



Policy on Use of Applicant Status

A. Preamble

A.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define the claims and references that certification bodies and their operators may make regarding their application for accreditation. The policy also sets out the measures to be taken by IOAS to enforce the policy.

A.2 Scope

The policy is solely related to issues regarding the way in which certification bodies who have applied for accreditation may make claims regarding this fact. The policy does not determine the use of accreditation status which is detailed in [PL0515](#).

A.3 Definitions

Reference is made to the IOAS General Operating Manual for definitions.

A.4 Access and Distribution

This document is distributed, via the IOAS client website, to certification bodies immediately upon finalizing any changes. Personnel are informed of changes as soon as they have been finalized. Other interested parties may obtain a copy on request.

A.5 Authority and Revision

This policy is approved by the IOAS Executive Director (ED). It is the responsibility of the IOAS Quality Director (QD) to review the appropriateness of the policy from time to time. Its effectiveness in meeting the quality policy of the IOAS will be assessed during Internal Audit and any measures for improvement notified to the Quality Director.

B. Policy

B.1 Acceptable Use of Applicant Status

B.1.1 IOAS recognises that an applicant certifier has a right to state the truthful fact of application.

B.1.2 Application for accreditation does not in any way mean that the certification body's services have met any standards or criteria. The correct use is therefore determined by the nature and intent of the statement.

B.1.3 Consequently, the fact of application may be stated in correspondence, newsletters, interviews, and brochures of the certification body.

B.1.4 The mention of application in advertisements is considered to have the intent of conveying a degree of compliance with criteria and standards and is not permitted.



B.2 Nature of the Statement

B.2.1 The statement must be a simple declaration of fact and must use the word “applied”, or derivatives of this word.

B.2.2 Terms that refer to having “joined” or being “part of “ the “accreditation system”, or any similar phrases that might be construed to suggest more than simple application are not permitted.

B.2.3 Mention of “assessment” or its derivatives may also be construed as intimating a degree of compliance and is not permitted.

B.3 Notification of Misuse

Any potential misuse should be brought to the attention of the IOAS QD. All notification of potential misuse must be made in writing or electronically containing any evidence (labels, brochures, etc.) to support the alleged misuse. Notifications of misuse are handled and documented via PL0511b – Complaints-ACBs.

B.4 Investigation of Misuse of Applicant Status

B.4.1 Upon receipt of an alleged misuse of applicant status the IOAS Quality Department shall clarify the following information (if applicable):

B.4.1.1 Name, address and telephone number of party making the claim.

B.4.1.2 Name of party alleged to misuse of applicant status.

B.4.1.3 Extent, location and/or circumstances where alleged misuse occurred.

B.4.1.4 Date and time when alleged misuse occurred.

B.4.1.5 Any witnesses and/or evidence to support the alleged misuse.

B.4.1.6 Any other information deemed important.

B.4.2 If applicable, gather additional evidence from other sources to substantiate the claim.

B.4.3 Within 3 weeks of receipt of the allegation notify the alleged party of the potential misuse and invite a response using TL0317. This shall require a response within 2 weeks.

B.4.4 Following the response to notification letter, the IOAS QD shall assess whether a satisfactory resolution of the misuse is imminent or may require further action.

B.4.5 If the resolution is satisfactory and imminent, the Quality Department shall, within 3 weeks of receipt of response to the notification letter, confirm the mutual understanding of the resolution by sending TL0318 which shall advise of possible action if the resolution is not adhered to.



B.4.6 If a timely and acceptable resolution is unlikely or if there is no response, the Quality Department shall, within 3 weeks of receipt of response (or due date) to the notification letter, invite a (further) response within 2 weeks by sending TL0319 which shall advise of possible action if there is either an unsatisfactory or no reply.

B.4.7 If this action results in an unsatisfactory or no reply, the QD shall consult with the IOAS Executive Director who may determine to discontinue the accreditation process and terminate the CB's application.