaint.

9.9.10 The decision to be communicated to the complainant shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, personnel not previously involved in the subject of the complaint.

10 Management system requirements

10.1 General

The certification body shall establish, document, implement and maintain a management system that is capable of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the requirements of this International Standard. In addition to meeting the requirements of Clauses 4 to 9, the certification body shall implement a management system in accordance with either option A or option B, as follows:

- option A: a general management system which fulfils the requirements of 10.2; or
- option B: a body that has established and maintains a management system, in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001, and that is capable of supporting and demonstrating the consistent fulfilment of the requirements of this International Standard (ISO/IEC 17024), fulfils the management system requirements of 10.2.

10.2 General management system requirements

10.2.1 General

The certification body shall establish, document, implement and maintain a management system that is capable of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the requirements of this International Standard.

The certification body's top management shall establish and document policies and objectives for its activities.

The top management shall provide evidence of its commitment to the development and implementation of the management system in accordance with the requirements of this International Standard. The top management shall ensure that the policies are understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the certification body's organization.

The certification body's top management shall appoint a member of management who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have responsibility and authority that include:

- a) ensuring that processes and procedures needed for the management system are established, implemented and maintained;
- b) reporting to top management on the performance of the management system and any need for improvement.

10.2.2 Management system documentation

Applicable requirements of this International Standard shall be documented. The certification body shall ensure that the management system documentation is provided to all relevant personnel.

10.2.3 Control of documents

The certification body shall establish procedures to control the documents (internal and external) that relate to the fulfilment of this International Standard. The procedures shall define the controls needed to:

- a) approve documents for adequacy prior to issue;
- b) review and update as necessary and re-approve documents;
- c) ensure that changes and the current revision status of documents are identified;
- d) ensure that relevant versions of applicable documents are provided at points of use;
- e) ensure that documents remain legible and readily identifiable;
- f) ensure that documents of external origin are identified and their distribution controlled;
- g) prevent the unintended use of obsolete documents and apply suitable identification if they are retained for any purpose.

NOTE Documentation can be in any form or type of medium.

10.2.4 Control of records

The certification body shall establish procedures to define the controls needed for the identification, storage, protection, retrieval, retention time and disposition of its records related to the fulfilment of this International Standard.

The certification body shall establish procedures for retaining records for a period consistent with its contractual and legal obligations. Access to these records shall be consistent with the confidentiality arrangements.

NOTE For requirements for records on applicants, candidates and certified persons, see also 7.1.

10.2.5 Management review

10.2.5.1 General

The certification body's top management shall establish procedures to review its management system at planned intervals, in order to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness, including the stated policies and objectives related to the fulfilment of this International Standard. These reviews shall be conducted at least once every 12 months and shall be documented.

10.2.5.2 Review input

The input to the management review shall include information related to the following:

- a) results of internal and external audits (e.g. accreditation body assessment);
- b) feedback from applicants, candidates, certified persons and interested parties related to the fulfilment of this International Standard;
- c) safeguarding impartiality;
- d) the status of preventive and corrective actions;
- e) follow-up actions from previous management reviews;

- f) the fulfilment of objectives;
- g) changes that could affect the management system;
- h) appeals and complaints.

10.2.5.3 Review output

The output from the management review shall include as a minimum decisions and actions related to the following:

- a) improvement of the effectiveness of the management system and its processes;
- b) improvement of the certification services related to the fulfilment of this International Standard;
- c) resource needs.

10.2.6 Internal audits

10.2.6.1 The certification body shall establish procedures for internal audits to verify that it fulfils the requirements of this International Standard and that the management system is effectively implemented and maintained.

NOTE ISO 19011 provides guidelines for conducting internal audits.

10.2.6.2 An audit programme shall be planned, taking into consideration the importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of previous audits.

10.2.6.3 Internal audits shall be performed at least once every 12 months. The frequency of internal audits may be reduced if the certification body demonstrates that its management system continues to be effectively implemented in accordance with this International Standard and has proven stability.

10.2.6.4 The certification body shall ensure that:

- a) internal audits are conducted by competent personnel, knowledgeable in the certification process, auditing and the requirements of this International Standard;
- b) auditors do not audit their own work;
- c) personnel responsible for the area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;
- d) any actions resulting from internal audits are taken in a timely and appropriate manner;
- e) any opportunities for improvement are identified.

10.2.7 Corrective actions

The certification body shall establish (a) procedure(s) for identification and management of nonconformities in its operations. The certification body shall also, where necessary, take actions to eliminate the causes of nonconformities in order to prevent recurrence. Corrective actions shall be appropriate to the impact of the problems encountered. The procedures shall define requirements for the following:

- a) identifying nonconformities;
- b) determining the causes of nonconformity;
- c) correcting nonconformities;

- d) evaluating the need for actions to ensure that nonconformities do not recur;
- e) determining and implementing the actions needed in a timely manner;
- f) recording the results of actions taken;
- g) reviewing the effectiveness of corrective actions.

10.2.8 Preventive actions

The certification body shall establish (a) procedure(s) for taking preventive actions to eliminate the causes of potential nonconformities. Preventive actions taken shall be appropriate to the probable impact of the potential problems. The procedures for preventive actions shall define requirements for the following:

- a) identifying potential nonconformities and their causes;
- b) evaluating the need for action to prevent the occurrence of nonconformities;
- c) determining and implementing the action needed;
- d) recording the results of actions taken;
- e) reviewing the effectiveness of the preventive actions taken.

NOTE The procedures for corrective and preventive actions do not necessarily have to be separate.

Annex A (informative)

Principles for certification bodies for persons and their certification activities

A.1 General

A.1.1 This International Standard does not give specific requirements for all situations that can occur. These principles should be applied as guidance for the decisions that may need to be taken for unanticipated situations. Principles are not requirements.

A.1.2 The overall purpose of certification of persons is to recognize an individual's competence to perform a task or job.

A.1.3 The certification body has a responsibility to ensure that only those persons who demonstrate competence are awarded certification.

A.1.4 Certification of persons provides value through public confidence and trust. Public confidence relies on a valid assessment of competence, by a third party, reconfirmed at defined intervals.

A.1.5 The certification body should act in a responsible manner so as to provide confidence to interested parties in its competence, impartiality and integrity.

A.2 Impartiality

A.2.1 Certification of a person should be based on objective evidence obtained by the certification body through a fair, valid and reliable assessment, and not influenced by other interests or by other parties.

A.2.2 It is necessary for certification bodies and their personnel to be and to be perceived to be impartial in order to give confidence in their activities and their outcomes.

A.2.3 Threats to impartiality include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) self-interest threats: threats that arise from a person or body acting in its own interest to benefit itself;
- b) subjectivity threats: threats that arise when personal bias overrules objective evidence;
- c) familiarity threats: threats that arise from a person being familiar with or trusting of another person, e.g. an examiner or certification body personnel developing a relationship with a candidate that affects the ability to reach an objective judgement;
- d) intimidation threats: threats that prevent a certification body or its personnel from acting objectively due to fear of a candidate or other interested party;
- e) financial threats: the source of revenue for a certification body can be a threat to impartiality.

A.3 Competence

Competence of the personnel of the certification body is necessary to deliver certification that provides confidence.

A.4 Confidentiality and openness

Managing the balance between confidentiality and openness affects stakeholders' trust and their perception of value in the certification activities.

A.5 Responsiveness to complaints and appeals

The effective resolution of complaints and appeals is an important means of protection for the certification body and interested parties against errors, omissions or unreasonable behaviour.

A.6 Responsibility

The certification body has the responsibility to obtain sufficient objective evidence upon which to base a certification decision.

Bibliography

- [1] ISO 9001, *Quality management systems — Requirements*
- [2] ISO 19011, *Guidelines for auditing management systems*
- [3] ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

