

IAS POLICY ON ASSESSMENT OF OUTSOURCED SERVICES USED BY PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION BODIES

A. Purpose

This policy specifies International Accreditation Service (IAS) requirements for assessment of all IAS-accredited Personnel Certification Bodies (PCBs) which outsource key services for examination development, validation, and/or administration.

B. References

1. ISO/IEC 17024:2012, Clause 6.3.2: *When a certification body outsources work related to certification, the certification body shall: (a) take full responsibility for all outsourced work; (b) ensure that the body conducting outsourced work is competent and complies with the applicable provisions of this International Standard; (c) assess and monitor the performance of the bodies conducting outsourced work in accordance with its documented procedures; (d) have records to demonstrate that the bodies conducting outsourced work meet all requirements relevant to the outsourced work; and (e) maintain a list of the bodies conducting outsourced work.*
2. ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Clause 7.4.4: *The accreditation body shall establish documented procedures to assess the competence of a conformity assessment body to perform all activities in its scope of accreditation irrespective of where these activities are performed.*
3. IAF MD 1:2018 – *Audit and Certification of a Management System Operated by a Multi-Site Organization*
4. The IAS Accreditation Criteria for Personnel Certification Bodies (PCBs) AC474 is available on the IAS website, <https://www.iasonline.org/services/personnel-certification-bodies/>
5. Rules of Procedure for Accreditation of Personnel Certification Bodies

C. Requirements for PCBs Outsourcing Services

IAS requires that Personnel Certification Bodies (PCBs) which elect to outsource work to third-party outsourced bodies have the following management system requirements:

1. Written service agreement between the PCB and the outsourced body which specifies the following:
 - a. Services provided by the outsourced body;

- b. Agreement by the outsourced body to comply with all relevant requirements of ISO/IEC 17024;
 - c. Agreement by the outsourced body to comply with the PCB's ethics, security and impartiality policies;
 - d. Mutual responsibilities of the outsourced body and the PCB; and
 - e. PCB rights to monitor the performance of the outsourced body, including access to staff, facility, and relevant records.
- 2. Evidence of the qualifications of outsourced bodies to provide contracted services;
 - 3. A list of all outsourced bodies, which includes the address and name/contact of the person(s) who are responsible for management of these services; and
 - 4. Procedure and records specific to initial qualification and ongoing assessment of the performance of all outsourced bodies. These policies and procedures must include provisions to ensure the security of examination materials, taking into account the following (**refer to clause 7.4.2, ISO/IEC 17024:2012**):
 - a. the locations of the materials (e.g., transportation, electronic delivery, disposal, storage, examination center);
 - b. the nature of the materials (e.g., electronic, paper, test equipment);
 - c. the steps in the examination process (e.g., development, administration, results reporting);
 - d. the threats arising from repeated use of examination materials.
 - 5. PCBs must seek the approval from IAS for the use of an Authorized Qualification Body (AQB) prior to use and the name/location of the approved AQB will be listed on the IAS scope of accreditation.

D. Outsourced bodies administering practical/performance examinations

- 1. Onsite audit by the PCB could be required for initial qualification and annual performance audits of outsourced bodies which provide administration of practical/performance examinations.
- 2. PCBs shall submit to IAS the policy and procedure for monitoring the performance of these outsourced bodies, as stated in Section C 4 of this policy.
- 3. When outsourced bodies are required to have and use calibrated/verified equipment for the administration of examinations, the PCB shall maintain records attesting to this requirement.
- 4. Scheduled IAS assessments may include the onsite observation of outsourced body(s) which administers practical/performance examinations. When multiple outsourced bodies are contracted for this service, IAS will select a sample of outsourced body(s) to observe over the accreditation cycle.