POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION OF PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS - ANSI-PCAC-CA-501

PART 1 GENERAL

The policies, procedures and other requirements in this document govern ANSI accreditation of certification programs. The process for reviewing and approving an application for accreditation is contained in PCAC-CA-502, ANSI Manual of Operations for Accreditation of Certification Programs (Manual of Operations), publications. Programs are accredited by ANSI upon approval by the ANSI Personnel Certification Accreditation Committee (PCAC).

The PCAC, under ANSI Bylaws is responsible for the operational aspects of accrediting personnel certification programs and related activities of the Institute. Its responsibilities include overseeing the processing of applications for accreditation by ANSI staff, rendering decisions on accreditation, evaluating assessors' reports and monitoring of Accreditation Programs in accordance with this document as well as the PCAC-CA-502, Manual of Operations. The PCAC functions in accordance with PCAC-CA-503, ANSI Operating Procedures of the Personnel Certification Accreditation Committee.

The requirements of this document and the Manual of Operations provide the basis for the nationally recognized, open, disciplined and credible accreditation activity that requires applicants' certification programs to demonstrate high level of integrity and technical and administrative quality, to serve the public interest and to have a tangible value. As a result, ANSI accreditation can provide added value to certification programs through enhanced consumer confidence in the services covered by such programs. ANSI accreditation can also be utilized in procurement and regulatory activities by government agencies which can rely on ANSI accreditation to reduce or eliminate expenditure of public resources for monitoring personnel certification programs.

ANSI accreditation can facilitate U.S. participation in global trade by providing international recognition of personnel certification (i.e. conformity assessment) programs. This document requires that ANSI accreditation programs also comply with the current issue of *ISO/IEC17011 – Conformity Assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.* As a result, validation of claims of conformity regarding processes and services, as part of a certification program accredited by ANSI, can help achieve acceptance in world markets where personnel certification is a factor. In addition, mutual recognition agreements/multilateral agreements between ANSI and counterpart organizations in other countries or regions can serve as a formal basis for such acceptance.

ANSI is the U.S. member body of the International Organization for Standards (ISO) and of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) via the U.S. National Committee of the IEC and ANSI Committee. It maintains close ties and relationships with regional bodies such as the European Organization for Testing and Certification, the Pacific Area Standards Congress, and the Pan American Standards Commission, as well as with relevant bodies in many countries.

1.2 References

1.2.1 The following international documents are the basis for the ANSI Accreditation Program requirements:

ANSI/ISO/IEC 17000: 2004 Conformity Assessment – Vocabulary and general principles.

1.2.2 In addition to this document (PCAC-CA-501), the following ANSI documents are used to implement the ANSI Accreditation Program:

ANSI-PCAC-CA-502 *ANSI Manual of Operations for Accreditation of Personnel Certification Programs*

ANSI-PCAC-CA-503 *Operating Procedures of the Personnel Certification Accreditation Committee*

PM 100 - *ANSI Management System Policy Manual*

PART 2 - REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACCREDITATION BODY

2.1 Personnel Certification Accreditation Body

2.1.1 General Provisions

2.1.1.1 ANSI operates the Personnel Accreditation Program in conformance with the provisions of ISO/IEC 17011. ANSI's policies and procedures are designed and implemented to provide needed confidence in accreditations issued by virtue of the efficiency and quality of the process that issues those accreditations.

2.1.1.2 The policies and procedures under which the Personnel Certification Accreditation

Program operates are non-discriminatory and are administered in a nondiscriminatory manner. Procedures shall not be used to impede or inhibit access by applicant bodies otherwise than as provided for in this document.

2.1.1.3 The Personnel Certification Accreditation Program services are accessible to all applicants whose personnel certification program is within the scope of ISO/IEC

17024. Scope is limited to personnel certification bodies.

2.1.1.4 In keeping with the scope, in order to be eligible for ANSI accreditation certification bodies must also satisfy the following basic criteria:

a) Be able to demonstrate independent third-party status as a certifier of individuals;

b) Be a legal entity or part of a legal entity;

c) Have clearly published defined scope of certification, conditional upon the number of bodies already accredited within the same sector..

The scope of the assessment will be clearly defined and made known to the applicant.

Access is not conditional on the size of the applicant body or membership in any association or group, nor is accreditation.

2.1.7.2 The ANSI staff controls all documents and data that relate to their personnel certification accreditation functions. The review and approval of such documents is provided for in the ANSI Accreditation Program Management System Policy Manual.

The listing of controlled documents is maintained in *SharePoint* with an identification of the respective issue and/or amendment status. The appropriate documentation will be made available to personnel of the Accreditation Program or to applicants and accredited bodies when needed.

2.1.8 Records

2.1.8.1 The Personnel Certification Accreditation Program maintains a record system. The records demonstrate that accreditation policies and procedures have been fulfilled effectively, particularly with respect to application forms, assessments reports, and other documents relating to granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending or placing on probation, or withdrawing accreditation. The records are identified, managed, and disposed of in a manner designed to ensure integrity of the process and confidentiality of the information. The records are kept for at least five years (an accreditation cycle), or as required by law to demonstrate continued confidence and serve as basis for accreditation decisions.

2.1.9 Confidentiality

2.1.9.1 The Personnel Accreditation Program safeguards confidentiality of all the information obtained in the course of accreditation activities at all levels of the organization, including those of committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf.

PCAC ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Certification Bodies Operating a Personnel Certification Program

PCAC-FR-505

The annual surveillance report is designed to continually monitor certification bodies that are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to ensure that the accredited certification bodies are continuing to meet the requirements of ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024. Because this report is part of the accreditation process, it is important to remember that the materials submitted will be reviewed by two ANSI approved assessors (normally the same assessors who review the certification body initially) and they will be making recommendations regarding the accreditation status of the certification body. If a new assessor is assigned to review your surveillance report, the same procedures used initially to determine any conflict of interests with your certification body will be implemented. The assessors will recommend to the Personnel Certification Accreditation Committee (PCAC) one of the possible actions:

- Continued Accreditation

- Continued Accreditation with further reports required addressing cited non-conformities

- Assessors scheduling an on-site to review specific requirements when it is deemed insufficient to review only documents and an on-site is not part of the process for that year

The annual surveillance report can generate a non-conformity if it is found the certification body no longer meets a requirement of ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024. If a non-conformity is written, the certification body will be ask to submit a plan and/or corrective action to remove the non-conformity. The time allotted to remove any non-conformity will be collaboratively determined between the assessors, personnel certification accreditation committee and the certification body. It is important to remember if a non-conformity(ies) is/are identified, it does not affect your accreditation status at that time. If a non-conformity is not address in an agreed upon allotted time or continually not adequately address, it may affect the accreditation status of your certification body.

Part One

VITAL ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

Basic Information

Date:	Certification Body:
Address:	Contact Person:
City, State, ZIP:	Title:
Email:	Phone:
Fax:	Web Site:

Organizational Information

1. How is your organization legally structured?	<please select one>
If selected "other", please specify:	
2. How long has your organization been in existence?	years
3. How long has your organization been offering personnel certification?	years
4. How many active certificates are in your database for each scheme?	<please select one>
5. How many applications were received this past year?	<please select one>
6. How many applicants were tested this past year?	<please select one>
7. How many tests were administered past year	<please select one>
8. How many applicants were certified this year?	<please select one>
9. Does your program continue to be open to international applicants who are trained / educated outside the United States?	<please select one>
10. If yes, does your organization have any reciprocity agreements in place?	<please select one>
If selected "yes", please explain:	
11. Is your certification program necessary for personnel to obtain employment in your industry?	<please select one>
12. Does your organization outsource components of your personnel certification program?	<please select one>
If selected "yes", please specify:	☐ Collection and fee(s)
	☐ Application processing
	☐ Examination analysis

☐ *Test development*

☐ *Test administration*

☐ *Other*

13a. List the certification schemes that are accredited.

Name(s):

13b. List any additional certification schemes not accredited.

Name(s):

14. How are your candidates assessed? Check all that apply:	15. Where is your assessment given? Check all that apply:
☐ Written paper and pencil examination	☐ Industry setting
☐ Oral examination	☐ Commercial testing center
☐ Performance (skills) examination	☐ Educational institution
☐ Combination of written and oral examination	☐ Other (please specify):
☐ Portfolio (representative sample of work)	
☐ Computer based testing	
☐ Computer adaptive testing	
☐ Other (please specify):	

Part Two

REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

4.1 Certification Body

4.1.1 Fair and equitable policy and procedures	*List and submit any policies and / or procedures relating to the overall operations of the certification body you have changed over the past twelve months* List and describe any formal complaint(s) that you have received over the past 12 months. Document actions taken to resolve the complaint(s) and the current status of the complaint(s).
4.1.2 Defined policy and procedures for granting, maintaining, renewing expanding, reducing scope, suspending and withdrawing of certification	*List and submit any policy or procedural changes for granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding, or reducing the scope of the desired certification; in addition list policy / procedural changes affecting the suspension or withdrawal of the certification.*

4.2 Organizational Structure

4.2.1 Organizational structure of certification body	*List any changes in the organizational structure or the assignment of responsibilities for any component of the certification body and how these changes have affected the certification body.*
4.2.3 Development of scheme committee(s)	*List any changes to the scheme (examination development) committee to include* a) Criteria for members on the committee b) The numbers of required committee members, c) Changes of individual members (submit qualifications for each new member)
4.2.4 Certification body requirements regarding financial resources, confidentiality, objectivity and impartiality	*Provide the most recent audited financial statement; indicate any services or functions which could not be funded or there was a reduction in services or functions. Highlight significant changes.*
4.2.5 Certification body role in training services	*List any new additional related activity that the certification body has initiated beyond the primary certification function. Describe the relationship between the new activity and the certification function.*
4.2.6 Certification body policies and procedures for the resolution of appeals and complaints	*List and describe any appeals that you have received over the past twelve months, actions taken to resolve them and their current status.*
4.2.7 Education, training, technical knowledge and experience of personnel, inlcuding contract bodies	*List changes in personnel to include major personnel who are on a contract basis. Provide qualifications for any new personnel and their assigned responsibilities.* *Describe any changes in workload that may be affecting personnel.* *List and describe any changes in qualification requirements of personnel.*

4.3 Development and Maintenance

4,3,1 Definition of the methods and mechanisms to be used to evaluate competence of candidates	*List any changes to the certification scheme that includes standards, methods or mechanisms used to evaluate the certificants.*
4.3.3 Notice to scheme committee members of any	*If any changes to the scheme have occurred, describe and document the notification process that was used or is currently being used to notify*

change in requirements for certification	*interested parties and certified persons.*
4.3.5 Certification not restricted on grounds of undue financial or other limiting conditions	*If any changes have occurred to the scheme, describe and document the process for implementation to include dates of completion.*
4.3.6 Evaluation of the methods for examination of candidates	*Describe any evaluation results regarding the method(s) for assessing candidates and any actions taken regarding the results of the evaluation. Submit with explanation the following data for each time the examination was given:* *Mean:* *Pass-Fail cut scores:* *Pass Rates:* *How information is made available to public:* *Challenges to specific test items and how it was resolved.*

4.4 Management System	
4,4,1 Management of the certification body	*Describe any changes in the operation of the management system and how it is intended to improve the effective application of these requirements.*
4.4.2 Establishment and implementation of a management system	*If changes have been made, describe the process used to inform affected personnel.*
4.4.3 Document control, audit and management review systems	*Describe the results from the management system process and the actions taken that include corrective and / or preventive actions. Documentation must include any changes to controlled documents, minutes of the management review meetings, and internal audits.*

4.5 Subcontracting	
4.5.1 Development of agreement(s) with subcontractors	*List any changes to current or new agreement(s) with subcontractors. Include documentation of any audits or performance reviews of all subcontractors.*
4.5.2 Certification body responsibility for subcontracted work	*Describe any changes regarding the relationship between current or new subcontractor(s) and the certification body.*

4.6 Records

4.6.2 Records management	Describe any changes to the record keeping system; Indicate any incident(s) regarding any records and any corrective actions taken.

4.7 Confidentiality

4.7 Confidentiality of Information	List any changes in confidentiality policies and procedures; Describe and provide any documentation of any incidences regarding confidentiality and any corrective and / or preventive actions taken.

4.8 Security

4.8 Security	Describe and provide documentation of any security breaches that have occurred in the past year and any corrective and/or preventive actions taken that are not related to any security breaches.

5.1 Personnel Requirements

5.1.2 Certification body personnel commitment to the rules	Submit documentation regarding the commitment of any new personnel to comply with the rules defined by the certification body. Provide signed agreements.
5.1.3 Up-to-date descriptions of duties and responsibilities of personnel	Submit any job descriptions that have been changed over the past twelve months. Describe any training or educational activity that was conducted during the past year for certification body personnel. If no training has occurred, please explain why.

5.2 Examiners

5.2.1 Requirements of examiners	List any new examiners (if applicable) that have been selected over the past year; Document the training/education that they have received to perform their assigned functions.
5.2.2 Examiner conflict of interest	List and describe any complaints filed regarding conflict of interest for examiners and how it was resolved

6.1 Application

6.1.1 Description of certification process	List, describe and submit any changes to public documents regarding the certification process.
6.1.2 Application for individuals seeking certification	Describe any changes in the requirement(s) that are part of the application process. Submit application documents and / or procedures that support the changed requirements.

6.2 Evaluation

6.2.2 All competence criteria covered in examination	If any changes regarding knowledge, skills or abilities have been made, indicate what data was used to support the change and how they will be evaluated.
6.2.4 Documentation of performance and results of the evaluation	Report any studies conducted regarding examination assessment results.

ANSI requires each Certification Body to adhere to the following:

a) make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of assessments, including provisions for examining documentation, and access to records (including internal assessment reports) and personnel for the purpose of surveillance, re-assessment and resolution of complaints;

b) make claims only regarding activities defined in the scope of the accreditation granted;

c) not use the accreditation in such a manner as to bring the Personnel Certification Accreditation Program into disrepute and not make any statement regarding the accreditation which Personnel Certification Accreditation Program may consider misleading or unauthorized;

d) upon withdrawal of the Personnel Certification Accreditation Program accreditation, discontinue use of all advertising material which references the Personnel Certification Accreditation Program accreditation and return all accreditation documents including the certificate to ANSI;

e) not allow the Personnel Certification Accreditation Program accreditation to imply that a person's competencies are approved by the Personnel Certification Accreditation Program;

f) ensure that no Personnel Certification Accreditation Program document, logo, or report nor any part thereof is used in a misleading manner; and

g) comply with Personnel Certification Accreditation Program requirements when referencing the status of Personnel Certification Accreditation Program accreditation in communication media such as documents, brochures, or advertising.

10.0 Review of Program Documents

10.1 Prior to the commencement of any assessment activity, the assessment team will receive all documents that the certification body has submitted to ANSI as part of its application.

The assessment team shall review the documents in order to become completely   f the operational requirements of the certification body being assessed.

10.2 All documents are considered confidential unless they are publicly available. Information obtained during the review of the documents is only for use by the assessment team in the conduct of the assessment activity and shall not be disclosed to others except when expressly authorized. Also, knowledge gained from these assessments must not be directly used for a business vantage in the assessor's other occupational/business roles that he/she is fulfilling.

10.4 The paper review is undertaken by the assessors in accordance with ANSI policies and procedures. Upon receipt of application materials, the ANSI Program Director will review the application materials for completeness. If the materials are complete and the assessors have been determined not to have any conflict of interests, the application will be sent to assessors for initial review and conformity with ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024.

10.5 This review may include, but is not limited to the following documents:

a) Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

b) Quality management manual or equivalent

c) Published documents

d) Candidate handbook

e) Policies and Procedures

f) Job/practice analysis

g) All forms and internal documents used in certification process

h) Minutes of meetings

i) Statistical reports related to the examination(s)

j) Management review reports based on internal audits and analysis of audit results

k) Reports related to the effectiveness of any corrective actions implemented

l) Listing of complaints and appeals and actions taken to resolve issues

On completion of the review of the certification body's application documents by both assessors and a consensus has been determined regarding the appropriate actions, the lead assessor will communicate orally and in writing with the certification body in regard to one or more of the following:

a) discuss additional documentation that is needed

b) clarify understanding of organizational structure and functions, if needed

c) confirm locations and activities of the certification body to include subcontracted

activities

d) reaffirm the scope of accreditation to be assessed

e) identify any additional materials that need to be provided by the certification body

f) discuss details of the site visit (see section 12.0)

g) decided not to proceed with an on-site assessment based on the non-conformities found during document and record review. In such cases, the preliminary informal non-conformities shall be reported in writing to the CAB.

15.0 Assessment at Certification Body Headquarters and/or Other Sites

15.1 The ANSI assessment team will hold an opening meeting with representatives of the certification body which should include top management representatives and preferably with the Chief Executive Officer present. (See Annex 1 for the opening meeting agenda.)

15.2 The purpose of the on-site audit is to validate paper documentation and acquire further documentation through interviews and observation (witness of activities). This also affords the opportunity for the assessors to meet with appropriate staff members, contract employees and other individuals, as agreed to by the assessors and the certification body, to discuss any pertinent aspects of the program as they relate to accreditation requirements.

15.3 Assessors shall evaluate the organization, using interviews, examination of documents and observation of activities and conditions.

15.4 Observations relevant to conformity with ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 are to be recorded by each assessor on Table 3 - Assessment Worksheet (pp. 22-25) of this document. These observations will be used as evidence regarding conformity with a requirement in ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024. The worksheet must be kept as another source of evidence in determining whether a requirement has been met.

15.5 Any changes in principal staff members operating the program, critical documents or financial changes shall be noted by the assessor and reported in the accreditation report.

15.6 The assessment shall be conducted in the English language, unless otherwise requested. If another language is requested, the certification body must provide translation costs and support. If possible, an ANSI assessor who is fluent in the language will be assigned and all related costs shall be borne by the certification body.

15.7 The ANSI assessors shall have open access to any relevant information on file related to the certification program and to any areas where the assessors are authorized to conduct their activities.

19.0 Surveillance

19.1 Surveillance Cycle and Focus (See Annex 02 – Personnel Certification Surveillance of this document)

a) cycle will commence one year after the date of initial accreditation

(1) year one will include a paper review of the annual report and an on-site

(2) year two will include a paper review of the annual report

(3) year three will include a paper review of the annual report and an on-site

(4) year four will include a paper review of the annual report

(5) year five will be the re-accreditation of the certification body

b) will include review of the certification body's annual report

c) investigate any relevant written complaints brought to the attention of ANSI

d) non-conformities may be cited as a result of this surveillance

19.2 Any changes to the certification body will be reviewed during this surveillance. Where the changes are extensive, on-site audits will need to be scheduled even if it is a year that would normally be only a paper review of the annual report.

19.3 Where possible, the same assessors who participated in the original review will be assigned to participate in the first and subsequent surveillance cycles. At the end of a five year cycle, new assessors will be assigned to the certification body.