

CONFIDENTIALITY AND IMPARTIALITY POLICY

ABC Accreditation Body

Revision 1

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1.0 SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to provide adequate arrangements to safeguard confidentiality of information obtained during ABC accreditation activities at all levels of organisation of ABC, including committees and external bodies or individual assessors acting on the behalf of ABC.

This document details the arrangement of ensuring that all information supplied to ABC is treated as or "CONFIDENTIAL".

All persons employed by ABC or working for, or on behalf of ABC, are subject to this policy.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Generally, definitions found in ISO/IEC 17000 and in ABC criteria documents and operating procedures are applicable. For this document, the following definitions also apply.

CAB (CAB): Body that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation, e.g: testing and calibration laboratories, certification bodies or inspection bodies.

3.0 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

All information and documentation obtained or provided during the accreditation process will be treated as strictly confidential. The Director of ABC may approve an exception to the condition following written approval from the CAB or organisation concerned. When this approval is given, the Director shall stipulate where and to whom the information will be disclosed.

Information which is already known to be available in the public domain may be disclosed without reference to the Director of ABC.

Details of applicants for accreditation shall also be treated as confidential until the conclusion of the accreditation process. In the case of a CAB or organisation being unsuccessful in its application for accreditation, the fact can be disclosed upon written request and clearance by the Director of ABC.

In the case of a CAB or organisation having its accreditation suspended or withdrawn by ABC, the fact can be disclosed upon written request and clearance by the Director.

When confidential information on a particular CAB is required to be disclosed to a third party under the requirement of law, the CAB concerned shall be informed in writing of the information disclosed, unless the authority having jurisdiction in the enforcement of the law, provides written instruction to not do so.

ABC accreditation programs may involve persons from regulatory authorities who, under national or state law, are required to enforce the legislation surrounding their area of expertise. In these instances, and in cases where ABC is required, under law, to release information to an authority having jurisdiction, ABC will comply with the laws of the land.

4.0 MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

ABC staff ensure that a formal undertaking of Maintaining Confidentiality and Impartiality and Declaration of No Conflict of Interest is agreed and accepted based on a signed and obtained commitment of the ABC Code of Ethics, from all persons prior to allowing them access to confidential information. This includes all of the following persons:

- ABC Staff
- ABC assessors.
- Members of ABC committees,
- Other national accreditation bodies and partners or peer evaluation members of any Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA or MRA) group that may have access to CAB files through their association with ABC.

Where possible, all confidential information shall be passed by hand. However, when this is not practical and documents are mailed, the documents and envelopes shall be stamped "**CONFIDENTIAL**," such as double enveloped, and transported by secured means.

5.0 IMPARTIALITY

ABC provides its services in an open and transparent manner and applies them without discrimination.

ABC maintains independence, impartiality transparency and objectivity in all its activities.

ABC does not provide consulting services of any kind to accredited and applicant CABs. ABC may provide generic training to all applicant and accredited CABs.

The ABC Code of Ethics sets forth the conditions to determine the existence of real and potential conflicts of interest.

6.0 FAILURE TO CONFORM

Any person failing to conform to any part of this policy may be prevented further access to ABC information.