INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO/IEC 17024

Second edition
2012-07-01

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

Reference number
ISO/IEC 17024:2012(E)

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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.

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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

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3.11
invigilator

ISO/IEC 17024:2012
https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/5593beaa-3b5c-43f0-99aa-
11863ad1303f/iso-iec-17024-2012

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.