INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO/IEC 17024

First edition
2003-04-01

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

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ISO/IEC 17024:2003
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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member 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 and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC 17024 was prepared by ISO/CASCO, *Committee on Conformity Assessment*.

This first edition of ISO/IEC 17024 is based on EN 45013:1989.

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Introduction

This International Standard has been drawn up with the objective of achieving and promoting a globally accepted benchmark for organizations operating certification of persons. Certification of persons is one means of providing assurance that the certified person meets the requirements of the certification scheme. Confidence in the respective certification schemes is achieved by means of a globally accepted process of assessment, subsequent surveillance 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 new certification schemes for persons, in response to the ever increasing velocity of technological innovation and growing specialization of personnel, may compensate for variations in education and training and thus facilitate the global job market. Alternatives to certification may 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/ registration bodies, one of the characteristic functions of the personnel certification body is to conduct an examination, which uses objective criteria for competence and scoring. While it is recognized that such an examination, if well planned and structured by the certification body, can substantially serve to ensure impartiality of operations and reduce the risk of a conflict of interest, alternative requirements have been included in this International Standard.

In either case, this International Standard should be the basis for the recognition of the certification bodies and their certification schemes, 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 operating certification schemes for persons operate in a consistent, comparable and reliable manner. The requirements in this International Standard are to be considered as general requirements for bodies operating certification schemes for persons and therefore may have to be supplemented in response to additional demonstrated market need/desire (i.e. improvement of the profession) or specific government requirements (i.e. protection of the public).

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Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

1 Scope

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

NOTE   In some countries, bodies which verify the conformity of the competence of persons against specified requirements are called "certification bodies", in other countries "registration bodies", in others "assessment and registration bodies" or "certification/registration/licensure bodies", and in others still "registrars". This International Standard uses the term "certification body". However, this use is not limiting.

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 Guide 2:1996, *Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary*

ISO 9000:2000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2 and ISO 9000 and the following apply.

3.1
appeal
request by applicant, candidate or certified person for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the certification body related to her/his desired certification status

3.2
candidate
applicant who has fulfilled specified prerequisites, allowing his/her participation in the certification process

3.3
certification process
all activities by which a certification body establishes that a person fulfils specified competence requirements, including application, evaluation, decision on certification, surveillance and recertification, use of certificates and logos/marks

3.4
certification scheme
specific certification requirements related to specified categories of persons to which the same particular standards and rules, and the same procedures apply

3.5
certification system
set of procedures and resources for carrying out the certification process as per a certification scheme, leading to the issue of a certificate of competence including maintenance

3.6
competence
demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and/or skills and, where relevant, demonstrated personal attributes, as defined in the certification scheme

3.7
complaint
conformity assessment request, other than an appeal, by any organization or individual to a certification body, for corrective action relating to the activities of that body or to those of any of its customers

3.8
evaluation
process that assesses a person's fulfilment of the requirements of the scheme, leading to a decision on certification

3.9
examination
mechanism that is part of the evaluation, which measures a candidate's competence by one or more means such as written, oral, practical and observational

3.10
examiner
person with relevant technical and personal qualifications, competent to conduct and/or score an examination

3.11
qualification
demonstration of personal attributes, education, training and/or work experience

4   Requirements for certification bodies

4.1   Certification body

4.1.1   The policies and procedures of the certification body and their administration shall be related to the criteria in which certification is sought, shall be fair and equitable among all candidates, and shall comply with all applicable regulations and statutory requirements. The certification body shall not use procedures to impede or inhibit access by applicants and candidates, except as provided for in this International Standard.

4.1.2   The certification body shall define policies and procedures for granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding and reducing the scope of the desired certification, and suspending or withdrawing the certification.

4.1.3   The certification body shall confine its requirements, evaluation and decision on certification to those matters specifically related to the scope of the desired certification.

4.2   Organizational structure

4.2.1   The certification body shall be structured so as to give confidence to interested parties in its competence, impartiality and integrity. In particular, the certification body:

a)   shall be independent and impartial in relation to its applicants, candidates and certified persons, including their employers and their customers, and shall take all possible steps to assure ethical operations;

b) shall be responsible for its decisions relating to the granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding and reducing the scope, or suspending and withdrawing the certification;

c) shall identify the management [group(s) or person(s)] which shall have overall responsibility for

1) evaluation, certification and surveillance as defined in this International Standard, the applicable competence standards and other relevant documents,

2) the formulation of policies relating to the operation of the certification body, with regard to certification of persons,

3) decisions on certification,

4) the implementation of its policies and procedures,

5) the finances of the certification body, and

6) the delegation of authority to any committees or individuals to undertake defined activities on its behalf;

d) shall have documents establishing it as a legal entity or part of a legal entity.

4.2.2 The certification body shall have a documented structure which safeguards impartiality, including provisions to assure the impartiality of the operations of the certification body. This structure shall enable the participation of all parties significantly concerned in the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the certification system, without any particular interest predominating.

4.2.3 The certification body shall appoint a scheme committee, which shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of the certification scheme for each type of certification being considered. The scheme committee shall fairly and equitably represent the interests of all parties significantly concerned with the certification scheme, without any particular interest predominating. Where a certification scheme is developed by organizations other than the certification body, the respective developer of the scheme shall adhere to the same principles.

4.2.4 The certification body

a) shall have the financial resources necessary for the operation of a certification system and to cover associated liabilities,

b) shall have policies and procedures that distinguish between the certification of persons and any other activities, and

c) shall assure that the activities of bodies related to it do not compromise the confidentiality and impartiality of its certification.

4.2.5 The certification body shall not offer or provide training, or aid others in the preparation of such services, unless it demonstrates how training is independent of the evaluation and certification of persons to ensure that confidentiality and impartiality are not compromised.

4.2.6 The certification body shall define policies and procedures (e.g. code of conduct) for the resolution of appeals and complaints received from applicants, candidates, certified persons and their employers, and other parties about the certification process and criteria, as well as policies and procedures for the performance of certified persons. These policies and procedures shall ensure that appeals and complaints are resolved independently, in an unbiased manner.

4.2.7 The certification body shall employ or contract enough people with the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience to perform certification functions relating to the type, range and volume of work performed, under a responsible management.