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Guidance on Transfers of Accredited Certification of Persons

PURPOSE

The guidance document is intended to be used by person certification bodies performing the transfer of person certification and by national accreditation bodies (NAB) that assess the transfer of person certification between certification bodies.

Authorship

This document has been written by the Certification Committee.

Official language

The publication may be translated into other languages as required. The English language version remains the definitive version.

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1 SCOPE

This document provides guidance on the transfer of an accredited person certification between certification bodies and allows for a consistent application of EN ISO/IEC 17024 cl. 9.2.6.

All clauses of EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 continue to apply, and this document does not supersede any of the requirements in that standard.

The objective of this document is to assure the maintenance of the integrity of an accredited person certification issued by one certification body if transferred to another certification body.

Certification bodies may implement procedures or actions which are more stringent than those contained herein, provided that a certified person's freedom to choose another certification body is not unduly or unfairly constrained.

2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Transfer of Certification

The transfer of certification is defined as the recognition of an existing and valid person's certification granted by one accredited certification body (hereinafter referred to as the "issuing certification body") by another accredited certification body (hereinafter referred to as the "accepting certification body") for the purpose of issuing its own certification.

Multiple certification (certification by more than one certification body at the same time) for the same category and under the same certification scheme is not covered by the definition above, and EA discourages it.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Eligibility of a Certification for Transfer

3.1.1 Only certifications issued to the same person are eligible for transfer to another certification when:

- (i) issued under the same certification scheme (EN ISO/IEC 17024, cl. 8), or
- (ii) under an equivalent certification scheme, or
A certification scheme is deemed to be equivalent if it is based on the same requirements document, and it contains all elements of § 8.2 and 8.3 of EN ISO/IEC 17024 in an equivalent manner. The accepting certification body is responsible to demonstrate it has analysed, using appropriate experts, the equivalence of its certification scheme with the certification scheme of the certificate to be transferred, and concluded positively.
- (iii) if the scheme competence requirements for the person are based on the same standard (for example, welders ISO 9606) and the same evaluation procedures.

Note1: In the case of regulated schemes where authorization from authorities/scheme owners is required, the accepting CB needs to ensure that this authorization is in place before accepting the client.

Note 2: The transfer process cannot be applied when the person certification scheme has provisions that do not allow the application of the transfer process.

- 3.1.2 Only certifications that are covered by the accreditation of an EA MLA signatory should be eligible for transfer. Persons holding certifications that are not covered by such accreditations should be treated as new clients.
- 3.1.3 Only valid accredited certifications should be transferred. Certifications that are known to be suspended should not be accepted for transfer.
- 3.1.4 The certification transfer process must be completed before end of validity of certification. The accepting certification body shall take the decision on transfer of certification before the renewal process is initiated.
- 3.1.5 If the issuing certification body has terminated its business and the necessary records could not be provided, no transfer is possible.
- 3.1.6 In case that the accreditation of the issuing certification body is withdrawn, transfer should be completed within 6 months or on expiration of the certification, whichever is sooner. In such cases, the accepting certification body should inform the accreditation body, under whose accreditation it intends to issue the certification, prior to the transfer.

3.2 Cooperation Between the Issuing and Accepting Certification Bodies

- 3.2.1 Cooperation between the issuing and accepting certification bodies is essential for the effective process of transfer and the integrity of certification. The accepting certification body should contact the issuing certification body for receiving the documentation described in 3.3.4 and when requested, the issuing certification body should provide to the accepting certification body all the documents and information required to allow appropriate performance of all the steps described in 3.3.4. The issuing certification body needs to obtain approval by the certified person, to exchange personal details with the accepting certification body. If this is not possible, then the person should be treated as a new client.
- 3.2.2 The issuing certification body should cooperate with the accepting certification body to facilitate the transfer.
- 3.2.3 The issuing certification body should not use a request of transfer as justification for suspension or withdrawal of the existing certificate before the transfer process by the accepting certification body is completed.
- 3.2.4 Once the accepting certification body has issued the certification, it should inform the issuing certification body.

3.3 Pre-Transfer Review

- 3.3.1 The accepting certification body should have a process for obtaining sufficient information, according to 3.3.4, in order to make a decision on certification and inform the transferring client of the process. This information should, at a minimum, include arrangements regarding the certification cycle.
- 3.3.2 The accepting certification body should conduct a review of the certification of the transferring client. This review should include a review of the records provided by the issuing certification body.
- 3.3.3 The accepting certification body should determine the competence criteria for personnel involved in the pre-transfer review. The review may be conducted by one or more competent individuals in that specific area. The individual or group conducting the pre-transfer review should have the same competence that is required for an examiner for the scope of certification being reviewed. The accepting certification body should verify the implementation of the certification process of the issuing CB to ensure the competence of the person against the certification standard or criteria concerned.
- 3.3.4 The review should cover the following aspects as a minimum, and the review and its output should be fully documented:
- (i) confirmation that the client person's certification (certification scheme and category) falls within the accreditation scope of the issuing and accepting certification bodies;
 - (ii) confirmation that the issuing certification body's accreditation body currently has an EA MLA covering person certification against EN ISO/IEC 17024;
 - (iii) the reasons for seeking a transfer;
 - (iv) the initial certification or most recent recertification records including practical and/or theoretical exam papers, reports, decision-making records and other evidences supporting competence etc.

If these current certification records are not made available, due to confidential business critical information, a verification of summary demonstrating that all scheme requirements have been considered, evaluated and approved is acceptable.
 - (v) confirmation that existing certification is not currently under suspension;
 - (vi) complaints addressed to the issuing certification body regarding the person and action taken (if available);
 - (vii) any other requirement coming from the relevant person certification scheme for the transfer of the certificates.

3.4 Decision on Transfer of Certification

3.4.1 The normal certification decision-making process in accordance with clause 9.4 of EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 should be followed, including the requirement that the personnel making the certification transfer decision be different from those carrying out the pre-transfer review.

3.4.2 The certification validity should be based on the previous certification cycle if no issues are found during the pre-transfer review.

NOTE: The accepting certification body can quote the person's initial certification date on the certification documents, with the indication that the person was certified by a different certification body before a certain date.

3.4.3 Where the pre-transfer review (documents and records review) identifies issues that prevent the completion of the transfer, the accepting certification body should treat the transferring client as a new client.

The justification for this action should be explained to the transferring client, documented by the accepting certification body, and maintained in the client's records.

Where the accepting certification body has had to treat the client as a new client as a result of the pre-transfer review, the certification cycle should begin with the certification decision.

3.4.4 The accepting certification body should make the decision to transfer or not the certification before the existing certificate expires.