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Commercial Workforce Credentialing Council

Guidance Documents

and

Sample Policy/Procedure Templates

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Introduction

This document provides guidance information, sample policies and procedures, and template documents to organizations seeking to become accredited personnel certification bodies. Certification bodies (organizations certifying the competence of persons) wishing to seek accreditation against **ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons** must provide evidence that they are meeting the provisions of the standard. This document provides information and sample policies and procedures to help certification bodies develop evidence to show they are meeting the standard.

A prospective certification body should understand the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 standard before working with these documents. An introduction to the standard provides a foundation for the guidance contained in this document and what is expected of the certification body to become an accredited certification provider. To use these documents, a certification body should first review each subject area in the table of contents. The certification body must address each area by developing a procedure for that area as well as a policy that describes the situation in which the procedure will be used.

Policies and procedures should be developed and documented. Policies are courses of actions that dictate what an organization is supposed to do. Policies are statements of direction agreed upon by management or a board and provide direction to the organization toward its desired goals. These documents are the “rules” of the organization.

Procedures describe *how* the policies are fulfilled. Procedures are implementation protocols that show the step-by-step methods to fulfill the policies of an organization. Procedures document for employees what they are to do as part of their jobs. These are the “instructions” of the organization.

Although not every clause in ISO/IEC 17024 demands a documented policy and procedure, the certification body would be well advised to review each clause in the standard and to develop a policy and a procedure for meeting each clause. An example of a clause that requires documented policies and procedures is Clause 7.3.1, which states, “*The certification body shall establish documented policies and procedures for the maintenance and release of information.*” This clause requires the certification body to have a policy that lists how all confidential information is maintained, as well as how and when it is to be released. A certification body’s confidential information includes all information pertaining to the candidate such as candidate records, personal information, and candidate examination scores. Areas within this document that pertain to confidential candidate data include:

- Confidentiality
- Public Information
- Publication of Certificant Status
- Records and Recordkeeping
- Releasing Candidate or Certificant Information.

Policies would need to be developed that address each of these areas. These policies would state that all confidential and candidate information obtained during the certification process shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed without approval from the candidate. Additionally, procedures should be developed that

address how the certification body ensures confidential information (signed non-disclosure agreements, etc.) is kept confidential and the how information is released if and when candidate approval is obtained.

Continuing with the above example, Clause 7.3.5 states, “*The certification body shall ensure that the activities of related bodies do not compromise confidentiality.*” This clause does not specifically state that a policy or procedure must be developed to address it. Nor does it state that the certification body must provide documented evidence that it is meeting the clause. However, the certification body should develop a policy and a procedure to address the clause.

An example of a policy to address Clause 7.3.5 might be, “XXX Certification Body does not permit any activities of related bodies to compromise confidentiality.” An example of a procedure to ensure this would be:

- Once each year, XXX Certification Body creates a list of all related bodies.
- All activities of related bodies are reviewed to determine the potential for compromise of confidentiality.
- Any potential for compromise of confidentiality is reviewed and systems put into place to ensure confidentiality is not compromised.
- This procedure is implemented annually.

This document is designed to provide information about the content that should be addressed in each policy and procedure developed by the certification body. The subject areas are arranged alphabetically for ease of locating desired topics. Certification bodies should use this document as guidance in the development of policies and procedures that address each clause of ISO/IEC 17024.

Introduction (short version)

This document provides guidance information, sample policies and procedures, and template documents to organizations seeking to become accredited personnel certification bodies. Certification bodies (organizations certifying the competence of persons) wishing to seek accreditation against **ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons** must provide evidence that they are meeting the provisions of the standard. This document provides information and sample policies and procedures to help the certification body develop evidence to show it is meeting the standard.

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Advertising

Guidance on Advertising

The certification body needs to ensure that all marketing for the certification is accurate and not misleading (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.4). Each certification body should develop a written policy for its commitment to ensuring that all marketing materials are accurate and not misleading.

Sample Template Policy for Advertising

XXX Certification Body ensures that all advertising and marketing for the XXX Certification Program are accurate and not misleading. XXX Certification Body conducts an annual review of its advertising and marketing for the XXX Certification Program as part of its management systems review, and corrective actions are taken to address any identified deficiencies.

Appeals of Adverse Decisions

Guidance on Appeals of Adverse Decisions

The certification body must have policies and a procedure for appeals of any adverse decisions made against the candidate or certified person (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.8). The appeals policy should include all adverse decisions, including denial of eligibility to earn the certification, denial of recertification to maintain certification, any sanctions resulting from an investigation of a violation of the Code of Ethics, or any other condition for awarding and maintaining certification. At a minimum, the policy should include:

- Conditions for requesting an appeal
- Procedures for pursuing an appeal
- Deadlines
- Supporting documentation
- Procedures for conducting an appeal
- Administrative processes.

Sample Template Procedure and Policies on Appeals of Adverse Decisions

XXX Certification Body is committed to a fair appeals process for any applicant, candidate, or certified person with any adverse outcome of a decision. The appellant shall send all appeals of decisions made by the XXX Certification Body in writing to XXX no later than 30 calendar days from the postmark date on the original letter of denial. The candidate or certified person shall clearly set forth the reasons he or she believes the decision was improperly decided, including documentation to support such claim.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the XXX Certification Body appeals committee will gather all evidence in the case and make final determination. Within 60 calendar days from the date of the correspondence, XXX will send the candidate a letter with its final decision.

I. Responsibilities of the appeals committee

The appeals committee is responsible for hearing appeals in situations in which an adverse decision about a certified person has been recommended. The appeals committee shall make final determinations about the appeal.

II. Policies of the appeals committee

- a) Establishing the appeals requirements for recommended sanctions in findings of violations of the code of ethics
- b) Conducting fair and unbiased appeal hearings
- c) Confidentiality of information
- d) Conflict of interest
- e) Meeting attendance and participation
- f) Length of service term on the appeals committee.

III. Statement of qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the appeals committee. Its members shall:

- a) Be recruited from the pool of certified persons in good standing, or from another source of reputable individuals.
- b) Represent the professional experience typical of the certified population.
- c) Represent the employment demographics and experiences typical of the population of the certified person.
- d) Understand the guidelines and processes used by the ethics and disciplinary committee in conducting investigations and making determinations, including sanctions.
- e) Articulate and provide evidence to support denials of appeals.
- f) Commit the time and resources required to perform their functions.

Appeals of Denial of Special Needs

Guidance on Appeals of Denial of Special Needs

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for appeals when applications for special accommodations are denied. The procedure should allow a candidate to present additional information about his or her application for special accommodation to a neutral party (appeals committee) for review and decision.

Application Process for Candidates

Guidance on Application Process for Candidates

The certification body shall have an application for certification and shall require all applicants for certification to complete the application (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2).

At a minimum, the application shall contain:

- Information required to identify the candidate
- The scope of the desired certification
- A statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the certification requirements and to supply any information needed for the assessment
- Any supporting information to demonstrate objectively compliance with the scheme prerequisites
- Notice to the applicant of his or her opportunity to declare, within reason, a request for accommodation of special needs.

The application may take one of many forms, including an electronic application, a written statement, or a paper application. Simple acknowledgment of the provisions above may be considered an application.

The certification body should establish a policy for applying for certification that addresses, at a minimum:

- Means of application, electronic, mail, fax
- Payment options such as credit card, check.

The certification body should establish through a policy how it will communicate with the applicant or candidate. The policy for corresponding with applicants should include:

- Medium of communication—electronic, written
- Name and contact information of contact person in certification office.

Applications: Procedures for Processing

Guidance on Applications: Procedures for Processing

The certification body must have a policy and a procedure for processing applications. Upon initial application, the certification body must make available to the applicant an overview of the certification process in accordance with the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.1). The certification body shall require an application that is signed by the applicant (where permitted by law, other methods, including electronic signatures, are acceptable), which include:

- Information required to identify the applicant (name, address, etc.) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2.a)
- The scope of the desired certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2.b)
- A statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the certification requirements and to supply any information needed for the assessment (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2.c)
- Any supporting information to objectively demonstrate compliance with the scheme prerequisites (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2.d)
- Notice to the applicant of his or her opportunity to make a reasonable request for accommodation of special needs (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.2.e).

A policy for the application process also needs to include the following information:

- Application timelines and fees
- How the application is to be completed and what information the applicant must supply along with the application (e.g., evidence of eligibility)
- The certification body's internal processes for receiving, processing, and reviewing the application.
- The responsible party (committee, etc.) within the certification body for reviewing the application and eligibility evidence.
- The certification body's process for rejecting an application.

Assessment Methods

Guidance on Assessment Methods

The certification body must maintain a number of documents associated with the development and maintenance of the assessment to ensure the fairness, validity, and reliability of the examination process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 9.2 and 9.3). These would include the following documented descriptions of:

- How the assessment method corresponds to the competence requirements (as identified in the job/task analysis [JTA]) identified in the scheme. For example, if psychomotor skills are required, how are these assessed?
- How the assessment methods and test items correspond to the scheme examination blueprint and information about how the certification body ensures that all scheme requirements are objectively and systematically verified with documented evidence to confirm the candidate's competence (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.3).
- How the type of assessment (multiple-choice, short answer, performance examination, etc.) was selected and how it relates to the competence requirements.
- How the assessment items were written, who wrote them, the qualifications of the item writers, how the item writers were trained, and when the activities occurred.
- How the test items were reviewed, who reviewed them, the qualifications of the item reviewers, how the reviewers were trained, and when the review activities occurred.
- How the examination items are stored and what information is stored with them.
- How the examination forms are created and verified.
- How the passing score was established (passing score or cut score study).
- How the certification body ensures that alternate examination forms are equivalent in content and difficulty (comparability of results of each single examination (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.3.1).
- How various examination forms are statistically equated to ensure equivalence.
- How the examinations are administered, including administration policies and procedures, to ensure a consistent examination administration (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 9.3.2 and 9.3.3). Normally an examination administration manual and examination administration procedures are components of these documents.
- How the examinations are scored, including information about diagnostic information provided to candidates.
- How the certification body ensures that the assessment methods are fair and valid.
- How statistical examination data are collected and reviewed at defined intervals to confirm the fairness, validity, reliability, and general performance of each examination and how all identified deficiencies corrected (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.3.5). Policies and procedures should also be written about when an examination or test item is flagged as poorly performing and what corrective actions the certification body takes when it learns it has a bad examination item and/or examination administration.

Typical documents that a certification body might have to reflect the above include Item writing meeting report, item review meeting report, passing score study report, examination and item analysis for all examinations used, including indices for reliability, reports of post-examination reviews, reports of reviews of candidate comments, reports of standardization of graders, item development training materials, candidate handbooks, examination administrator's manual, score reports, quality control checklists for examination shipping and scoring, item banking report and information, and reports of equating studies.

Assessment Methods: Changes

Guidance on Assessment Methods: Changes

Any time any changes are made to the assessment methods, including the addition or deletion of content on the examination, or to the eligibility requirements, the candidates and the public must be notified as to how the certification body will ensure that certified persons comply with the changes (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.2). The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for notifying candidates and the public about changes to the certification scheme and the assessment methods.

Candidate and Certificant Information: Releasing

Guidance on Candidate and Certificant Information: Releasing

The certification body must make public information, upon request, about whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.1). However, the certification body shall ensure that information obtained during the certification process is kept confidential (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.3.2 and 7.3.3) and may not be disclosed without the written consent of the certified person (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.3.3). Therefore, the certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the confidentiality and release of candidate information.

The policy for information about candidates and certified persons should include:

- Status of certified persons—name and certification status for verification purposes
- Sanctions imposed on certified persons—code of ethics
- Written requests to release confidential information (legal representative, employer).

Sample Template Policy on Candidate and Certificant Information: Releasing

XXX Certification Body shall keep confidential all applicants', candidates', and certified persons' information (including name, address, telephone numbers, examination scores, and other confidential records) unless authorized for release by the applicant, candidate, or certified person. A certified person wishing to have examination scores released to employers or others must sign an authorization to release the data form before XXX Certification Body will release any information. XXX Certification Body will verify upon request whether a certified person holds a current, valid certification. A certified person will not be notified if a request is made about the status of his or her certification.

Certificant Status: Publication

Guidance on Certificant Status: Publication

The certification body is required to verify and provide information, upon request, as to whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.1). Upon request means that the individual requesting the information may have to call, send an email, and/or provide information such as the certified person's name for the certification body to verify certification. The certification body is not required to publish a list of certified persons, although many choose to do so and there is no prohibition against doing so. Also, when certification has been suspended or withdrawn, the certification body is not required to publish a list of individuals who have had their certifications suspended or withdrawn. Instead, the certification body may simply state, upon request, that the individual in question does not hold a current, valid certification.

Sample Template Policy on Certificant Status Publication

Individuals wishing to verify that a certified person holds a current, valid certification may contact XXX Certification Body at XXX-XXX-XXXX [phone number] with the certified person's name and XXX Certification Body will verify whether that person holds a current, valid certification.

Certificate, Logo, and Marks

Guidance on Certificate, Logo, and Marks

The certification body must document the conditions for use of a certification mark or logo and must appropriately manage the rights for usage of the mark and logo (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.1). Part of this responsibility includes having certified persons sign an agreement that they will:

- Comply with the relevant sections of the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.2.a).
- Make claims about certification only with respect to the scope for which they have been granted certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.2.b).
- Not use the certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute, and not make any misleading or unauthorized statement about the certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.2.c).
- Discontinue the use of all claims to certification upon suspension or withdrawal of certification and return any certificates issued by the certification body (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.2.d).
- Not use the certificate in a misleading manner (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.2.e).

The certification body is required to address any misuse of its certification mark or logo (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.7.3). To do this, the certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the use of its certificates, logos, and marks. The policy for use of certificate, logo, and marks should, at a minimum, address:

- Protection of intellectual property (registration of marks, logos, and property)
- Authorized and appropriate use of marks
- Monitoring and enforcing appropriate use of property
- Authority of certification governing body over certificates, logos and marks).

Sample Template Policy on Certificate, Logo, and Marks

The certification mark and logo are the property of XXX Certification Body. Permission to use the certification mark or logo is granted to certified persons at the discretion of the XXX Certification Body, for permissible uses only.

I. Persons authorized to use the marks

Use of XXX Certification Program marks and logos is limited to those persons who have been granted the certification by XXX Certification Body and who satisfy all maintenance and recertification requirements established by XXX Certification Body.

Use of the mark and logo by individuals who have not been granted and maintained the certification is expressly prohibited.

II. Non-assignability and non-transferability

Permission to use the certification mark is limited to the certified person, and shall not be transferred to, assigned to, or otherwise used by any other individual, organization, or entity.

III. Mark and logo use

Persons who have been granted permission to use the certification mark and logo shall do so pursuant to the rules and guidelines established by XXX Certification Body. Persons granted permission to use the certification mark and logo must familiarize themselves with the established rules and guidelines for use and must execute approved agreements setting forth such rules and guidelines for use.

The XXX certification program marks and logo may not be revised or altered in any way. They must be displayed in the same form as produced by XXX Certification Body and cannot be reproduced unless such reproduction is identical to the mark provided by XXX Certification Body.

The mark or logo may be used only on business cards, stationary, letterhead, and similar documents on which the name of the individual certified is prominently displayed.

The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that could bring XXX Certification Body into disrepute or in any way be considered misleading or unauthorized. The mark or logo may not be used in any manner that would imply an invalid connection between XXX Certification Body and the certified person's business. This includes any use of the mark or logo that the public might construe as an endorsement, approval, or sponsorship by XXX Certification Body of a certified person's business or any product or service thereof.

IV. Suspension or revocation of permission to use mark or logo

XXX Certification Body retains the right, at its sole discretion, to suspend or revoke any permission to use its certification mark or logo. In most circumstances, when XXX Certification Body is informed that a person is misusing the certification mark or logo, XXX Certification Body will provide the person notice of the misuse and a reasonable opportunity to comply with XXX Certification Body's rules and guidelines. However, XXX Certification Body retains the right to suspend or revoke privileges without notice and an opportunity to correct, particularly when the violation is of a gross nature and more immediate action is necessary to stop misuse.

Actions by XXX Certification Body to suspend or revoke use of the certification mark shall be communicated in writing to the person whose privileges are being suspended or revoked and to all other persons affected by the decision. XXX Certification Body may also publicize its actions on its website and any other of its publications. Should any person continue use of XXX Certification Body mark or logo after notice of suspension or revocation, XXX Certification Body shall seek full equitable and/or legal remedies through a court of competent jurisdiction.

Certificates: Information Contained

Guidance on Certificates: Information Contained

Information on the certificate should, at a minimum, contain:

- Name of the certified person (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.a)
- A unique identification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.b)
- Name of the certification body (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.c)
- Reference to the certification scheme, standard, or other relevant documents, including issue date if relevant (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.d)
- Scope of certification, including any applicable validity conditions and limitations (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.e)
- Dates of certification award and expiration (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.8.f)
- Signature of authorized individual.

The policy for issuing certificates upon successful completion of recertification requirements should include:

- The same as with the original certificate but with new effective and expiration dates
- Conditions associated with awarding of new certificate; e.g., continued approved use of certification logos and marks.

Certificates must be designed to reduce the risks of counterfeiting (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.4.9).

Sample Template Policy on Certificates: Information Contained

XXX Certification Body places the following information on certificates awarded to certified persons:

- Name of the certified person
- A unique identification
- Name of the certification body
- Reference to the certification scheme, standard, or other relevant documents, including issue date if relevant
- Scope of certification, including any applicable validity conditions and limitations
- Dates of certification award and expiration
- Signature of authorized individual.

Certification: Awarding

Guidance on Certification: Awarding

The certification body should develop a policy that describes the conditions under which it will award certification. At a minimum, the policy for awarding certification should address:

- Requirements to earn certification, such as passing the examination, meeting eligibility requirements, passing background checks, signing the code of ethics, and other conditions for awarding certification
- Matters that do not affect awarding certification, such as completion of specific training programs, membership, and other conditions external to the purposes of certification.

Sample Template Policy on Certification: Awarding

XXX Certification Body shall award certification to candidates who meet the following requirements:

- Are at least 18 years of age.
- Have met the eligibility requirements, including:
 - 2 years of experience in the XX field
 - Graduation from a XXX program of study
- Have passed the examination
- Have agreed to the code of ethics and signed all required disclosures and documents.

Certification shall be awarded for 5 years.

Certification: Length of Time for Which It Is Awarded

Guidance on Certification: Length of Time for Which It Is Awarded

The scheme should specify the period of validity for one certification cycle. However, the certification body needs to create a policy and a procedure based on the certification validity period identified in the scheme. At a minimum, the policy for the period of time certification is awarded for should include:

- The number of years for which certification is awarded
- Any conditions for maintaining certification such as completion of recertification requirements, maintenance fees, continuous compliance with the code of ethics, background check, or other conditions.

Sample Template Policy on Certification: Length of Time for Which It Is Awarded

XXX Certification is valid for a period of 5 years. Each certification will expire 5 years from the effective date of the certification. Recertification requires certified persons to sit for and pass the certification examination again.

Certification: Not Restricting or Limiting Conditions

Guidance on Certification: Not Restricting or Limiting Conditions

The certification body should not restrict participation in certification on the grounds of undue financial or other limiting conditions such as membership in an association or group (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.4). This means that the certification body may NOT:

- Require membership in its own or any other organization as a condition or prerequisite for applying for certification.
- Create eligibility requirements that are intended to restrict entry into the certification (e.g., requiring an advanced degree when there is no reason for the degree).
- Require excessive expenses for certification significantly above what may be reasonable (e.g. \$10,000 certification application fee) when the only reason is to restrict entry to certification to the very rich.
- Require candidates to complete the certification body's own education or training as an exclusive prerequisite when alternative education or training with an equivalent outcome is available (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.d).

Sample Template Policy on Certification: Not Restricting or Limiting Conditions

XXX Certification Body does not restrict entrance to the XXX Certification Program on the grounds of membership in any organization, excessive and unsupported eligibility requirements, or graduation from XXX Certification Body's own education or training program. Certification is open to all qualified candidates.

Certification: Suspending, Withdrawing, and Reducing

Guidance on Certification: Suspending, Withdrawing, and Reducing

The certification scheme must include the criteria for suspending and withdrawing certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 8.3.d) or reducing certification (changing the scope or level of certification) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 8.3.e). However, the certification body must implement the scheme and therefore must have a policy and documentation for suspension or withdrawal of the certification or reduction in the scope of certification, which includes subsequent actions by the certification body (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.5.1). If the certification body suspends a certification, failure on the part of the suspended certified person to resolve the issue that resulted in suspension in a time established by the certification body, shall result in the withdrawal of the certification or the reduction of the scope of certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.5.2). The certification body must have enforceable agreements 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 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.5.3). Similarly, the certification body must have enforceable agreements 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 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.5.4).

Sample Template Policy on Certification: Suspending, Withdrawing, and Reducing

XXX Certification Body may, at its discretion, suspend or revoke a certificate for cause. Causes for suspension or revocation include, but are not limited to fraud, deceit, or submission of inaccurate data to obtain certification.

When XXX Certification Body has evidence that charges against a certificate holder are valid, it shall notify the certificate holder by certified mail at his or her last known address. The certificate holder will have the opportunity to present his or her defense to the certification board in writing according to the terms outlined in the policy.

The suspension or revocation shall remain in effect until the board reviews the case. XXX Certification Body shall then uphold or deny the suspension or revocation.

Certification and Training: Separating

Guidance on Certification and Training: Separating

Offering training and certification within the same legal entity constitutes a threat to impartiality. Therefore, a certification body that also offers training must ensure that:

- It continually identifies and documents the associated threats to impartiality and has a documented process to demonstrate how it minimizes those threats (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.a).
- All processes it performs are independent of training to ensure that confidentiality, information security, and impartiality are not compromised (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.b).
- It does not give the impression that use of both services would provide any advantage to the applicant (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.c).
- Candidates are not required to complete the certification body's own education or training as an exclusive prerequisite if an alternative education or training with an equivalent outcome is available (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.d).
- Personnel do not serve as examiners of specific candidates they have trained for a period of 2 years from the date of conclusion of the training activities (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3.e).

The certification body's completion of training is a requirement of a certification scheme, but the recognition or approval of any training by the certification body may not compromise impartiality or reduce the assessment and certification requirements (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.1). If education or training is used as a prerequisite for certification, the certification body must provide information about the various available training and education, but the certification body may not imply that certification would be simpler, easier, or less expensive if any specified education or training services are used (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.2).

The certification body should develop a policy for the separation of certification and training that should, at a minimum, address:

- Whether the certification body requires applicants or candidates to take a particular training or education program as a prerequisite or as a condition of earning or maintaining certification.
- If there is an educational requirement, that the certification body does not endorse any source of education or training as a guarantee of success on the certification examination.
- If the certification body offers its own training, that use of its own training does not provide any advantage over any other available training.

Sample Template Policy on Certification and Training: Separating

XXX Certification Body offers training and certification. However, XXX Certification Body does not require completion of XXX Certification Body's training as a prerequisite or component of the XXX certification program. Candidates are free to select any training they wish, and completion of XXX Certification Body's training will not provide any advantage over completion of any other training program.

Certification Bodies: Authority and Autonomy

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Authority and Autonomy

The certification body is required to perform its duties in an autonomous and impartial manner (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 4.3 and 5). This includes physical, administrative, and financial separation from any training or educational activities and membership organizations. The certification body is responsible for all decisions related to certification and shall ensure that these decisions are made impartially with documented evidence to support the decisions. The certification body should have a policy that reflects its authority and autonomy.

Sample Template Policy on Certification Bodies: Authority and Autonomy

XXX Certification Body believes that ensuring the proper authority and autonomy for the certification body is of utmost importance to the credibility and integrity of the certification program. Therefore, XXX Certification Body is guided by the following responsibilities in its activities and when making decisions:

- a) Develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure the certification program is operated and administered in conformance with best certification practices; at a minimum the policies should address the granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding, and reducing the scope of the certification, and suspending or withdrawing the certification.
- b) Provide oversight to the development and administration of a legally defensible, valid, and reliable certification examination. Secure psychometric services to ensure the examination is legally defensible, reliable, valid, and maintained according to industry standards in test development and measurement. Review psychometric reports and take into consideration with psychometric services necessary and required changes to the examination. Ensure the item bank is sufficient and adequately maintained.
- c) Provide oversight to the development of all elements of the certification scheme, including, but not limited to eligibility criteria, recertification requirements, ethics, and disciplinary procedures and appeals.
- d) Appoint standing and ad hoc subcommittees as required to support all program components and maintain a cadre of qualified subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate in all aspects of the certification scheme, including, but not limited to examination content; item writing; setting the passing score; maintaining the reliability and validity of the examination, eligibility, and recertification requirements; disciplinary actions; appeals and due process; and nominations of qualified individuals to the certification body and its committees.
- e) Ensure the security of the certification examination and the intellectual property associated with the credential, including the development, maintenance, and administration of the examination.
- f) Establish and implement the code of ethics required of certificants and administer the disciplinary program, including appeals.
- g) Make readily available to applicants, candidates, and certified persons the scope of the certification, all policies, procedures, and related program information relevant to earning and maintaining certification.

- h) Protect the property associated with the credential, including approved uses of logo, marks, and certificate.
- i) Make available to the public the certification status of certified individuals.
- j) Develop an annual operating budget to ensure all certification program activities are conducted in a credible manner.

Certification Bodies: Composition and Qualifications of Members

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Composition and Qualifications of Members

The certification body should have policies that outline how the various committee members and members of the organizational structure are selected. The certification body should have a procedure to ensure committee members and organizational structure members are selected according to this policy. The policies and procedures should ensure that all stakeholders are represented (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.8), that members of the various committees are competent (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.3), and that committee members have information about their duties and responsibilities (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.5). The policies should answer the following questions:

- What are the qualifications of the members of the various committees and organizational structure?
- How are these individuals selected?
- What type of term do they serve?
- What are their qualifications?

A policy on the composition of the governing body should, at a minimum, include information about:

- Number—enough to represent interested parties and stakeholder categories affected by the certification, as well as the breadth, depth, and scope of certification
- Geography
- Industry
- Certified persons.

A policy on the qualifications of members of the governing body should, at a minimum, address:

- Work experience
- Subject matter expertise
- Years in industry
- Certified persons
- Representation of interested parties
- Other characteristics of the certification and industry it represents.

Sample Template Policy on Certification Bodies: Composition and Qualifications of Members

Following is a sample policy for one certification body committee:

I. Responsibilities of the examination committee

The examination committee is responsible for the examination contents, development, maintenance and delivery, and processes associated with these activities. The examination committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Ensure the ongoing validity, reliability, and fairness of the certification examination.
- b) Review the results of routine item analysis reports and make adjustments as required, including recommendations for substantial changes to the examination.
- c) Work with the certification staff to determine activities required for budgeting to ensure a valid and reliable examination is administered (validation study, cut score study, item review/writing workshop, etc.).
- d) Determine areas in which additional participation by SMEs is required.
- e) Review candidate complaints about examination content or administration.
- f) Recommend to the certification commission changes in policies or procedures as required.
- g) Complete all duties as assigned.

II. Policies of the examination committee

The examination committee shall be responsible for implementing the following policies of the certification program:

- a) Setting the cut score (passing score)
- b) When to conduct analysis of items and examination performance
- c) Number of items in the item bank
- d) Timing of the validation studies (e.g., JTAs and passing score studies)
- e) Security such as the committee's non-disclosure agreement and requirements for handling intellectual property and confidential information
- f) Confidentiality of intellectual property
- g) Meeting attendance and participation
- h) Length of term of service on examination committee.

III. Statement of qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the examination committee. The members of this committee shall:

- a) Collectively represent the stakeholders utilizing the credential, have a wide range of experiences in the industry/field, and be familiar with the requirements of the certification program.
- b) Represent the range of years of professional experience typical of the certificant population and the expectations of competence.
- c) Represent the geographic and employment demographics reflective of the certificant/stakeholder population.
- d) Understand content requirements of the examination and collectively represent the expertise of each content domain.
- e) Attend and complete all training programs as required to ensure the validity and reliability of the examination, including item writing and item editing workshops, analysis of item performance, and cut score studies.

Certification Bodies: Financial Health Maintenance

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Financial Health Maintenance

The certification body must demonstrate that it has the financial resources to operate the certification process and that it has adequate arrangements (e.g., insurance or reserves) to cover associated liabilities (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.4). Evidence of financial health includes evidence that all liabilities of the certification program are being covered and that all activities required to support the certification examination (e.g., item development activities, new form development, institutional security activities, examination administration activities, and adequate staffing) are being conducted. It is often easier for accreditation assessors to identify instances where required activities are not being done because of financial constraints. This leads assessors to believe that the certification body is not in good financial health.

Certification Bodies: Management Review and Sign-Off

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Management Review and Sign-Off

The certification body is required to have its top management establish procedures to review its management system at planned intervals to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.5.1). These reviews must be conducted at least once every 12 months and must be documented (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.5.1). The certification body's top management should review inputs (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.5.2) and outputs (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 12.2.5.3).

Certification Bodies: Nominations and Appointment/Election Process for Committees

Certification Bodies: Guidance on Nominations and Appointment/Election Process for Committees

The certification body must ensure that all interested parties in the certification have an equal opportunity to participate in the process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.8). To ensure the open participation of interested parties, the certification body should have a nomination process and an appointment or election process that looks to fill membership on committees with balanced involvement of interested parties.

Sample Template Policy on Certification Bodies: Nominations and Appointment/Election Process for Committees

I. Purpose and responsibilities of the nominating committee

The nominating committee ensures proper conduct of the nomination and election of candidates to the certification body. The nominating committee has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Ensure the nominating and election process is followed according to the policies and procedures, including conflict of interest, of the certification program.
- b) Establish a timeline of activities.
- c) Issue a call for candidates.
- d) Review candidate information.
- e) Establish a slate of candidates.
- f) Develop the official ballot.
- g) Disseminate the official ballot with candidate profiles.
- h) Prepare the election packet.
- i) Supervise the ballot counting.
- j) Prepare and deliver the election results.

II. Statement of Qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the examination nominating committee. The members of this committee must:

- a) Not currently be serving as a director on a parent board or competitor's governing body.
- b) Understand the roles and responsibilities of the certification body and the responsibilities of its members.
- c) Understand the leadership requirements of the certification body as well as industry knowledge required to govern the certification program.
- d) Understand the democratic process of identifying and electing leadership and be familiar with the policies and procedures of the certification program.
- e) Understand the mission and purpose of certification program and the public served by the credential.

- f) Possess a broad understanding of the stakeholder groups represented by the credential in the industry and seek representation from interested parties.
- g) Be fair, unbiased, and free of influence at every stage of the nomination process.
- h) Be judicious and prudent in the exercise of all decisions and in the conduct of the nominations process.
- i) Follow the written procedures for soliciting nominations and conducting an election.

Certification Bodies: Organizational Structure

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Organizational Structure

The certification body must be structured to safeguard impartiality (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.1.1). This means that if it has a related body (one that 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 may be able to influence the process) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.6 note 3), there should be administrative, physical, and fiscal separations between the certification body and the related body. This is particularly important if the related body provides educational or training services.

The certification body is required to document its organizational structure, describing the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of management, certification personnel, and any committee (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.1.2). 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 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.1.2).

The certification body should be aware that offering training and certification within the same legal entity constitutes a threat to impartiality, and a certification body that is part of a legal entity offering training must complete additional activities to ensure the impartiality of the certification program (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 5.2.3, a through e).

Sample Template Policy on Certification Bodies: Organizational Structure

The XXX certification program is managed by the XXX Certification Body's independent certification committee. The certification committee is responsible for overseeing the development and administration of a credible XXX certification program and for ensuring the credentials meet high standards of ethical and professional practice for the industry. This oversight ensures the proficiency and competency of XXX professionals. The committee is responsible for the entire certification program and oversight of committees that report to it. It is composed of a chair, six certified individuals, and a public member. The committee members are elected, and only certified individuals may vote. The initial certification committee was appointed.

Purchases of education, membership, or any other XXX Certification Body services are not required to seek XXX certification. Candidates are not required to take any particular courses or buy any resources to take any of the XXX Certification Body examinations. The certification committee and XXX Certification Body, in keeping with the accreditation requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 standard, do not link any training or education programs, or any other educational provider's educational programs offered, to obtaining a XXX certification credential.

Certification Bodies: Outsourced Services

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Outsourced Services

The certification body must have legally enforceable agreements covering the arrangements, including confidentiality and conflict of interest, with any body that provides outsourced work related to the certification process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.1). Additionally, the certification body shall:

- Take full responsibility for all outsourced work (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.a).
- Ensure that any body conducting outsourced work is competent and complies with the relevant clauses of ISO/IEC 17024 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.b).
- Assess and monitor the performance of any bodies conducting outsourced work (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.c).
- Maintain records to demonstrate that bodies conducting outsourced work meet all requirements relevant to the outsourced work (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.d).
- Maintain a list of all bodies conducting outsourced work (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.e).

Sample Template Policy on Certification Bodies: Outsourced Services

XXX Certification Body takes full responsibility for all outsourced work. XXX Certification Body outsources its psychometric test development services and its examination administration services. XXX Certification Body maintains legally enforceable agreements with all bodies conducting outsourced work. XXX Certification Body conducts annual evaluations of the bodies conducting outsourced work.

Certification Bodies: Roles and Responsibilities

Guidance on Certification Bodies: Roles and Responsibilities

The overall purpose of certification of persons is to recognize an individual's competence to perform a task or job. The certification body is responsible to ensure that only those persons who demonstrate competence are awarded certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Annex A.1.3). The certification body should act in a responsible manner so interested parties are confident of its competence, impartiality, and integrity (ISO/IEC 17024, Annex A.1.5). The certification body is responsible to obtain sufficient objective evidence upon which to base a certification decision (ISO/IEC 17024, Annex A6).

Certification Committee Members: Appointment Process

Guidance on Certification Committees: Appointment Process

The certification body should establish a policy and a process for how members are appointed to certification committees to ensure representation from all interested parties (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.8).

A policy for how individuals are elected or appointed to serve on certification committees should include the following, and be supported by a process that documents the procedures for doing so:

- Stipulate how members are elected or appointed to committees, including the governing certification body.
- Include the role of the nominating committee and processes for finding candidates for service.
- Include terms of service and reappointment/reelection procedures.

Certification Committee Members: Terms of Service

Guidance on Certification Committee Members: Terms of Service

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the terms of service for all certification committee members (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2). The process should ensure that members of all certification committees act impartially, agree to maintain the confidentiality of all confidential information, and agree to notify the certification body in the event of a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest. The certification body should require all members of all certification committees to sign pertinent agreements. Terms of service should include, at a minimum:

- Expected behavior of committee members
- Information about how committee members may be removed
- Information about how new committee members are nominated and selected.

Certification or Recertification: Denial

Guidance on Certification or Recertification: Denial

The Certification Body must have a policy and a procedure that outline the circumstances under which certification or recertification will be denied. The policy for rejecting applications and denying entrance to the certification program should include:

- Reasons applications are rejected, including incompleteness, lack of documentation, and failure to meet requirements
- Recourse for the applicant to reapply, submit additional information, and deadlines for doing so
- Timelines to review resubmitted applications
- Procedures to appeal a denial or rejection.

Sample Template Policy on Certification or Recertification: Denial

XXX Certification Body maintains a recertification committee to evaluate recertification applicants and denials of recertification.

I. Responsibilities of the recertification committee

The recertification committee is responsible for reviewing denials or unusual circumstances associated with interpreting the recertification requirements. The recertification committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Review applications for recertification that require special consideration related to a certificant documenting compliance with the recertification criteria.
- b) Report any trends or common areas of noncompliance with the recertification requirements to the certification body or scheme committee.
- c) Make recommendations for revisions to the recertification requirements.
- d) As additional credentials are developed, or as the credential is revalidated, ensure recertification requirements are current, relevant, and reflective of any changes to the credential's competency requirements.
- e) Recommend to the certification body changes in policies or procedures as required.
- f) Complete all duties as assigned.

II. Policies of the recertification committee

The recertification committee shall be responsible for implementing the following policies of the certification program:

- a) Establishing the recertification requirements
- b) When to review the recertification requirements for currency and relevance to maintaining continued competence in the field
- c) Denial of recertification

- d) Confidentiality of applicant information
- e) Meeting attendance and participation
- f) Length of term of service on recertification committee.

III. Statement of qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the recertification committee.

Members of this committee shall:

- a) Collectively represent the stakeholders using the credential, have a wide range of experiences in the industry/field, and be familiar with the requirements of the certification program.
- b) Represent the range of years of professional experience typical of the certificant population and the expectations of maintaining competency requirements.
- c) Represent the geographic and employment demographics reflective of the certificant/stakeholder population.
- d) Understand the content requirements of the examination as they relate to the expectation of maintaining continued competence in the field.
- e) Commit the time and resources required to perform their functions.

Certification Personnel Requirements for Qualifications

Guidance on Certification Personnel Requirements for Qualifications

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure to ensure that certification personnel, including volunteers, are qualified. The policy for certification personnel should include:

- Qualification of certification personnel (paid staff)
- Requirement to sign non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements
- Understanding of separation of certification functions and activities from other activities, products, and services.

Certification Personnel: How To Hire

Guidance on Certification Personnel: How To Hire

The certification body is required to ensure that all personnel associated with the certification process:

- Have the necessary competence to perform certification functions (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.2).
- Have competence for the specific tasks and responsibilities as defined in the competence criteria for their positions (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.3).
- Receive documented instructions describing their duties and responsibilities (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.4).
- Have up-to-date personnel records that contain relevant information such as qualifications, training, experience, professional affiliations, professional status, competence, and known conflicts of interest (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.6).
- Agree to keep confidential all information obtained or created during the certification activities (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.6).
- Sign a document by which they agree to comply with the rules defined by the certification body, including those relating to confidentiality, impartiality, and conflicts of interest.

The certification body is required to ensure that its examiners:

- Understand the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.a).
- Are able to apply the examination procedures and documents (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.b).
- Have competence in the field to be examined (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.c).
- Are fluent in the written and spoken language of the examination (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.d).
- Have identified any known conflicts of interest (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.e).

If an examiner has a potential conflict of interest in the examination of a candidate, the certification body must take measures to ensure that the confidentiality and impartiality of the examination are not compromised (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.3).

Finally, the certification body must have documented descriptions of the responsibilities and qualifications of other personnel involved in the assessment process (such as proctors) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.3.1) and must take measures to ensure that the confidentiality and impartiality of the examination are not compromised if other personnel have potential conflicts of interest in the examination of a candidate (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.3.2).

Certification Process: Information Available to Candidates

Guidance on Certification Process: Information Available to Candidates

Candidates have a right to know the conditions under which they are applying for a certification. Upon application, the certification body is required to make available to the applicant an overview of the certification process in accordance with the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.1). The certification body should make available to candidates the following information:

- The scope of the certification and a general description of the certification process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 7.2.2 and 9.1.1)
- All the prerequisites of the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.3)
- Information about the application process
- Information about the applicant's rights (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.1)
- Information about the examination administration (where it will be, what to bring to be admitted, what not to bring to the examination, appropriate attire for the examination, etc.)
- Information about the content of the examination (content outline or examination blueprint)
- Information about the examination (type of examination, sample items, length of examination, time given to take the examination, etc.)
- Examination administration policies (rules about the examination administration, security and cheating issues, late arrivals, failure to show, cancellations and rescheduling policies, providing comments and feedback to candidates)
- Information about the length of time before score reports will be issued
- Information about scoring, score reports, passing and failing the examination, challenging examination results, requesting rescoring and hand scores, reexamination information, and indeterminate scores
- Information about certification status, including length of certification validity, use of the certification mark and logos, replacement certificates, code of ethics and misconduct, discipline (including suspension and withdrawal of certification), and recertification requirements
- Information about the duties of the certified person (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.1)
- Information about the appeals and grievance process
- Information about the application for accommodation of special needs
- Information about the fees to be certified (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.1.1).

Most of this information is usually available in a candidate handbook or bulletin.

Certification Process: Information Available to the Public

Guidance on Certification Process: Information Available to the Public

The certification body is required to make some types of information available to the public. This would include:

- Information about whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.1)
- Information about the scope of the certification and a general description of the certification process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.2)
- All the prerequisites of the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.3).

Information about the validity of a certification may be made after a request, but information about the scope and prerequisites must be publically available without request. That means placing this information on a website or otherwise making it available to interested parties without request.

Certification Scheme: Verify Certified Persons Comply With Changes

Guidance on Certification Scheme: Verify Certified Persons Comply With Changes

When the certification scheme undergoes changes that require additional assessment, the certification body must document and make publically accessible without request the specific methods and mechanisms required to verify that the certified person has complied with the changed requirements (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.2). Recertification may be used to achieve this verification (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.2 note). This means that if new tasks or knowledge and skills are identified during an updating of the JTA, the certification body will be expected to ensure that the certified person is competent in the new tasks, knowledge, and skills. However, this verification may be done at recertification. Competence in new content may be verified by offering an examination of the new content, a reexamination of all content, or even continuing professional development specifically in the new content. The certification body must develop policies and procedures for how it will verify that the certified person will remain competent after new content is added to the certification scheme.

Certification Services (Test Development and Administration): How To Contract

Guidance on Certification Services (Test Development and Administration): How To Contract

The certification body must have legally enforceable agreements, including confidentiality and conflict of interest, covering outsourced activities with each body that provides outsourced work related to the certification process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.1). Additionally, the certification body shall take full responsibility for all outsourced work and shall regularly assess and monitor the performance of bodies conducting outsourced work (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2.c).

Sample Template Policy on Certification Services (Test Development and Administration): How To Contract

XXX Certification Body outsources the following certification activities:

- Examination psychometrics
- Examination administration

XXX Certification Body maintains contracts with all outsourced service providers and conducts annual evaluations of their services.

Cheating

Guidance on Cheating

The certification body must proactively safeguard the security of the examination and should have a policy and a procedure that address cheating. Consideration should be given to consequences and penalties for cheating, including invalidation of test scores, cancellation of examination administration, and legal remedies. The certification body must be prepared to act on the consequences stated in its policies. Candidates should be informed in the candidate handbook, or other information about the program, of the consequences of cheating. This is also done in the interest of due process and fairness to candidates (ISO/IEC 17024 Clause 7.4.1).

It is also helpful for the certification body to have published policies for “indeterminate scores.” Indeterminate scores are passing level examination results that cannot be certified as representing a valid measure of an examinee’s competence in the domains assessed by the examination. Any aberrancy in performance for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation results in passing scores being classified as indeterminate. This could be a case where evidence suggests that the candidate may have cheated, but rather than accuse the candidate of cheating in the absence of absolute proof, it is better for the certification body to be able to refer to a policy on “indeterminate scores” and state that the candidate will be required to retest.

Sample Template Policy on Cheating

XXX Certification Body maintains strict policies to safeguard the security of the examination through the administration. Any individual who removes, or attempts to remove, examination materials from the testing site, including memorizing examination questions, is subject to prosecution in addition to sanctions that may include removal of certification and restrictions on future access to the examination. Should XXX Certification Body determine evidence of cheating, it reserves the right to invalidate test scores and mandate retesting.

Sample Policy on Indeterminate Scores

Statistical procedures will be applied routinely, and in response to particular information, to identify scores that may be subsequently classified as indeterminate. Scores identified for potential classification as indeterminate may result from factors such as examinee illness during part of an examination, irregular behavior, or other factors. Classification of scores as indeterminate does not necessarily imply any inappropriate behavior by an examinee. Irregular behavior is not the only basis upon which scores may be invalidated.

XXX Certification Body will refer an examinee’s scores to the appeals committee if it finds that it cannot certify a score as representing a valid measure of the examinee’s competence in the domains assessed by the examination. The appeals committee will perform follow-up action and report results to XXX Certification Body.

If otherwise eligible, an examinee whose scores have been declared indeterminate by the appeals committee may take an examination, within a specified period of time, to validate the performance on the examination in

question, unless the appeals committee finds that irregular behavior occurred and the examinee is barred from future administrations of the XXX examination.

Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures: How To Enforce

Guidance on Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures: How To Enforce

The certification scheme is required to include a code of conduct/code of ethics where appropriate (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 8.2.f) and the disciplinary criteria (criteria for suspension or withdrawal) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 8.3.d). The certification body implementing the scheme will be required to develop policies and procedures related to the code of ethics and how it will sanction the certified person who violates the code of ethics.

Sample Template Policy on Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures: How To Enforce

I. Responsibilities of the ethics and discipline committee

The ethics and discipline committee shall ensure that issues about certificants' practice and conduct are fairly and reasonably investigated and determined, and protect the public against unprofessional and unethical conduct by certified persons. The primary objective of the ethics and discipline committee is to enforce the code of ethics of the certification program in accordance with policies and procedures. The ethics and discipline committee is responsible to follow the procedures for investigating and disposing of complaints as set forth by the certification body or scheme committee. The ethics and discipline committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Receive and review complaints of ethical violations.
- b) Conduct investigations in accordance with established procedures.
- c) Make recommendations for action, including sanctions and dismissal of complaint, to the certification body.
- d) Recommend revisions to the code of ethics.
- e) Recommend changes in policies or procedures as required.
- f) Complete all duties as assigned.

II. Policies of the ethics and discipline committee

The ethics and discipline committee shall be responsible for implementing the following policies of the certification program:

- a) Appointment to the committee
- b) Conducting investigations
- c) Confidentiality, such as the requirements for handling property associated with the investigation and other confidential information
- d) Conflict of interest
- e) Meeting attendance and participation.

III. Statement of qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the ethics and discipline committee. The members of this committee shall:

- a) Collectively represent the stakeholders using the credential, have a wide range of experiences in the industry/field, and be familiar with the requirements of the certification program.
- b) Understand the code of ethics and its application.
- c) Attend and complete training programs and orientation offered to ensure thorough investigations are conducted.
- d) Be in good standing with any certifications or licenses held.

Committees: Term Limits

Guidance on Committees: Term Limits

To prevent the appearance of conflict of interest and cronyism, good governance practices limit the terms committee members may serve (ISO/IEC 17024 Clause 4.3.8). The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the term limits of members of its various committees. In setting policy to guide term limits, the following should be considered:

- The number of committee members
- The length of service
- Rotation schedule (one third, one half, etc.)
- Representation of interested parties
- Subject matter expertise represented
- Ability to recruit and retain committee members.

Sample Template Policy on Committees: Term Limits

Committee members shall serve a term of 3 years, which may be renewed for a second 3-year term. One third of the committee shall consist of members who are certified in XXX and in good standing; one third shall represent the XXX interests of the industry; and one third shall represent the XXX technical specialties of the industry. Committee members must agree to all conditions of service, including attending meetings and fulfilling all duties as assigned.

Complaints and Disciplinary Issues

Guidance on Complaints and Disciplinary Issues

The certification body is required to have a complaints and disciplinary process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.9).

The policy for complaints and discipline should, at a minimum, address:

- Enforcement of the code of ethics
- Requirements for submission of a complaint—must be signed and linked to a violation of the code of ethics
- Timeline for processing complaints
- Authority to investigate complaints, make determinations, and impose sanctions on certified persons, including suspending and withdrawing certification.

The policy on administrative complaints should include:

- Applicable circumstances for lodging complaints of an administrative nature (usually related to certification services)
- Procedures and timeline for processing an administrative complaint
- Notification of outcomes
- Conditions for appeal of outcomes.

Disciplinary actions should be based on the scheme and appropriate for the compliant or violation.

Confidentiality

Guidance on Confidentiality

The certification body is required to have policies and procedures for confidentiality and the release of information (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.6 and 7.3). A policy on confidentiality should, at a minimum, address:

- All information obtained in the process of prosecuting the objectives of the certification program (confidential information extends to information obtained about applicants, candidates, and certified persons, including financial information, test scores, investigations, and sanctions)
- Denials of eligibility to qualify for certification and maintain certification (recertification)
- Intellectual property—examination questions, other resources
- Policy should state that the certification status (date awarded, date expiration) is public information and will be disclosed.

Sample Template Policy on Confidentiality

Personnel associated with the certification program shall keep confidential all information obtained in the process of prosecuting the objectives of the XXX certification program. Confidential information extends to information obtained about applicants, candidates, and certified persons; the intellectual property associated with the administration of the certification program; and information associated with vendor support of the certification program. All certification personnel are required to complete a non-disclosure agreement as a condition of service.

Conflict of Interest Statements and Non-Disclosure Agreements

Guidance on Conflict of Interest Statements and Non-Disclosure Agreements

The certification body is required to have a policy and a procedure for conflict of interest (ISO/IEC 17014, Clauses 4.3.7, 6.1.7, and 6.2.1). A policy on conflict of interest should be clearly stated and upheld by every member governing the certification program. At a minimum, the policy should address each member's:

- Refraining from using his or her position, or the knowledge gained therefrom, in such a manner that is a conflict of interest between the interests of the organization or any of its affiliates and his or her personal interests
- Placing the interest of the organization foremost in any dealings
- Continuing to comply with the requirements of this policy
- Agreement to sign a conflict of interest form at the time of service.

Sample Template Policy on Conflict of Interest Statements and Non-Disclosure Agreements

No member of XXX Certification Body, or by extension its committees, shall use his or her position, or the knowledge gained therefrom, in such a manner that is a conflict of interest between the interests of the organization or any of its affiliates and his or her personal interests.

Each member of XXX Certification Body, or by extension members of its committees, shall place the interests of the organization foremost in any dealings with the organization and has a continuing responsibility to comply with the requirements of this policy as a condition of service.

Members of XXX Certification Body and committees must sign the conflict of interest form at the time of service and as a condition of service.

Sample Conflict of Interest Form

To avoid conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, the following agreement with all certification personnel—voluntary and paid—is required for involvement in the XXX Certification program.

I _____ (print name) _____ understand and agree to uphold and abide by the conflict of interest policy of the XXX certification program. I understand that a conflict of interest arises when conditions or circumstances preclude or interfere with my ability to participate without influence in the certification program. I have reviewed and agree to the following conditions and circumstances that may create a conflict of interest:

- I do not participate in the delivery of training or education programs that prospective certificants may attend to gain the knowledge they need to prepare for a certification examination.
- I do not possess knowledge about the examination content or do not use such knowledge outside the development and administration of the certification program.
- I do not serve on the governing board of a competing organization.

- I do not participate on another committee that encourages, requires, or permits me to disclose knowledge about the development and administration of the certification program.
- I do not have a monetary or personal interest in the determination of examination content or requirements of the certification program.
- I do not have a monetary or personal interest in the outcome of a certification decision.
- I am not aware of information that may prevent a fair and unbiased decision regarding matters of certification.

I understand and agree to disclose any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest with the XXX certification program. I understand that failure to abide by the conflict of interest policy will result in my removal from activity in the XXX certification program.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample Non-Disclosure Agreement

I, __ (print name) _____, acknowledge that, in the course of employment and/or service with the XXX certification program, I will have access to materials of a confidential and/or proprietary nature. "Confidential" and "proprietary" materials include, but are not limited to:

- Information about applicants', candidates', and certificants' personal and financial data
- Information submitted for investigations of alleged violations of the Code of Ethics
- Item content, characteristics, development, or other aspects of a test
- Examinations and forms
- Corporate and certification documents
- Financial data.

Therefore, I agree to the following conditions of employment and/or service:

I will abide by all certification policies and procedures for proper handling and security of confidential and proprietary materials.

I will not disclose any confidential or proprietary materials to any unauthorized individual or organization unless expressly authorized by the XXX certification program.

I will not remove any confidential or proprietary materials from the office premises unless so directed by an XXX authorized person and I will safeguard such materials, as directed, until they are delivered or returned.

I will hold examination content in confidence perpetually and will not disclose, publish, reproduce, summarize, paraphrase, or transmit examination content, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, oral or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose.

I understand and agree that the unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary material could cause harm and irreparable damage to the certification program that may be difficult to ascertain. Accordingly, I agree that XXX certification program shall have the right to seek and obtain immediate injunctive relief from material breaches of this agreement, in addition to any other remedies at law available and therefore without bond.

I understand that my employment may be terminated immediately upon any material breach of the terms and conditions contained herein. The obligations under this agreement shall continue perpetually and survive the termination or expiration of my employment or service.

I agree that this agreement shall be construed and controlled by the laws of the State of XX, and further consent to jurisdiction by the state and federal courts sitting in the State of XX.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Due Process

Guidance on Due Process

The certification body must have a policy and a procedure to ensure that an applicant, candidate, or certified person's due process rights are not violated. This would include the right to have appeals or complaints results in a constructive, impartial, and timely manner (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 9.8.3 and 9.9.3). The policy for due process should, at a minimum, address:

- Any adverse decision (to deny access to certification, maintain certification, or sanction a certified person for a violation of the code of ethics)
- Right to request an appeal of an adverse decision
- Procedure for requesting an appeal
- Procedure and timeline for processing an appeal
- Involvement of independent, impartial persons during appeals
- Notification of outcomes to parties
- Confidentiality of parties.

Eligibility and Denial of Eligibility

Guidance on Eligibility and Denial of Eligibility

Eligibility requirements normally are defined by the scheme. The certification body is required to implement the eligibility procedure and to ensure that all candidates meet the eligibility requirements (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 9.2.1 and 9.2.3). The certification body should therefore have a policy for eligibility. The policy for qualification requirements should include:

- Eligibility requirements such as education, work experience, and other factors to qualify for certification and to take the certification examination
- Documentation requirements as evidence to show the applicant's achievement of eligibility requirements
- Timelines or deadlines for submission
- Timeline to review applications.

Sample Template Policy on Eligibility and Denial of Eligibility

XXX Certification Body maintains an eligibility committee who is responsible to review the eligibility requirements of the applicants and candidates.

I. Responsibilities of the eligibility committee

The eligibility committee is responsible for reviewing denials or unusual circumstances associated with interpreting eligibility requirements for individuals applying for certification and the certification examination, and for making recommendations to the certification body about the relevance and purposes of the eligibility criteria. The eligibility committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Review applications for the certification that require special consideration related to an applicant documenting compliance with the eligibility criteria.
- b) Report any trends or common areas of noncompliance with the eligibility criteria to the certification body or scheme committee.
- c) Make recommendations for revisions to the eligibility criteria and policies and procedures.
- d) As additional credentials are developed, or as current certification is revalidated, ensure the eligibility criteria are current, relevant, and reflective of any changes to the credential's requirements.
- e) Complete all duties as assigned.

II. Policies of the eligibility committee

The eligibility committee shall be responsible for implementing the following policies of the certification program:

- a) Establishing the eligibility requirements
- b) When to review the eligibility requirements for currency and relevance to the certification examination and application requirements

- c) Denial of eligibility
- d) Confidentiality of applicant information
- e) Meeting attendance and participation
- f) Length of term of service on eligibility committee.

III. Statement of Qualifications and areas of expertise required for service on the eligibility committee. The members of this committee shall:

- a) Collectively represent the stakeholders using the credential, have a wide range of experiences in the industry/field, and be familiar with the requirements of the certification program.
- b) Represent the range of years of professional experience typical of the applicant population.
- c) Represent the geographic and employment demographics reflective of the certificant/stakeholder population.
- d) Understand the content requirements of the examination and the relationship of the eligibility requirements to the examination.
- e) Articulate and provide evidence to support denials of eligibility.
- f) Commit the time and resources required to perform their functions.

Examinations: Administration Services—Ensure These Meet Certification Needs

Guidance on Examinations: Administration Services—Ensure These Meet Certification Needs

The certification body must have a policy and a procedure to evaluate all its outsourced services, in particular any that pertain to examination development or administration (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.3.2). To ensure that outsourced examination administration meets the certification body's needs, a regular evaluation must be conducted on the outsourced test administration services regardless of whether the services are paper and pencil or computer-based testing. At least annually, the certification body should conduct an evaluation by reviewing any and all incidents that occurred at the test site, any comments or complaints by any candidates, and a review of the contract and performance of test administration staff to contract specifications. Checklists are useful for these occasions.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: Administration Services—Ensure These Meet Certification Needs

XXX Certification Body maintains and updates a list of all bodies that provide outsourced work related to the certification process. XXX Certification Body takes full responsibilities for outsourced work and shall have legally enforceable agreements covering the arrangements, including confidentiality and conflict of interest, with each body that provides outsourced work related to the certification process. XXX Certification Body shall conduct an evaluation of the outsourced services at least annually.

Examinations: Admission

Guidance on Examinations: Admission

The certification body must have a policy and a procedure for how candidates are admitted to the examination sites, particularly the identification process. Most certification bodies require two forms of photo identification, one of which must be government issued (driver's license, passport, etc.) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.c).

Sample Template Policy for Examinations: Admission

At least XX weeks before the examination, each candidate will receive an admission slip, which he or she must bring to the examination site. The admission slip will include the date, time, and location of the examination.

Each candidate will be required to show two forms of current photo identification to gain admission to the examination site. One must be government issued or a legal document bearing the candidate's picture and signature. Acceptable government-issued identifications include a valid state driver's license, a valid state identification card with photo, a current passport, a current military identification, and an international photo identification issued by a foreign country. Student and employment identification cards are NOT acceptable.

Candidates who cannot produce the required identification at the examination site will not be permitted to take the examination. Under these circumstances candidates will be considered absent, will forfeit the full examination fee, and will be required to reapply for the examination and pay all applicable fees.

Examinations: Candidates Agree To Keep Materials Secure

Guidance on Examinations: Candidates Agree To Keep Materials Secure

Candidates often do not know that by revealing test questions they are affecting the security of the examination. Therefore, the certification body must require candidates to agree not to disclose examination materials (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.a). The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for obtaining agreement from candidates about examination materials.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: Candidates Agree To Keep Materials Secure

By signing this I agree that as a candidate for the XXX certification, I am required to keep secure and not disclose the contents of the examination and examination items. I understand that revealing the contents of the examination, either by orally repeating the contents of any question or information to anyone (including an instructor or educator), or by writing down any of the questions or information, is considered a violation of the confidentiality agreement to which I am hereby agreeing. If I violate the confidentiality agreement, my examination will be voided and any certification awarded to me will be withdrawn.

Examinations: Data and Frequency of Data Review

Guidance on Examinations: Data and Frequency of Data Review

The certification body must have appropriate methodologies and procedures (e.g., collecting and maintaining statistical data) to reaffirm, at justified defined intervals, the fairness, validity, reliability, and general performance of each examination (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.5.3). This means that the certification body should have a policy or procedure that specifies how often it will conduct an examination and item analysis. Normally the frequency (justified defined intervals) is based on the candidate numbers and the frequency the examination is given. For example, for an examination that is repeated (e.g., given every day via a computer), the item analyses might be conducted twice per year or every 200 candidates, whichever is more frequent. For an examination given once per year, twice per year, or four times per year, the item analysis might be conducted after every examination administration, assuming more than 30 to 50 candidates participate in each examination administration. Whatever the case, the certification body must have a policy that specifies the type of examination data that it will review and the frequency of that review.

A statistical analysis of test results should be conducted for each administrative cycle of each test. There are multiple definitions of what constitutes an administrative cycle, based on the format of the test (e.g., linear versus adaptive), its defensible shelf life, and other considerations.

The certification body should describe the procedures by which, and the personnel by whom, the analysis is performed, reviewed, and used in the scoring and test development processes. The certification body should provide sample output of the test analysis and describe how test statistics are monitored for historical and comparability purposes. Finally, the context of this information should include an explanation of the administration cycle for which the analyses are conducted.

At a minimum, statistics should include measures of average performance, measures of performance variability, reliability indices, and pass-fail percentages for the overall candidate population on the overall test. Measures of average performance and performance variability, as well as pass-fail percentages, should also be computed for major examinee subpopulations that typically exhibit disparate performance levels. Finally, measures of average performance and performance variability should also be computed for major sections of test content, and for test components administered in different formats, if any (e.g., written and practical).

Tests should be almost monotonously similar in content and difficulty, unless they change by intent. For example, lurching from easy to difficult (or the reverse) is not acceptable. It is unfair to the public, the profession, and the examinees, and is inconsistent with the purpose of credentialing, if passing or failing is predicated on the luck (good or bad) of taking an easy or difficult form of the test. By conforming to test specifications and conducting test analysis and its many components, including item analysis, a credentialing body can provide reasonable evidence of adequate comparability or equivalence among the various forms of the test.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: Data and Frequency of Data Review

XXX Certification Body conducts examination and item analyses after every administration of the examination attended by more than 40 candidates. Examination analysis data include:

- Passing and failing data
- Measures of central tendencies (mean, median, mode)
- Standard error of measurement
- Variance
- Standard deviation
- Skewness and kurtosis
- Reliability coefficient.

Item analysis data typically include:

- n responding to item
- upper XX %
- lower XX %
- discrimination indices (biserial and point biserial) for the item overall
- % responding to each option
- % correct
- Biserial and point biserial for each option.

Examinations: How To Challenge Results

Guidance on Examinations How To Challenge Results

The certification body should give candidates the opportunity to provide feedback on the examination content and procedures and should stipulate the conditions applicable to the challenge, the format for submitting the challenge, and timelines or deadlines. Sometimes this can be completed at a test center, in which case candidates should be informed of the procedures for doing so, or candidates can contact the certification body with their concerns after the examination is administered.

For candidates who wish to challenge the examination because they failed it, the certification body should consider the merits of providing failed candidates the opportunity to review the examination, or just offer them the opportunity to retest. Consideration should be given to examination exposure, the time between retests, number of examination forms, the time required to process requests for review, administrative procedures for producing the examination and score sheet, etc. Forms for this type of request can expedite and streamline the process, and should include contact information, fees (if applicable), acceptable reasons for submitting the request, etc.

Candidates who pass the examination should not be permitted to challenge their scores, or to retest to achieve higher scores. Opportunities for challenging examination results usually include:

- The candidate is provided the opportunity to write comments about test items or testing situations that in the candidate's opinion are adverse.
- The candidate may be provided an opportunity to review his or her examination performance or in particular the questions that the candidate missed. This is usually done in a sequestered environment at the certification body's headquarters under the supervision of authorized staff. No materials are allowed to be brought in and candidates are required to sign appropriate non-disclosure agreements. Candidates are normally charged for the expenses associated with review of the examination.
- The candidate may be provided an opportunity to challenge specific test questions or the entire examination administration.

Challenges are presented to a neutral body such as the appeals committee, whereby final decisions are reached. Outcomes usually do not result in the award of certification but may enable a candidate to retake the examination for no fee.

Situations where examination challenges are not permitted are usually based on the facts that the certification examination is offered frequently (e.g., daily) and the fee to retake the examination is not exorbitant. In these cases, the courts have ruled that ample opportunity is provided to the candidate to retake the examination frequently so challenge opportunities are not required.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: How To Challenge Results

XXX Certification Body gives any candidate the opportunity to provide feedback on the examination content and procedures about:

- Technical accuracy of the examination
- Fairness in the administration of the examination.

A candidate who has a concern about administrative procedures at a testing site or who has observed a breach of security or other improper conduct should submit a report in writing within XX days after taking the examination.

A candidate who has a question or concern about the reliability, validity, or fairness of the examination may submit the question or concern in writing to XXX Certification Body no later than XX days after taking the examination. (Note: this timeframe should be relatively short; e.g., 14–30 days. Also be sure to include email and other contact information such as a mailing address.)

XXX certification will not consider reports about improper test administration procedures or test contents that exceed the XX day deadline, or are not submitted in writing.

Candidates who pass the examination are not allowed to challenge their examination results, or to retest to try to improve their scores.

Sample Request Form for Failed Candidates to Review the Examination

XXX POST-EXAMINATION REVIEW REQUEST

By completing this form, you are requesting to review your most recent failed XX certification examination. This form must be received within XX days from the date on your on-site failed grade report and include a non-refundable review fee of \$XX.00. By electing this review, you must wait 30 days after the review before rescheduling the examination. If you attempt to take an examination while waiting for your review results, you forfeit the review.

Make check or money order payable to: [Contact person and address for XX Certification Body]

Submit form and payment to the address above: Attn: [Name of contact person]

Please Print:

Name:

Address:

Candidate I.D. Number:

Examination Date:

Examination:

Fee:

Candidate Signature:

Sample Communication to Failed Candidates Requesting to Challenge the Examination Results

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name of Certification Body:

Contact Person:

Address:

PROCEDURE:

Policy XX of XXX Certification Body provides to candidates who have taken and failed the XXX certification examination the opportunity to review the examination failed questions, answers, grades, and the grading keys used. A \$XX.00 review fee will be incurred to review any failed part of the examination. Check or money order should be made payable to: [contact information] at the headquarters of XXX Certification Body.

Requests for reviews must be submitted in writing within XX days from the on-site notification date of failure.

You will not be scheduled for a review XX days before the next examination. If you attempt to take an examination while waiting for your review, you forfeit the review and the fees.

During the examination review, you will be allowed to review a copy of the examination questions you missed, and be permitted to note your challenges to any of the missed questions in writing. However, you may not copy or remove any material provided for your review. Your challenges will be submitted to the testing vendor for review and determination of validity. You will be notified in writing of the final decision. You can expect a response to those challenges within about XX weeks. To maintain the confidentiality of the examination, the only response you will see is “credit” or “no credit.” No details of subject matter experts or consultants can be revealed. Challenges or supporting documents submitted after you leave the review room will not be accepted.

All reviews are subject to strict security requirements to ensure the integrity of the examination. You will be notified in writing of your appointment date and time. Bring the appointment letter and a photo identification to the review. You are responsible for all related travel costs.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Reference books permitted at the examination may be used as references during the review. No notes or markings may be made in your books during the review. Any personal items or supplies needed during the review session must be enclosed in a clear plastic bag no larger than eight by eleven inches (8" x 11"). Unauthorized supplies (those not listed in the candidate handbook or review guidelines) will be subject to removal by the certification body's representative. Reference books may be brought into the review room in a box or wire basket. No briefcases, portfolios, or purses will be allowed in the review room.

Breaks taken during the review session are your responsibility and cannot be taken into consideration as time lost. The time for the review session will begin and end as specified in the review appointment letter.

Please note that the test booklets used during the examination are NOT retained. You will be provided a clean, exact copy of the test questions.

Your on-site grade report is your official grade notification, as the board does not mail “official” reports after ratification.

Mail your completed review request to above address.

Examinations: Languages in Which They Are Given

Guidance on Examinations: Languages in Which They Are Given

The certification body is not required to offer examinations in languages other than English; however, if it does, it must ensure that translated examinations are equivalent in content. This involves documented evidence that the translated items are the same as the English items. One common method for doing this is to have an examination translated and then translated back into the original language and to compare the results with the original. SMEs in the primary and secondary language should review the translated examinations.

Where examiners are used, they should be fluent in both the written and oral language of the examination; however, in some circumstances an interpreter or translator may be used. If an interpreter or translator is used, the certification body must have a procedure in place to ensure that the translation does not affect the validity of the examination (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.2.1.d).

Examinations: Maintenance

Guidance on Examinations: Maintenance

The certification body is required to keep the contents of its assessment process in line with the certification scheme (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.1). Any time the scheme changes, the certification body must ensure that certified persons comply with the changed requirements (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.2) and that all scheme requirements are objectively and systematically verified with documented evidence to confirm the candidate's competence (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.2.3). Therefore, the certification body should have a policy and a procedure to update the examination based on the following:

- Changes to the scheme
- Identification of deficiencies.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: Maintenance

XXX Certification Body updates the examination content within 3 months of any changes to the scheme. New test items are written annually and items referencing outdated practices or identified as deficient are flagged for review and rewritten or deleted.

Examinations: Number of Times a Candidate May Take

Guidance on Examinations: Number of Times a Candidate May Take

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the number of times a candidate may take and fail the examination. This policy should be based on the following criteria:

- The risk of exposure of the test items (e.g., the number of examination forms in rotation)
- The frequency of examination administrations (daily testing versus annual testing)
- The likelihood that candidates will study and/or obtain additional education before the next examination attempt
- The cost to retest
- Whether a new application for certification or simply a retest fee is required.

The certification body must ensure it does not unduly restrict candidates from the opportunity to retest, but must also protect candidates who do not understand that they may pay for and fail the examination again and again unless they increase their knowledge between testing events.

Sample Template Policy on Examinations: Number of Times a Candidate May Take

Candidates failing the XXX certification examination are permitted to pay an examination fee and retest up to two additional times. Thereafter the candidate must wait 12 months, then submit a full application, including application fee and full certification fee.

Examinations: Staff and Volunteer Personnel Taking

Guidance on Examinations: Staff and Volunteer Personnel Taking

The certification body is required to develop a policy and a procedure to maintain impartiality when the certification body certifies a person it employs (either for pay or voluntarily) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.8). There are numerous ways to do this. One way is to ensure that staff and volunteers are not exposed to the entire item bank or all examination forms and to allow staff and volunteers to sit only for examinations to which they have not been exposed.

Sample Template Policy on Examination: Staff and Volunteer Personnel Taking

Employees, staff members, and volunteers of XXX Certification Body shall notify XXX Certification Body in the event they are applying for XXX certification and sitting for an XXX certification examination. In the event that an employee, staff member, or volunteer takes the XXX certification examination, XXX Certification Body will ensure that the employee, staff member, or volunteer is given an examination to which he or she has not been exposed.

Fees and Refunds

Guidance on Fees and Refunds

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for fees and refunds. Fee payment is normally a prerequisite to obtaining certification, and the certification body must make information about the prerequisites of the certification scheme publically available without request (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2.2). At a minimum, the policy on fees should include:

- Application fees
- Maintenance or renewal fees
- Penalties for cancelling examinations or not showing
- Fees to replace a certificate
- Administrative fees
- Late fees.

At a minimum, the policy on refunds should include:

- Terms and conditions for issuing a refund
- Processes subject to refund
- Circumstances in which refunds are not permitted
- Timelines to issue refunds.

Sample Template Policy on Fees and Refunds

XXX Certification body reserves the right to assess fees for all services, including application, examination, recertification, challenging failed examination scores, duplicate certificates, and publications. Fees are also charged for late applications, rescheduling an examination without a valid reason, extensions, and other circumstances as deemed appropriate. Fees are subject to change and the candidate is responsible to submit the current and correct fee for any aspect of certification. All fees shall be published in the candidate handbook and on the website.

Refunds are granted at the discretion of the certification staff granted for accepted circumstances such as emergency cancellations or withdrawals from the examination process. Refunds are not granted to candidates who forfeit or fail the examination, or who are denied eligibility or recertification.

Fiduciary Responsibility

Guidance on Fiduciary Responsibility

The certification body should develop a policy for fiduciary responsibility that should, at a minimum:

- Protect the assets entrusted to the body.
- Safeguard the public's trust by administering a credible credential.
- Protect the intellectual property and reputation of the certification program.
- Exercise due diligence and good stewardship in performing duties.

Sample Template Policy on Fiduciary Responsibility

Members of the XXX Certification Body shall understand and accept their fiduciary responsibility to XXX certification and the stakeholders it serves by the credential. In accepting their responsibility in governing a certification entity, members shall protect the assets entrusted to them, and shall exercise due diligence upholding the integrity of the certification program by performing their duties in a manner that is trustworthy, reflective of good stewardship, and respectful of the organization as it prosecutes its purposes.

Fraud and Evidence of Cheating

Guidance on Fraud and Evidence of Cheating

The certification body is required to 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 (examination proctor) to be present.
- c) Confirming the identity of the candidates.
- 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 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3).

Items a and c have been previously addressed. Item b means that the certification body cannot have un-proctored examinations or examinations where the candidate simply goes online and takes an examination without being observed. It is still debatable whether “remote proctoring” is acceptable. Items d and e require examination proctors to ensure that no notes or other aids are brought into the room and that the walls and desks are clear so no hints, clues, or notes can be used during the examination. Finally, item f means that the certification body must run regular cheat detection software or otherwise monitor the results (i.e., look for changes in the difficulty of a test item, look for repeating response strings from candidates, look for abnormal pass rates in a candidate population).

Impartiality

Guidance on Impartiality

The certification body is required to have a policy and a procedure to manage impartiality and to ensure that the certification activities are conducted impartially (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.1). A policy on commitment to impartiality should, at a minimum, ensure that the body:

- Acts impartially and fairly in relation to applicants, candidates, and certified persons.
- Does not restrict certification on the grounds of undue financial or other limiting conditions, such as membership in an association or group.
- Does not unfairly impede or inhibit access to certification by applicants and candidates.
- Does not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality.
- Makes decisions according to policies and procedures.
- Makes public policies and procedures affecting applicants, candidates, and certified persons.
- Understands, identifies, and minimize threats to impartiality.
- Understands and minimizes threats associated with related bodies.

Sample Template Policy on Impartiality

XXX Certification Body shall commit to acting impartially in relation to its applicants, candidates, and certified persons. Certification decisions shall be made in accordance with policies and procedures. Policies and procedures affecting applicants, candidates, and certified persons shall be made public and shall fairly and accurately convey information about the certification program. XXX Certification Body shall understand threats to impartiality that include, but are not limited to, self-interest, activities from related bodies, relationships of personnel, financial interests, favoritism, conflict of interest, familiarity, and intimidation. XXX Certification Body shall periodically conduct a threat analysis to determine the potential, both real and perceived, of an individual or an organization to influence certification.

Internal Audit Procedures

Guidance on Internal Audit Procedures

The certification body is required to have a procedure for internal audits to verify it fulfills the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 and that the management system is effectively implemented and maintained (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.6.1). Internal audits are required to be performed at least once every 12 months (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.6.3). The certification body must ensure that:

- Internal audits are conducted by competent personnel knowledgeable in the certification process, auditing, and the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024.
- Auditors do not audit their own work.
- Opportunities for improvement are identified (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10.2.6.4).

Sample Template Policy on Internal Audit Procedures

XXX Certification Body conducts annual internal audits. The services of external consultants are secured to conduct the internal audits. Auditors must be competent and may not audit their own work. Auditors are required to identify any appropriate opportunities for improvement in addition to nonconformities.

Management System Components

Guidance on Management System Components

The certification body must document that it has an operational management system that includes document control, management review of inputs and outputs, internal audits, and corrective and preventative actions (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 10). ISO 9000 is one example of a quality management system. For each of these areas, the certification body should have a policy and a procedure for the management system and how it operates within the certification body. Numerous consultants, books, and guidance documents are available to help certification bodies develop their management systems.

Meeting Minutes and Recordkeeping

Guidance on Meeting Minutes and Recordkeeping

The Certification Body should have a document control system to control documents (internal and external) as well as records (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 10.2.3 and 10.2.4). The document control system should include a procedure to ensure that the most recent and up-to-date document is in use (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 10.2.3.d and 10.2.3.g).

All meetings should be documented. The certification body should have a policy for documenting all meetings pertaining to certification. Meeting documentation should include:

- Description of type of meeting
- Identification of meeting participation
- Medium for participation (face-to-face or electronic)
- Penalties (such as dismissal) for failure to participate
- Agenda used during the meeting
- Resolutions or actions items arising from the meeting
- Parties responsible for action items
- Date and time of next meeting.

Non-Discrimination

Guidance on Non-Discrimination

The certification body should have a policy on non-discrimination that should include, at a minimum:

- What is prescribed by law
- Scope—all individuals involved in the certification program, including paid personnel, volunteer personnel, applicants, candidates, and certified persons.

Sample Template Policy on Non-Discrimination

XXX Certification Body does not discriminate in the participation in the XXX Certification Program and prohibits discrimination against its applicants, candidates, certified persons, employees, and volunteers on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Pass Point (Cut Score): Setting

Guidance on Pass Point (Cut Score): Setting

The certification body must design examinations to ensure the validity of the pass/fail decisions (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 9.3.1). This means that setting the passing score or cut point on the examination cannot be arbitrary. Although it may seem intuitive to think that an appropriate passing score for an examination should be 70% or 75% correct based on personal experiences taking classroom tests, these arbitrary values may not reflect the performance level expected of the certified person given the difficulty of the test. For example, if the examination is very easy, a passing score of 70% may be too low. However, if the examination is very difficult, this same value may be too high. Establishing passing scores requires systematic procedures to be applied that consider the defined performance level definition of the “minimally qualified certified person” and the difficulty of the examination. Before the final passing scores are established, they are evaluated to ensure that the available validity evidence supports their use for the intended purpose of distinguishing the “minimally qualified candidates” from those who are not yet qualified.

The process selected by the certification body for establishing the passing standard should comply with established psychometric and governmental or legal guidelines. Most importantly, the passing standard should be determined using a *criterion-referenced* technique. Unlike “grading on a curve” (i.e., norm referenced), in which candidates are judged relative to each other regardless of their level of knowledge and/or skill, criterion-referencing judges candidates against a predetermined standard of knowledge and/or skill. This predetermined standard is defined as the minimum score that would be expected from candidates who have the level of knowledge and skills needed to competently conduct their work responsibilities. Criterion-referencing eliminates artificial and arbitrary quotas that are in the best interest of neither the public nor the profession or specialty.

Implications: A test can consist of well-written items closely linked to a thorough JTA. Despite satisfying this foundation of test validity, all the quality and effort are lost if an acceptable process is not used to determine the pass-fail standard. The ultimate goal is to maximize the probability that passing candidates deserve to pass, and that failing candidates deserve to fail. These probabilities are maximized only when *criterion-referenced* standard setting is applied properly.

Sample Template Policy on Pass Point (Cut Score): Setting

XXX Certification Body used a panel of content experts to establish the passing score for the XXX certification examination. The panel used industry best practices to establish a passing score for the XXX certification examination. The method used by the panel, as directed by a psychometrician, is known as the modified-Angoff method. This method requires that field experts (panel members) evaluate individual test items and estimate the percentage of qualified XXX professionals who would be able to answer correctly. These estimates were analyzed for consistency and averaged to produce the passing score. The passing score and all candidate results are reported as scaled scores. The passing scaled score for the update XXX certification examination is 1400, with a range of possible scores of 1000 to 1600.

Personnel Records Maintenance

Guidance on Personnel Records Maintenance

The certification body is required to maintain up-to-date personnel records, including relevant information (e.g., qualifications, training, experience, professional affiliations, professional status, competence, and known conflicts of interest) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.1.5). At a minimum, the records of certification personnel should include:

- Job title
- Job description
- Qualifications for the job
- Documentation, such as a resume, of qualifications
- Training in job requirements
- Signed non-disclosure agreements, confidentiality agreements, and other forms.

Personnel is defined as “Individuals, internal or external, of the certification body carrying out activities for the certification body” (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 3.12). According to this definition, even volunteers carrying out activities for the certification body would be considered “personnel” and the certification body should have records for these individuals.

Sample Template Policy on Personnel Records Maintenance

XXX Certification Body maintains personnel records for all individuals carrying out certification activities on behalf of XXX Certification.

Proctoring

Guidance on Proctoring

The certification body must conduct all test administrations in the same manner or in a manner that can be demonstrated to provide the same opportunity for all candidates. If a test is administered in more than one format or mode, the scores produced under all formats and modes must be demonstrably comparable. Policies for the implications of testing irregularities and for accommodations, modifications, and adaptations, are essential. Guidelines are required for understanding the most likely effects of irregularities, accommodations, or changes upon the interpretation of resultant scores.

The certification body should provide specifications detailing and standardizing the conditions under which tests are administered. Such specifications should address, at a minimum:

- Characteristics of the physical environment
- Necessary materials and equipment
- Arrangement of candidates
- Arrangement, calibration, and preparation of equipment
- Training (including instructions and responsibilities) of individuals who administer and proctor the test
- Timing of the test
- Maintenance of security
- Monitoring for cheating.

Standardized administration of tests helps to ensure consistency and fairness. Without standardized administration and evidence that test administrations are comparable, many potential sources of error could result that would adversely affect reliability and validity.

The certification body must have documented descriptions of the responsibilities and qualifications of personnel involved in the assessment process, including proctors (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.3.1). These documented descriptions should include:

- Information about how to administer the examination
- Information about how to receive and return examination materials (including electronic materials for computer-based examinations)
- Information about the requirements for the physical examination location (seating, lighting, etc.)
- Information about the verification of candidate identifications
- Information about what to do for various incidents, including late arrivals, suspected cheating, power outages and other emergencies, and candidate illness.
- Scripts to be read by examination staff or projected on computer screens to ensure standardized examination administrations.

The certification body should evaluate the qualifications of proctors and examination administrators and ensure they sign conflict of interest agreements (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 6.2.3.2) and confidentiality agreements.

Instructions for proctoring examinations (both paper and computer-based examinations) are usually provided in an examination administration manual.

Public Information

Guidance on Public Information

The certification body is required to provide specific information to the public (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.2). At a minimum, policies should ensure the following information is public and available:

- Status of certified persons
- Scope of certifications
- Policies affecting applicants, candidates, and certified persons
- Requirements to earn and maintain certification
- Examination blueprint (content outline)
- Commitment to impartiality
- Complaints and appeals processes.

Recertification Process

Guidance on Recertification Process

The certification body must implement the recertification program as defined by the certification scheme. Therefore, the certification body should have a policy and a procedure for recertification. The policy for maintaining certification or recertification should include:

- Conditions for maintaining certification, such as completion of recertification requirements, continuous compliance with code of ethics, and other conditions such as background check
- Specific recertification requirements based on competencies, such as continuing education credits and work experience
- Applicable fees
- Documentation requirements (evidence to support attainment of recertification requirements)
- Timelines for submission of recertification documents
- Circumstances such as military duty or illness for which an extension can be granted.

Sample Template Policy on Recertification Process

Certification is valid for a period of 5 years. To recertify, certified individuals must submit:

- A recertification application together with the recertification fees
- Evidence of employment in the industry for no fewer than 90 days per year for the previous 5 years
- Evidence of the completion of 30 hours of continuing professional development by completing courses approved by XXX Certification Body (list available at XXXXX)
- Recertification application together with employment and continuing education evidence; otherwise, the certification will expire and the certified person will be required to reapply for initial certification.

Recertification Requirements, Including Audits

Guidance on Recertification Requirements, Including Audits

The certification body shall review the applications for recertification. The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for reviewing the recertification applications, which should include:

- Completeness of application, including supporting documentation
- Notification of audits (a percentage)
- Timeline to review and process applications.

The policy for auditing recertification applications should include:

- The percentage audited (10%, 20%, etc.)
- Notification of audit (electronic, written)
- Information to be provided if audited; e.g., certificates of completion of continuing education courses, verification of employment.
- Penalties such as suspension of certification associated with failure to comply with audit.

Record Destruction

Guidance on Record Destruction

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for record destruction. Records of applicants, candidates, and certified persons shall be disposed of in such a way as to ensure the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the information (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.1.2). The records of applicants, candidates, and certified persons should be kept for an appropriate period of time (as defined by the certification body), for a minimum of one full certification cycle, or as required by recognition arrangements, contractual, legal, or other obligations (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.1.2). A policy for destroying records and certification documents should address:

- Type of destruction (papers shredding; deletion of electronic records)
- Security of records during destruction
- Conditions for destroying records (record is no longer required)
- Evidence of destruction
- Destruction time period.

Sample Template Policy on Record Destruction

XXX Certification Body shall destroy all paper and electronic records pertaining to candidates 5 years after candidates are no longer certified. Records for certified candidates shall be kept in perpetuity. Paper records shall be destroyed by using a professional document destruction company. Electronic records shall be destroyed by deleting the original and all copies of the electronic files.

Record Retention

Guidance on Record Retention

The certification body should have policies and procedures for retention of all records. This policy should address:

- Corporate records (annual reports, minutes)
- Legal documents (contracts, copyright and trademark registrations)
- Certification (correspondence with certified persons, applications, score reports, disciplinary proceedings, job/task analysis studies, item and examination statistics, qualifications of SMEs, examination forms, non-disclosure agreements, etc.).

Records and Recordkeeping

Guidance on Records and Recordkeeping

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure for recordkeeping. The certification body shall maintain records, including records that confirm the status of a certified person (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.1.1). The records should 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 (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.1.1).

The policy for maintaining information such as candidate records should include:

- Authorization of persons in the certification office to do so and to access information throughout the individual's life cycle of certification
- Confidentiality requirements
- Access to confidential information by persons such as those who work in information technology and accounting to support certification activities
- Description of information kept on individuals
- Medium for collecting information
- Length of time for record retention
- Information on the format and location of records being retained
- Timeline for record destruction.

The policy for access to records should, at a minimum, address:

- Personnel with access
- Conditions permitting access to unauthorized personnel (legal request)
- Authorization to remove records (legal requirement)
- Training of certification personnel handling records.

A policy for records of volunteers or SMEs participating in the certification program should:

- Ensure that electronic or hard copy files are kept on volunteers.
- Include signed confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements
- Include records of qualification such as bios and resumes
- Include other requirements such as the volunteer code of conduct
- Include information about destruction of record
- Ensure confidentiality.
- Access to records.

A policy for record storage should address:

- Secure storage for electronic and hard copy records
- Authorized and restricted access to records (personnel, passwords, etc.)

- Requirement for personnel accessing records to sign non-disclosure agreements.

Score Reporting (Pass/Fail Notification)

Guidance on Score Reporting (Pass/Fail Notification)

The certification body should issue score reports to candidates. Score reports can take the format of pass/fail reports, scores/grades for passing and failing candidates, diagnostic score reports for failing candidates, or scores/grades for failing candidates only. The method of pass/fail reporting should take into account the value of providing more detailed information to the candidate versus the validity of diagnostic subscores or the helpfulness of scores/grades versus simple pass/fail notice. Additionally, the potential for misuse and abuse of scores should be considered in determining whether to report scores or simply pass/fail.

Sample Template Policy on Score Reporting (Pass/Fail Notification)

XXX Certification Body will report to each candidate the passing score required and the candidate's scaled score. No diagnostic subscores will be reported.

Security

Guidance for Security

The certification body must design and use procedures that ensure the security of examinations and related information at all times. These procedures should include a statement of potential consequences for violations of security procedures. Security issues addressed should include:

- Signed confidentiality agreements with item writers and test development committee members that explain their responsibilities for security of the materials
- Allowed and prohibited acts and materials (including access and removal)
- Handling of materials and equipment
- Adequate staffing for mode of testing, number of candidates, and room size and configuration
- Training and orientation of staff
- Directions to candidates
- Responding to candidate questions (including avoidance of coaching and interfering)
- Monitoring of test administration (including prevention of candidate collaboration) for standardization and security
- Reporting on security during test administration
- Accounting of materials
- Monitoring the field for the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of secure test content that may compromise the integrity of the test.

Security during test administration must be adequate to ensure that no activity or event will lead to an unfair advantage or disadvantage for any candidate. It must also ensure that no compromises of test materials or equipment will lead to future unfairness or adverse implications for test reliability and validity.

The certification body is required to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure security throughout the entire certification process (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.1). Security policies and procedures should take into account:

- The location of secure materials (transportation, electronic delivery, disposal, storage, examination centers, etc.) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.2.a)
- The nature of the secure materials (electronic, paper, test equipment, etc.) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.2.b)
- The steps in the examination process (development, administration, results reporting, etc.) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.2.c)
- The threats arising from repeated use of examination materials (e.g., examination item exposure and overexposure) (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.2.d).

The certification body should also require candidates to sign confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements indicating their commitment not to repeat confidential examination information (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.a).

The certification body is also required to consider:

- Requiring an examination proctor to be present at examination administrations (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.b)
- Verifying the identity of the candidate (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.c)
- Ensuring that candidates do not bring unauthorized materials into the examination or otherwise gain access to unauthorized examination materials (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.d and 7.4.3.e)
- Monitoring examination results for indications of cheating (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4.3.f).

Security policies and procedures developed by the certification body should cover:

- Access to confidential records
- Certification body staff
- Application processing
- Computer access, data storage, and backup
- Facilities (office, test sites)
- SMEs participating in passing score studies
- SMEs writing or reviewing test questions
- Test administration
- Test development and maintenance
- Test materials.

The certification body should keep in mind that all test data are secure and that all candidate data obtained during the certification process are considered confidential or secure (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.3.3).

Signatures (Electronic If Applicable)

Guidance on Signatures (Electronic If Applicable)

The certification body must obtain signatures from candidates and personnel (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 6.1.7, 9.1.2, and 9.7.2). However, ISO/IEC 17024 allows these signatures to be electronic or, where permitted by law, to use other methods. This means that any acknowledgment, including checked boxes on an online application, should be acceptable for use as a signature.

Sample Template Policy on Signatures (Electronic If Applicable)

XXX Certification Body requires that the candidate fulfills the signature requirements of e-signatures/signatures according to the XXX certification process.

XXX Certification Body abides by the international standards of security procedures for e-signatures/signatures as well as other regional identification practices.

Individuals who falsify e-signatures/signatures may be subjected to disciplinary action, cancellation of certification, and legal actions.

Site Access

Guidance on Site Access

The certification body should have a policy and a procedure pertaining to access to all secured areas for visitors and others. The policy should cover the headquarters of the certification body where secured data are stored, the site where examination development activities occur, and examination sites (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 7.4).

Sample Template Policy for Site Access

All visitors to XXX offices must sign in at the front reception desk during office hours. Each visitor will be issued a visitor pass that must be displayed at all times when on the premises and that is to be returned to the reception desk when signing out. An authorized person must escort non-regular visitors at all times while inside the building. Visitors must present valid identification and sign in and out. After hours and on weekends, visitors must identify themselves with the supervisor or lead person on duty and sign in and out on the visitor board by the employee entrance.

No visitors shall be allowed into areas where examination development activities are occurring.

Visitors shall not be allowed at the examination site during an examination administration without pre-approval. Only authorized visitors who have valid reason for observing the examination (i.e., accreditation assessors) and have been pre-approved will be allowed at the examination site. All visitors to the examination site are required to sign non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements and must be escorted at all times by an authorized person.

Special Needs Accommodations

Guidance on Special Needs Accommodations

The certification body needs to have a policy and a procedure for dealing with candidates who have special needs. This begins with the application for accommodation. How is it made available to special needs candidates and how do they know where to get it? Once the candidate obtains the application, what information is collected and what happens to that information? Typically a certification body requires evidence of the special needs from a licensed physician, social worker, psychologist, or other pertinent professional. The certification body must specify and verify the special needs request. The certification body should have both a policy on special needs and a procedure for special needs candidates (ISO/IEC 17024, Clauses 9.1.2.e and 9.2.5).

Sample Template Policy for Special Needs Accommodations

XXX Certification Body complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC Section 12101, et seq.) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended (42 U.S.C.2000e, et seq.), to accommodate candidates who, because of a disability, need special arrangements to enable them to take an examination. All applicants for an examination, or a reexamination, who desire special testing accommodations because of a disability, must complete the section on the application indicating special accommodations are required.

All test sites have access for candidates with disabilities. To take advantage of special testing arrangements, a candidate with impaired sensory ability, manual ability, speaking skills, or other disabilities requires a letter from a licensed physician, social worker, psychologist, or other pertinent professional. The letter must be written on the professional's letterhead and include the professional's title, address, telephone number, and date. The letter must also include a diagnosis of the disabling condition and explain why special testing arrangements are necessary. The letter must have an original signature from the professional and be dated no more than 5 years before the application. Faxes and photocopies will not be accepted.

A candidate with a learning disability must submit a request for special accommodations in writing and include it with the application. The request must include a diagnosis of the disability and follow the same documentation requirements as stated in the previous paragraph. The request must stipulate the necessary accommodations. XXX Certification Body staff will work with the candidate to determine acceptable accommodations.

Sample Template Procedures for Special Needs Accommodation

XXX Certification Body shall process applications for accommodations of special needs as follows:

1. Applications for accommodation of special needs are received by the certification body from the candidate.
2. Applications for accommodation of special needs are reviewed for completeness.
3. Applications for accommodation of special needs are sent to appropriate accommodation consultant for review.

4. Applications for accommodation of special needs are approved or denied. Denied candidates are provided opportunity to appeal the decision.
5. Arrangements are made for special accommodations for approved candidates.
6. Records of the procedure are placed in the candidate files.

Stakeholder Representation

Sample Template Policy on Stakeholder Representation

XXX Certification Body involves interested parties in all aspects of the XXX certification program. XXX Certification Body seeks to involve interested parties in the development of the examination items, passing scores studies, eligibility reviews, appeals and disciplinary committees, and all other committees. Interested parties may indicate an interest in participating in the certification program by serving as an SME or otherwise participating in voluntary committees.

Subject Matter Experts: Qualifications

Guidance on Subject Matter Experts: Qualifications

The certification body typically uses SMEs to conduct various aspects of the certification program, including:

- Item writing
- Item review
- Passing score studies
- Performance examination scoring
- Post-examination item analysis review and candidate comment reviews
- Eligibility review
- Appeals and disciplinary processes.

The certification body should have descriptions of the job duties for the various aspects of the certification program requiring the use of SMEs and qualification descriptions for the various jobs. Qualifications usually include holding the certification as well as educational and experience.

Threat Analyses: How To Conduct

Guidance on Threat Analyses: How To Conduct

The certification body is required to conduct a threat analysis (ISO/IEC 17024, Clause 4.3.6 and 4.3.7). A policy on conducting an analysis of threats to impartiality should include:

- List of relationships that can threaten impartiality with potential area(s) of risk (self-interest, products and services, involvement of interested parties, governance structure, resources, contracts, etc.)
- Timing of conduct of threat analysis—annually or as circumstances warrant
- Metrics for assessing risk of threat
- Timeline to implement corrective actions to minimize a threat.

Sample Template Policy on Threat Analyses: How To Conduct

In upholding its commitment to maintaining the highest level of impartiality and objectivity in its practices and decision-making, XXX Certification Body shall annually, or as circumstances warrant, conduct a threat analysis in accordance with the list of threats to impartiality. The [authorized person] shall review the findings from the threat analysis and implement preventive and corrective actions as necessary.