



Standard Terminology for Accreditation and Certification¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This terminology defines terms related to accreditation and certification. These terms are compiled from existing ASTM Committee E36 standards and other sources to enable the development of future ASTM documents and to provide guidance on proper usage of the terms. The first edition of this standard contained terms relating to personnel certificate and certification programs and is expanded. The source document for each definition is cited when an appropriate document is available. Many definitions are the product of the committee that compiled this terminology, and as such, are the result of the collected knowledge and experience of the committee members.

1.1.1 Since accreditation and certification are being carried out by many different bodies in many fields, usage of descriptive terms can vary. There is no attempt to include all accreditation and certification terms in this terminology. Rather, this terminology contains those terms most commonly encountered in accreditation and certification programs.

1.2 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D4538 Terminology Relating to Protective Coating and Lining Work for Power Generation Facilities

E1187 Terminology Relating to Conformity Assessment (Withdrawn 2006)³

E1424 Test Method for Determining the Rate of Air Leakage Through Exterior Windows, Skylights, Curtain Walls, and Doors Under Specified Pressure and Temperature Differences Across the Specimen

E1605 Terminology Relating to Lead in Buildings

E1732 Terminology Relating to Forensic Science

E1986 Guide for Information Access Privileges to Health Information (Withdrawn 2017)³

E2135 Terminology for Property and Asset Management

E2159 Guide for Selection, Assignment, and Monitoring of Persons To Be Utilized as Assessors/Auditors or Technical Experts

E2161 Terminology Relating to Performance Validation in Thermal Analysis and Rheology

E2659 Practice for Certificate Programs

2.2 Other Standards:

ASAE Certification and Accreditation Law Handbook, Second Edition, 2004⁴

ICE Basic Guide to Credentialing Terminology, 2006⁵

ISO 9000 Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary, 2015⁶

ISO/IEC 17000 Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles, 2020⁶

ISO/IEC 17011 Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies, 2017⁶

ISO/IEC 17024 Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons, 2012⁶

ISO/IEC 17050-1 Conformity assessment — Supplier's declaration of conformity — Part 1: General requirements, 2004⁶

¹ This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E36 on Accreditation & Certification and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E36.95 on Terminology.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

⁴ Available from American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), 1575 I St. NW, Washington, DC 20005, <https://www.asaecenter.org>.

⁵ Available from Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), 2001 K Street NW, 3rd Floor North, Washington, DC 20006, <https://www.credentialingexcellence.org>.

⁶ Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISO Central Secretariat, Chemin de Blandonnet 8, CP 401, 1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland, <https://www.iso.org>.

3. Definitions

Terms Related to Accreditation

accreditation, *n*—third-party attestation related to a body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

accreditation body, *n*—authoritative entity/organization that performs accreditation.

accreditation body logo, *n*—emblem used by an accreditation body to identify itself.

DISCUSSION—See definition of **accreditation symbol** in contrast to this definition.

accreditation certificate, *n*—formal document or a set of documents, stating that accreditation has been granted for the defined scope.

accreditation scheme, *n*—rules and processes relating to the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies to which the same requirements apply.

DISCUSSION—Accreditation scheme requirements include, but are not limited to, ISO/IEC 17020, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17024, ISO 17034, ISO/IEC 17043, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO 15189, and ISO 14065.

ISO/IEC 17011

accreditation scope, *n*—set of specific conformity assessment activities for which a conformity assessment body is accredited.

accreditation symbol, *n*—symbol issued by an accreditation body to be used by accredited conformity assessment bodies to indicate their accredited status.

DISCUSSION—“Mark” is to be reserved to indicate direct conformity of an entity (for example, product, process, system, or person) against a set of requirements.

assessment, *n*—process undertaken by an *accreditation body* to determine the competence of a *conformity assessment body*, based on standard(s) and/or other normative documents and for a defined *scope of accreditation*.

ISO/IEC 17011

assessment technique, *n*—method used by an *accreditation body* to perform an *assessment*.

DISCUSSION—Assessment techniques, can include, but are not limited to:

- on-site assessment;
- *remote assessment*;
- *witnessing*;
- document review;
- file review;
- measurement audits;
- review of performance in proficiency testing and other interlaboratory comparisons;
- validation audits;
- unannounced visits; and
- interviewing.

ISO/IEC 17011

assessor, *n*—an individual who has the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to perform a comprehensive assessment

of another body, which includes assessment of the quality management system, policies, and procedures, etc. **E2159**

DISCUSSION—An assessor/auditor should be fully qualified in the performance of a full assessment/audit, with the exception of evaluating specific technical areas. An assessor may also be qualified as a technical expert and bring such additional skills to the assessment/audit.

consultancy, *n*—participation in any of the activities of a *conformity assessment body* subject to *accreditation*.

ISO/IEC 17011

DISCUSSION—Examples include:

(1) Preparing or producing manuals or procedures for a conformity assessment body.

(2) Participating in the operation or management of a conformity assessment body.

(3) Giving specific advice or specific training towards the development and implementation of the management system, operational procedures and/or competence of a conformity assessment body.

extending accreditation, *n*—adding conformity assessment activities to the *scope of accreditation*. **ISO/IEC 17000**

flexible scope of accreditation, *n*—*scope of accreditation* expressed to allow conformity assessment bodies to make changes in methodology and other parameters which fall within the competence of the *conformity assessment body* as confirmed by the *accreditation body*. **ISO/IEC 17011**

interested parties, *n*—parties with a direct or indirect interest in accreditation. **ISO/IEC 17000**

DISCUSSION—Direct interest refers to the interest of those who undergo accreditation; indirect interest refers to the interests of those who use or rely on accredited conformity assessment services.

reducing accreditation, *n*—cancelling part of the *scope of accreditation*. **ISO/IEC 17000**

scope of accreditation, *n*—specific conformity assessment services for which accreditation is sought or has been granted. **ISO/IEC 17000**

technical expert, *n*—person assigned by an accreditation body, and responsible to an assessor, who provides specific knowledge or expertise with respect to the scope of accreditation to be assessed.

DISCUSSION—A technical expert may, but is not expected to, have assessor qualifications or training and does not assess independently.

witnessing, *n*—observation by the *accreditation body* of a *conformity assessment body* carrying out conformity assessment activities within its *scope of accreditation*.

Terms Related to Certification

certification, *n*—third-party attestation of conformity to specified requirements related to products, processes, systems, or persons. **E1424**

certification body/entity, *n*—a body that conducts certifications of conformity. **E1187**

certification mark, *n*—the symbol and use thereof which has been authorized by a certification body.