

Second edition
2012-07-01

Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

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

Reference number
ISO/IEC 17024:2012(E)



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

Published in Switzerland

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Contents

Page

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

Foreword

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

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

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

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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

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

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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