

Impartiality Policy

The definition of impartiality is “not favouring one side over another”.

On the basis of that definition, Assessment Services hereby confirms implementation and adherence to the following policy:

1. Assessment Services will ensure that the value of certification is upheld, the services of Assessment Services shall be available to all users of Certification and such services shall be applied in a manner necessary to preserve impartiality, objectivity, independence, freedom from conflict of interest, freedom from bias, lack of prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment and balance.
2. Assessment Services (including its assessors) shall not participate in the designing, implementation or maintenance (including Internal Audit) of the management systems of its Certification customers and shall not have been engaged in such activities in the two years prior to the customer's receipt of Assessment Service's Certification services.
3. Assessment Services undertakes to instil confidence in the delivery of its Certification services to customers and parties that have an interest in Certification. This shall be achieved by upholding the principles of impartiality (including taking action against threats, i.e. from self-interest, self-review, familiarity, intimidation), competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints.
4. In the management of impartiality, Assessment Services recognises the possibilities for conflicts of interests arising from relationships of those persons or organisations having an interface with Assessment Services. This includes staff, sub-contractors and assessors. Assessment Services undertakes to complete a thorough assessment of the risks to impartiality and to determine the action to be taken to eliminate or minimise those risks. The risk assessment process will be on-going and will be maintained through Assessment Service's Board and associated Management Review process.
5. Assessment Services shall maintain up to date operating procedures and ensure that these procedures support impartiality.
6. Assessment Services has undertaken a review with its various Insurance Brokers regarding the insurance cover that Assessment Services may require in the conduct of its business as an accredited certification body operating domestic and overseas certification. The Directors of Assessment Services have accepted that the following Insurance provision is necessary to maintain Assessment Services with proper insurance cover; General Insurance, Circa £100,000; Professional and Legal Liability, £2m; Public Liability, £5m. Such insurance cover requirements will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis by Assessment Services and adjusted accordingly.
7. From time to time Assessment Services is required to evaluate its systems, procedures and practices to ensure that impartiality in its certification is maintained. Parties with an interest in the certification services of Assessment Services are invited, by virtue of this policy, to submit any proposals, comments or relevant observations on the services of Assessment Services, such that these may be considered by Assessment Services as part of its evaluation process for continual improvement.

Parties with an interest in certification include:

- Applicants to the Scheme;

- Assessment Services assessors;
- Assessment Services staff;
- Certified organisations;
- Governmental Authorities;

All comments may be addressed to the Managing Director.

9. Consultancy organisations are an established part of the certification implementation process. Assessment Services will co-operate with outside organisations for the benefit of its members but will have no direct affiliation with management/product system consultancy organisations. Assessment Services will take action to correct inappropriate claims of affiliation (stated or implied) by any consultancy or other organisation that suggests directly, or indirectly, that certification would be simpler, easier, faster or less expensive by virtue of their co-operation with Assessment Services.