ICAC

international certification accreditation council

What is the ICAC?

In 1996, the International Certification Accreditation Council (ICAC) was chartered by a group of association executives to evaluate certification programs against international standards. ICAC is dedicated to assuring competency, professional management, and service to the public by encouraging and setting standards for licensing, certification, and credentialing programs. By accrediting certification programs, the public and the industries represented have an additional level of assurance, knowing that the program has been reviewed by a neutral third party and been found to meet or exceed reasonable levels of record keeping, security, objectivity, and professionalism.

The ICAC itself operates under the international guidelines established as a quality assurance regime for accreditation bodies (*ISO/IEC 17011 – Conformity Assessment: General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies*), and has established assessment tools and processes that assure certification bodies are in compliance with *ISO/IEC 17024 (2012): Conformity Assessment – General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons.*

Why Accredit Your Individual Certification Program?

In recent years the marketplace has witnessed a growing number of certification programs evaluating individual's competencies on a host of skills and in many fields. Unfortunately, not all certification programs are structured and administered in a manner that can reasonably assure the general public that a specific certification program is achieving what it claims to achieve.

For a number of years, the ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) has established guidelines that well-run certification programs should follow. This standard, ISO/IEC 17024, sets the "gold standard" to which industry certification programs can aspire. The ICAC's team can assess your program against the latest international standards and help achieve three goals:

1 The evaluation process may identify significant ways to improve a program.

2 After the evaluation is completed and accreditation is awarded, the certification program can be marketed to industry as meeting the highest standard of industry best practices.

3 Accreditation provides assurance that the certification program has been evaluated by a third party.

It is important to note that while certification is a good tool for beginning the process of evaluating a prospective vendor or employee, it should never be used as the sole evaluation tool. At its best, certification simply means that at some point the individual met the criteria established by the certification program. It does not guarantee the performance of any individual on any given project or on any given day.

What Does the Process Look Like?

Once an initial application is submitted, it will be reviewed by a committee of experts against established guidelines to assure that the program and the sponsoring organization are legitimate and following ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. Applicants will be responsible for submitting copies of forms or handbooks available to potential certification candidates. A complete application package, including requirements and timelines is available at www.icacnet.org.

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