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Requirements for organizations
operating as examination and
certification centers



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Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. General.....	4
2. Processes.....	4
2.1. General	4
2.2. Examination Process	5
2.3. Exam Conditions Requirements.....	6
2.4. Requirements to Actions Preceding and Following the Examination	6
3. Management of Nonconformities	8
3.1. General	8
3.2. Confidentiality Requirements.....	8
3.3. Unfair and Fraudulent Exam Practices Requirements	9
4. Documentation and Records Requirements	10
4.1. Creating and Updating the Documents	10
4.2. Required Documentation.....	10
4.3. Participants’ Records and Other Data	11
5. Resources	11
5.1. General	11
5.2. Personnel.....	12
5.2.1. Personnel structure	12
5.2.2. Personnel requirements.....	12
5.3. Infrastructure	13
5.3.1. Exam Facilities	13
5.4. Other Resources	14
6. Quality Assurance	15
6.1. General	15
6.2. Quality Assurance Officer	15
6.3. Internal Audits.....	16
6.4. Performance Evaluation	16
6.5. Management of Documentation and Records.....	17
6.6. Data Protection	17
6.7. Control of the Employees Involved in the Examination/ Certification Process	19
6.8. Control of Partners, Subcontractors and Third Parties	19
6.9. Improvement.....	20
Checklist.....	21
List of Documents to Enclose	27

Introduction

This standard was developed by the Swiss Global Cert©. The main goal and intention of this standard is to improve the examination and certification process by establishing requirements and rules that can be applied as guidance by the organizations that are engaged in the examination or certification process.

This document contains general requirements for the organizations that provide and/or conduct examinations or certifications as part of their core business or their additional services. The requirements represent a set of rules regarding organizing and conducting the exams, including the actions preceding and following the exams; resources requirements; tasks and responsibilities of the personnel; involvement of clients and partners; documentation, and other factors relevant in this context.

1. General

1.1. The exam center must be a registered legal body.

1.2. The exam center must have a clearly documented structure, policies, quality standards and core processes.

1.3. The exam center must take measures to segregate its activities in a way that allows it to act as an independent body at all times.

If the exam center is a part of a larger organization and does not represent its core business, appropriate measures have to be taken to ensure independent and objective examination and certification process. If the exam center that is a part of a larger organization provides services to the employees of this organization, special procedures must be implemented to safeguard the objectivity, impartiality and confidentiality of the examination and certification process.

1.4. If the exam center is also a training provider, appropriate measures have to be taken to make sure that both of these activities are conducted independently and do not impede the objectivity, impartiality and confidentiality of each other. E.g. the trainer of the course cannot be the examiner or the proctor of the exam after the course ; the trainer cannot have the access to the exam materials etc.

1.5. The exam center is obligated to document the segregation of activities as well as the measures to ensure it, and be able to prove their implementation.

2. Processes

2.1. General

2.1.1. The exam center must have established and documented processes.

The processes must be defined and documented taking into consideration the structure of the entire company and the points of intersection with other organizational units of the company, subcontractors or partners.

2.1.2. If the exam center is a part of a larger organization, it must provide the evidence that its processes are independent of the processes of other organizational units.

2.1.3. Core processes and supporting processes necessary for carrying out the core processes must be defined. The inputs and outputs of these core and supporting processes must be established. Processes have to be designed in a way that ensures traceability and enables quality control.

2.1.4. The processes must be monitored and measured within the scope of the quality assurance system in order to allow for their continuous improvement and optimization.

2.1.5. The processes as well as requirements or guidelines concerning the implementation of these processes must be communicated to all the relevant employees of the exam center.

2.1.6. The processes must be appropriate with regard to the products/services of the exam center. Information about the products/services of the exam center should be publicly accessible to the customers, potential customers and partners.

2.1.7. The products/services as well as the processes built around them must be designed based on the customer requirements, partner requirements and quality objectives relevant for the products/services. For that, expectations of the customers and stakeholders (such as examination boards, exam owners etc.) must be collected and analyzed.

2.1.8. The main processes in the context of the examination and certification centers are examination and certification processes. The supporting processes depend on every examination type.

2.2. Examination Process

2.2.1. The examination and certification process in the context of an examination and certification center can be considered as its main product/service. This process must be designed in a way that provides results that are as conform as possible.

2.2.2. The examination and certification processes must be organized in a way that ensures fairness and objectivity of the exam results as well as the impartiality of the parties involved in the process.

2.2.3. The examination and certification process must be based on :

- general objective requirements to the examination and certification process
- quality objectives relevant for the specific examination type
- requirements established by the examination scheme owner
- customer requirements and feedback.

2.2.4. Before the release of every examination/certification, the exam center must conduct and protocol the test release in order to make sure that the exam/certification fulfills all these requirements. Respective changes must be made in case the designed examination process does not satisfy the requirements.

2.2.5. The examination process requirements must also be reviewed and changed when :

- this is required by the scheme owner ;
- this is required by the customers (upon consultation with the scheme owner) ;
- the exam center sees an improvement potential (upon consultation with the scheme owner).

2.2.6. The examination process requirements must nonetheless be reviewed at least every 2 years.

2.2.7. Minimum process requirements regarding the examination conditions as well as the activities preceding and following the examination must be kept according to this standard.

2.3. Exam Conditions Requirements

2.3.1. The exam center has to maintain appropriate conditions for the examination and certification process. The conditions may differ depending on the exam type, but need to provide maximum impartiality and objectivity of the examination process and ensure the elimination of any fraudulent examination behavior.

These conditions have to be documented by the exam center and be communicated with all the personnel involved in the examination and certification process.

2.3.2. The conditions must contain, among others, following rules (unless required otherwise based on the exam type) :

- It is not allowed that the exam contents and exam questions are disclosed to the participants before the exam ;
- It is prohibited that any copies, screenshots or pictures of the exam contents are made by the participants ;
- It is not allowed that the participants talk to each other;
- It is prohibited that the participants use private books, papers or other materials and supplies that would provoke fraudulent exam practices;
- It is required that the examiner/proctor does not leave the examination room for the whole duration of the exam ;
- It is required that the proctor verifies the identity of the participants before starting the exam ;
- It is required that all the participants become familiar with the general exam conditions as well as the exam process before the exam start. This can be made directly before the exam by the examiner/proctor or in other appropriate ways ;
- It is only allowed that the examiner/proctor answers questions concerning the examination process or in case any problems occur (e.g. technical errors);
- It is prohibited that the examiner/proctor talks to the participants, answers questions about the exam contents, involves or lets the participants involve in unfair or fraudulent exam behavior in any other way.

2.3.3. The exam center must also establish measures that need to be taken in case of breach or neglect of these conditions.

2.3.4. In case any of these conditions do not apply to a certain exam type, the exam center must provide a document (e.g. exam process description) that contains an explanation why the condition is not applicable.

2.4. Requirements to Actions Preceding and Following the Examination

2.4.1. The exam center is obligated to establish, document and execute necessary procedures and processes that precede or follow the examination process but are nonetheless vital for it.

2.4.2. The exam center must establish an appropriate application process. The application forms, conditions and requirements must be publicly accessible to all the interested persons.

2.4.3. The exam center must establish a procedure for checking and verifying the fulfillment of the application requirements of the candidates. The exam center should appoint employees responsible for this task.

2.4.4. The exam center must establish policies to ensure that the participants with disabilities are not disadvantaged during the examination process.

2.4.5. The exam center is obligated to make publicly available the price for every exam.

2.4.6. The exam center must establish a payment procedure. The payment information and conditions must be available for the candidates either before or directly after the application process.

2.4.7. The exam center must establish and document an adequate, appropriate and objective examination assessment process. The applicants and candidates should be able to access the information about the assessment criteria.

2.4.8. The exam center is obligated to grant a confirmation of successful passing the exam in the form of a certificate. The certificate must contain information that is necessary to identify:

- holder of the certificate ;
- exam center ;
- exam module / certification scheme ;
- exam date or date of issuing the certificate ;
- expiration date ;
- certificate (certificate number).

2.4.9. In case the certificate or the granted certification expires after a certain period of time, the exam center must inform the participants about the recertification prerequisites, conditions, criteria and process.

2.4.10. The participants that did not pass the exam must be informed about the opportunity and conditions of repeating the exam, if such opportunity exists.

2.4.11. The exam center must enable and encourage customer feedback via telephone, e-mail, online form or in other appropriate way.

2.4.12. The exam center must establish a procedure to analyze customer feedback and develop improvement suggestions.

2.4.13. The exam center must establish and document a procedure for dealing with appeals and customer complaints in appropriate and timely manner.

2.4.14. Throughout the examination process, including the ante- and post-examination activities, the exam center must ensure sufficient and timely communication with the applicants, candidates and participants.

3. Management of Nonconformities

3.1. General

In the context of exam centers, nonconformities can be defined as any activities or processes involving internal or external parties that lead to infringement of fair and objective examination and certification process.

3.1.1. The exam center must determine and analyze existing or potential nonconformities based on its processes and objectives.

The exam center must establish possible sources of nonconformities, both internal and external.

3.1.2. Measures must be taken in order to eliminate existing nonconformities or prevent the appearance of the potential ones.

3.1.3. All the reported or disclosed nonconformities must be documented along with their causes and the actions that the exam center intends to take in order to eliminate or prevent them.

3.2. Confidentiality Requirements

3.2.1. The exam center must make sure that confidentiality is maintained on every stage of the examination and certification process and take measures to control and protect confidential information.

The process of managing and protecting confidential information must be documented and communicated to all the personnel involved in the examination or certification process.

3.2.2. The exam center must require that its internal and external employees as well as their partners or subcontractors that are involved in the examination or certification process in any way, sign a document containing clauses that prohibit to disclose following information in any form or way:

- Examination contents (e.g. exam questions, exam tasks, access to exam question pool) ;
- Participants' data (including personal data and exam results or status) ;
- Information regarding business processes and business operations (company-specific) ;
- Any financial information that is not publicly available.

3.2.3. The exam center has to require that the exam participants sign a non-disclosure agreement or a document containing non-disclosure clauses with regard to sharing the exam contents in any form or way.

The non-disclosure agreements or other documents regarding confidentiality must establish the measures that have to be taken if breaches of such agreements and documents occur.

3.2.4. The exam center must establish remedial procedures in case the employees, partners, subcontractors, participants or any other person involved in the examination or certification process breaches the non-disclosure agreements. These procedures must aim to diminish or eliminate the damage caused by disclosure confidential information.

3.3. Unfair and Fraudulent Exam Practices Requirements

3.3.1. The exam center has to analyze all potential fraudulent exam practices and take measures to avoid and/or eliminate such practices. Potential unfair and fraudulent exam practices must be identified based on the examination procedure and exam type.

It must be taken into account that such practices can occur from both sides: the participants as well as the examiner/proctor or other personnel involved in the examination process.

3.3.2. Regardless of the exam type, following measures, among others, must be taken to ensure the avoidance or elimination of unfair and fraudulent exam practices :

3.3.2.1. The participants must

- a) Confirm their identity by presenting a valid photo ID ;
- b) Agree to follow the exam conditions by signing them ;
- c) Sign a non-disclosure agreement that prohibits to share the exam contents in any form or way ;
- d) Be informed about and agree to face the consequences in case they act in a way that breaches the exam conditions or the non-disclosure agreement.

3.3.2.2. The examiners/proctors must

- a) Agree to follow the conditions for conducting/proctoring the exams by signing them ;
- b) Maintain the proper conditions during the examination ;
- c) Be informed about and agree to face the consequences in case they act in a way that breaches the conditions for conducting/proctoring the exam.

3.3.2.3. Other personnel involved in the examination and certification activities must

- a) Agree to act objectively and impartially by signing the contract containing the respective clauses and a non-disclosure agreement ;
- b) Be informed about and agree to face the consequences in case they act in a way that breaches the conditions mentioned in the contract or non-disclosure agreement.

3.3.3. In addition to the non-disclosure agreement and conditions included in the contract, the exam center might develop and establish further procedures that aim to identify, prevent, avoid or eliminate fraudulent exam practices, such as internal audits, on site observation or statistical tools.

3.3.4. The exam center must establish measures that will be taken, should the exam participant, examiner/proctor or another employee involved in the examination process act in a way that infringes these conditions. These measures might include, among others :

contractual penalties, termination of work contracts, voiding of exam results or withdrawing the certification etc.

4. Documentation and Records Requirements

The exam center must make sure that all the necessary documentation for conducting exams and granting certifications is available and distributed to the relevant personnel.

The exam center must establish the participant's and other data that is required for carrying out the examination and certification processes. Appropriate procedures and policies must be determined for collecting, maintaining and storing of these data.

4.1. Creating and Updating the Documents

4.1.1. The general management is responsible for taking care of the documents and/or appointing an employee responsible for the creating and updating the documents.

4.1.2. Creating the documents is based on the subject of every specific document and can be done either by the general management or by the employee who is an expert in every specific subject.

4.1.3. When the document is updated, both the new and the old version should be kept for traceability purposes. The old and the new versions of the documents should be marked accordingly.

4.1.4. If the document or the version of the document is no longer in use, it must be marked and stored in a way that eliminates the chance of mistakenly using this document as a current version.

4.1.5. Any changes and updates in these documents are to be communicated to the relevant personnel.

4.2. Required Documentation

4.2.1. The exam center must develop, maintain and update (when necessary) following documents :

- Structure, policies and processes ;
- Job descriptions ;
- Work contracts ;
- Non-disclosure agreements ;
- Contracts with partners and subcontractors ;
- Other necessary documentation.

4.2.2. These documents should be kept for the whole period of their validity. In case they lose their validity or a new version of the document is available, the hard copy of the old version must be kept for a time period indicated by legal requirements in the respective country. After that, it must be stored in the electronic archive.

4.3. Participants' Records and Other Data

4.3.1. The exam center must collect and keep the records of the applicants, candidates, exam participants and certified persons.

4.3.2. The exam center must have available a database where following information can be accessed :

- Name of the applicant or exam participant ;
- Exam type ;
- Exam date and place ;
- Exam status and results ;
- Certificate number.

4.3.3. Before collecting personal data of the applicants, candidates, exam participants and certified persons, it is necessary that the exam center obtains their consent for doing so.

4.3.4. Additionally, the exam center must inform the applicants or exam participants :

- Which exact data will be stored
- What is the purpose of storing the data
- For what period of time will the data be stored.

4.3.5. It must be taken into account that the time periods of data storage differ based on the status of the person:

- a) In the case of a successful examination and certification, the participant's data should be stored for not less than the validity period of the certificate.
- b) In the case of non-existence of the exam, the applicant's data should be stored for not less than the validity period of the application.
- c) In the case of failing the examination, the participant's data should be stored for not less than the period of repeatability of the exam.

4.3.6. The exam center must confirm that the personal data of the applicants and the participants will be deleted after that period of time.

4.3.7. The processes of the exam center with regard to storage and processing of the participants' data must be designed based on the relevant data protection standards.

5. Resources

5.1. General

5.1.1. The exam center must determine, plan, document and provide resources necessary for the production of high quality products/provision of high quality services in accordance to the determined requirements.

5.1.2. The resources must be sufficient in order for the exam center to carry out its core and supporting activities.

5.1.3. Procedures and methods must be implemented in order to measure and monitor the current resources and establish critical discrepancies to the resource requirements.

5.1.4. Resources must be determined, provided, measured and monitored with regard to following aspects :

- personnel
- infrastructure
- other necessary resources.

5.2. Personnel

5.2.1. Personnel structure

5.2.1.1. The personnel structure must correspond the core and supportive processes of the exam center. The exam center must have sufficient personnel to execute the activities associated with examination and certification.

5.2.1.2. The personnel must be employed based on the competences that they possess and that are needed for the respective position at the exam center. The exam center must make sure that the personnel possesses required experience, knowledge and qualifications for carrying out the tasks and take responsibilities designated to the specific position.

5.2.1.3. The tasks and responsibilities of the personnel must be clearly defined, documented and communicated with the personnel.

5.2.1.4. The exam center must document positions with respective descriptions and employ personnel that is responsible for :

- conducting and supervising the exams ;
- managing the supporting processes (according to the process map) ;
- exam assessment and certification (if relevant) ;
- training (if relevant) ;
- customer relations ;
- documentation and data management ;
- quality control.

5.2.1.5. These are minimum requirements for the personnel structure. Depending on the exam and certification type more positions or functions can be added.

One job description can contain multiple tasks mentioned above.

5.2.2. Personnel requirements

5.2.2.1. All employees should be informed about the quality objectives of the exam center and be encouraged to suggest improvements in the processes in order to reach these objectives more efficiently.

5.2.2.2. The tasks and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the examination and certification activities must be divided in a way that accounts for maximum objectivity and impartiality of the examination and certification process.

5.2.2.3. The exam center must make sure that the personnel involved in the examination and certification process :

- a) Aims to ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction ;
- b) Acts objectively and impartially ;
- c) Declares any existing or potential conflict of interests ;
- d) Does not disclose confidential information ;
- e) Is fluent in the language of examination and/or English language ;
- f) Has sufficient knowledge and experience in the area of certification (when required by the examination type) ; or
- g) Has no relevant experience or knowledge in the area of certification (when required by the examination type).

5.3. Infrastructure

The exam center must provide infrastructure that is sufficient for carrying out the core and supporting activities.

The infrastructure includes :

- office
- office equipment
- examination facilities
- technical equipment
- IT systems.

Infrastructure requirements depend on following factors :

- number of employees of the exam center
- yearly volumes of exams and exam participants
- type of exams.

5.3.1. Exam Facilities

5.3.1.1. The exam center is obligated to provide appropriate facilities for every exam to all participants.

5.3.1.2. The exam center is obligated to inform all the participants about the location of the exam facilities in advance (at least 5 days before the exam) as well as to make sure that every participant has received this information.

5.3.1.3. The exam facility must be easily accessible.

5.3.1.4. The size of the room must be suitable to accommodate all the exam participants and be appropriate for the respective exam type (e.g. online, written, oral etc.).

5.3.1.5. The minimum distance in all directions from the center of one work station to the center of the next one must be 1 meter.

5.3.1.6. The exam center has to make sure that the exam facility has functioning heating and ventilation systems.

5.3.1.7. The exam facility has to provide sufficient lightning (natural or artificial) as well as keep the outside noise at the appropriate level.

5.3.1.8. The exam center must make sure the facility can accommodate participants with disabilities and take all possible measures in order to aid the examination process for them.

5.3.1.9. In case technical equipment is needed in the examination process, all technical equipment must be available for every participant, intact and must be additionally checked before the exam.

Requirements for the technical equipment (incl. computers, internet speed etc.) must be defined and documented by the exam center. The requirements must be considered and complied with in every exam.

5.3.1.10. The exam center must provide the storage space of the participants' personal belongings and take responsibility for the secure storage of thereof. The storage space can be settled within the examination room as well as in another room.

5.3.1.11. In case other facility requirements apply due to a specific exam type, these must be documented by the exam center.

5.3.1.12. It is necessary that the exam center is able to prove the fulfillment of these requirements.

5.4. Other Resources

5.4.1. The exam center must maintain a proper non-discriminatory environment for both its employees and its customers.

5.4.2. The exam center must maintain the necessary level of organizational knowledge. It is required to provide knowledge, information or trainings to the employees whenever substantial changes in the processes, legal requirements etc take place.

5.4.3. In case other resources are required that do not fall under any of the categories mentioned above, these should be defined and documented.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1. General

6.1.1. The exam center must analyze the needs and expectations of all the interested parties, such as customers, certification scheme owners and others, and establish its quality objectives annually.

6.1.2. A quality assurance and management system must be implemented to achieve these quality objectives and enhance customer satisfaction through process improvement and conformity assurance. The scope shall cover all the aspects of this standard or contain information as to why some aspects of it are not applicable. If this is not done, the exam center will not be considered compliant with the standard.

6.1.3. The quality management system needs to be implemented taking into account the context of the organization, including both internal (employees, processes) and external (market, partners, subcontractors) factors.

The exam center must establish and implement quality assurance procedures throughout the whole organization.

6.1.4. Following processes, among others, have to be established, documented and implemented :

- Appointment of a quality assurance officer ;
- Conducting internal audits ;
- Management of documentation and records ;
- Control of the employees involved in the examination/certification process ;
- Control of partners, subcontractors and third parties.

6.1.5. The quality assurance framework, its components and processes must be documented and communicated with all the employees of the exam center.

6.2. Quality Assurance Officer

6.2.1. The exam center must appoint an employee whose main or additional responsibility is quality assurance. Quality management activities should be carried out by the responsible employee and supported by the general management.

6.2.2. General management must ensure that the core principles of the quality management system are maintained. General management must establish and communicate the quality policy and control its implementation on every level of the organization.

6.2.3. The quality assurance officer has, among others, following responsibilities :

- Participate in establishing and documenting processes and procedures associated with quality assurance ;
- Maintain and update the documents required for quality assurance ;
- Participate in internal audits ;

- Carry out performance evaluations ;
- Actively cooperate with general management in questions concerning quality assurance ;
- Actively participate in process improvements.

6.3. Internal Audits

6.3.1. The exam center must regularly conduct internal audits (at least every 12 months).

6.3.2. The goal of internal audits is to :

- Collect employee's experiences and best practices ;
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of the existing practices and business processes ;
- Identify the problems and improvement possibilities through the insight of the employees ;
- Identify and assess risks and opportunities for the organization ;
- Evaluate employees' satisfaction.

6.3.3. The general management of the exam center along with the quality assurance officer have to develop guidelines for the internal audits based on the business processes and operations in the organization.

6.3.4. Before every internal audit the general management and the quality assurance officer have to develop a question list for the audit based on previous audits, existing or potential problems in the context of examination activities or opportunities for the organization as a whole.

6.3.5. The exam center must document and take measures that were deemed necessary as a result of the internal audit. The exam center must be able to prove the implementation of these measures.

6.4. Performance Evaluation

6.4.1. The exam center must develop a set of KPIs for objective measurements of its performance.

These KPIs must reflect at least following aspects :

- process evaluation ;
- customer satisfaction ;
- employee satisfaction ;

6.4.2. The performance evaluation must be carried out at least once a year by the quality assurance officer. The results must be collected, analyzed and compared to the performance evaluation results of previous years.

6.4.3. The quality assurance officer shall bring any substantial findings to the attention of the general management and offer improvement suggestions.

6.5. Management of Documentation and Records

6.5.1. The exam center must establish and implement appropriate procedures to manage and control documents and records.

The exam center must establish and implement rules and regulations with regard to documents and records that assure confidentiality of information, its integrity and availability of the necessary data for authorized use.

6.5.2. All the sensitive and confidential documents must be defined. Measures must be taken in order to prevent unauthorized access to these documents or their use e.g. :

- appointment of the employee(s) that is(are) responsible for documentation and records control ;
- compartmentalization or need-to-know principle ;
- two-factor authentication ;
- data protection standards etc.

6.5.3. The integrity of the data must be safeguarded in a way that maintains the consistency of the documented information using following measures :

- rules regarding the procedure and frequency of reviewing and updating the documents (e.g. two-man rule) ;
- measures to prevent the use of obsolete documents ;
- managing the participants' records (incl. making sure that the records are deleted after the stated period of time) ;

6.5.4. All the employees must have access to the documents and records required for completion of their tasks. The exam center must make sure that all the personnel is provided information about the relevant processes and procedures. There must also be a rule regarding informing the employees about the changes and updates of the relevant documents.

6.6. Data Protection

6.6.1. The exam center must take measures to implement the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations or the local data protection standard as well as develop and establish data protection policies across all levels of the organization.

6.6.2. The exam center must determine which information needs to be collected in order to facilitate its processes and provide the services.

6.6.3. The exam center must develop policies for storing and processing the data or the categories of the data. The justification of processing and storing of the data must be provided in accordance with the GDPR standard or with local data protection standards.

Due to the exam center activities, data protection must be taken into account on every level of the exam center processes.

6.6.4. A person whose main or additional responsibilities are data protection control and GDPR compliance must be appointed. The tasks and responsibilities of this employee must be defined and documented.

6.6.5. The employees of the exam center must be aware and informed about the organization's data protection policies. The exam center must when necessary provide training to the employees that participate in processing of personal data.

All the employees must sign an agreement committing to data protection and secure data processing.

6.6.6. In case any third parties process personal data on behalf of the exam center, the latter must demand compliance with its data protection policies.

6.6.7. The applicants, candidates, exam participants and certified persons must give their explicit consent for collecting, processing and storing their data. This consent can be given in a form of signed data protection declaration or it can be submitted electronically. The consents must be traceable and stored or archived for the whole duration of storing the personal data.

6.6.8. The applicants, candidates, exam participants and certified persons must be informed about following :

- which data will be collected ;
- which data or categories of data will be processed ;
- what is the scope and extent of processing ;
- what is the purpose of processing the aforementioned data or categories of data ;
- which data or categories of data will be stores ;
- what are the periods of time that they will be stored for ;
- their right to withdraw the consent ;
- their right to object or restrict the processing of the data ;
- their right to receive a copy of their data ;
- their right to request the update or deletion of their data.

The exam center is obligated to inform the applicants, candidates, exam participants and certified persons whenever there is change of any of the processes regarding the points mentioned above. E.g. when the purpose of the processing or duration of storage changes.

6.6.9. The data must be stored in the database that is sufficiently secured.

6.6.10. In the case of data breach :

- the reason or source of data breach must be eliminated ;
- take appropriate measures to eliminate or avoid the negative consequences of the data breach must be taken ;

- data subjects must be immediately informed.

6.7. Control of the Employees Involved in the Examination / Certification Process

6.7.1. The exam center must establish and implement procedures for monitoring and review the work of the employees involved in the examination and certification process. This is to make sure that the employees work and act in a way that is compliant with the quality standards and processes of the exam center.

6.7.2. Internal audits of the exam center must include auditing the personnel involved in the examination and certification activities.

6.7.3. Examination results must be monitored in order to identify the signs of fraudulent behavior on the side of the exam center personnel.

6.7.4. The exam center has to plan and execute on-site observations of the examination process. This aims to verify that the exams are conducted in proper conditions by competent examiners/proctors.

6.7.5. The assessment of the personnel involved in the examination and certification activities must also encompass the feedback of the participants. Participants' feedback can help identify of incompetency or inappropriate behavior of the examiners/proctors or improper assessment or certification process as well as unethical treatment of the customers.

6.8. Control of Partners, Subcontractors and Third Parties

6.8.1. The exam center must have a legally binding contractual agreement with each of its partners, subcontractors and other third parties that are involved in the examination or certification process in any way.

The contractual agreements must clearly define the relationship between the exam center and its contractual partner as well as the authorities and responsibilities of both parties.

6.8.2. The exam center must be able to provide a list of all its contractual partners along with the description of the nature of the relationship/partnership.

6.8.3. The exam center must include clauses containing its quality standards and other necessary requirements in the contractual agreements and make sure that its contractual partners comply with these. Every contractual partner must be able to provide documents, records or other evidence of compliance with the standards and requirements of the exam center.

6.8.4. The exam center must establish a contractual penalty in case there are breaches on the side of the contractual partners.

6.8.5. The exam center must include clauses regarding the conflicts of interests that aim to avoid or eliminate any potential damage caused by the conflicts of interests.

6.8.6. The exam center must establish control procedures over the outsourced activities. Core processes and activities of the exam center cannot be outsourced.

6.9. Improvement

6.9.1. The quality management system and its components must aim to constantly improve processes and achievement of quality objectives as well as eliminate the causes and potential chances of nonconformities.

6.9.2. Both internal (employees) and external (customers, partners) parties shall be able to contribute to the improvement process.

6.9.3. The opportunities for improvement shall be based on the analysis of the following :

- performance evaluation outcomes ;
- customer feedback ;
- employee feedback ;
- target actual analysis of quality objectives ;
- analysis of risks and opportunities ;
- analysis of performance evaluation ;
- internal audit.

6.9.4. The quality assurance officer and the general management must annually analyze and discuss these factors in order to identify the opportunities for improvements.

6.9.5. The exam center must document the improvements and implemented actions to achieve them. A procedure to monitor and measure the positive outcomes of such actions must be established.

Checklist

No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
1	Is there evidence that the exam center acts as an independent body within the organization?					
2	Are the core processes defined and documented?					
3	Are the supporting processes defined and documented?					
4	Are policies documented and measures taken to ensure the conformity of the examination process and its outcomes?					
5	Is there evidence that the processes are designed based on the requirements mentioned in p.2.2.?					
6	Is there evidence that processes are communicated and accurately understood by all employees involved?					
7	Does the examination/certification center satisfy the exam conditions requirements?					
8	Does the exam center test the examinations before their release to the end customers?					
9	Are the exam conditions documented and distributed among all the examination/certification process participants?					
10	Are there established measures for the case of breach of the examination conditions for every party?					
11	Are there documented procedures regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - application process - verification process - assessment process? 					
12	Is the information regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - application - examination - certification - assessment criteria - recertification publicly available for the clients?					



No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
13	Does the exam center have policies regarding participants with disabilities?					
14	Does the examination /certification center encourage customer feedback?					
15	Are there documented procedures for dealing with appeals and customer complaints?					
16	Are measures documented and taken to determine and measure nonconformities?					
17	Are measures documented and taken to ensure confidentiality?					
18	Are there documents that establish which information has to be considered as confidential information?					
19	Does the exam center require that all the parties that deal with the confidential information sign corresponding non-disclosure agreements?					
20	Are measures established and documented for the case any of the party neglects its duties in terms of maintaining confidentiality?					
21	Are the potential fraudulent exam practices analyzed and prevented? Did the exam center take into account all the relevant parties?					
22	Are measures established and documented for the case any of the party involves in the fraudulent exam practices?					
23	Are there established procedures and guidelines regarding creating and updating the documents?					
24	Is there a mechanism of distributing the updated documents to all the relevant parties?					
25	Does the exam center ensure that the outdated documents are not used by any of the parties?					



No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
26	Does the exam center satisfy the minimum documentation requirements mentioned in p. 4.2?					
27	Does the exam center determine which participants data should be collected and stored?					
28	Does the exam center satisfy minimum data requirements mentioned in p. 4.3.?					
29	Are the participants asked for their consent regarding collecting and storing of their data?					
30	Are the participants informed, which data will be stored, for how long and with what purpose?					
31	Are there established and documented guidelines concerning the periods of data storage?					
32	Does the exam center make sure that the documents and/or data are respectively archived, and irrelevant data is deleted?					
33	Is there evidence of general management's commitment to resource allocation?					
34	Are all the processes of the exam center covered by the personnel?					
35	Is there evidence of personnel competences based on the positions they are employed for?					
36	Is there at least one employee responsible for the tasks mentioned in p. 5.2.1.?					
37	Does the exam center ensure impartiality and objectivity of the personnel?					
38	Is there evidence that every employee of the exam center corresponds the personnel requirements in p. 5.2.2.?					
39	Are all employees aware of the quality objectives?					
40	Are employees motivated and encouraged to make suggestions for process improvement?					



No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
41	Does the exam center plan and document its infrastructure requirements?					
42	Are employees satisfied with their work area?					
43	Is the work area clean and safe?					
44	Is there adequate equipment/tools/IT support?					
45	Does the exam center provide adequate exam facilities for all exam participants?					
46	Are the exam facilities appropriate for the examination type?					
47	Does the exam center take into consideration participants with disabilities when choosing the exam facilities?					
48	Does the exam center provide relevant training to the personnel?					
49	Is there evidence of the exam center's commitment to quality assurance?					
50	Is there a documented, established and implemented quality assurance system?					
51	Is the personnel aware and informed about the quality assurance system?					
52	Has the exam center developed and documented the quality objectives?					
53	Has a quality assurance officer been appointed?					
54	Are the tasks and responsibilities of a quality assurance officer defined and documented?					
55	Are internal audits regularly conducted?					
56	Are there guidelines developed for conducting internal audits?					
57	Have key performance indicators (KPI) been established to allow the effectiveness of the process to be evaluated?					
58	Are KPIs consistent with quality and business objectives?					



No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
59	Do KPIs measure the dimensions mentioned in p.6.4?					
60	Are the processes monitored, measured, analyzed and improved?					
61	Are the KPIs measured and analyzed annually?					
62	Has the exam center established and implemented procedures to manage and control documentations and records with regard to their confidentiality, integrity and availability?					
63	What principles does the exam center use in order to assure confidentiality, integrity and availability of the documents and records?					
64	Has the exam center developed and established data protection policies considering the scope of its activities?					
65	Are the data protection policies communicated with all the employees of the exam center?					
66	Is there evidence of the employees' and third parties' commitment to data protection policies?					
67	Did the exam center appoint an employee whose main or additional tasks and responsibilities concern data protection?					
68	Are the tasks and responsibilities of this employee defined and documented?					
69	Do the data protection policies of the exam center contain guidelines regarding the points mentioned in p. 6.6.?					
70	Do the data protection policies of the exam center contain legal justification regarding the data, its processing and storage?					
71	Are the participants informed about the data protection policies with regard to the points mentioned in p. 6.6.?					



No	Question				Evidence / Reference to a document	Improvement Opportunities
72	Are there procedures established in order to facilitate the participant's wish to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - receive the copy of their data - object or restrict the processing of the data - update or delete their data? 					
73	Are the cosents given by the participants with regard to collecting, processing and storing their data archived or stored in paper, electronic or other form?					
74	Can the participants withdraw their consent for collecting, processing and storing their data entirely as well as partially?					
75	Are participats data stored securely?					
76	Do the data protection policies of the exam center provide guidelines for the cases of data breach?					
77	Has the exam center established and documented measures to monitor and control the performance of the employees involved in the examination and certification process?					
78	Has the exam center established and documented measures to monitor and control the performance of its subcontractors, partners and third parties?					
79	Does the exam center analyze the findings resulting from its quality policy and procedures?					
80	Is there evidence of the exam center's commitment to the continual improvement process?					
81	Where opportunities for improvement have been implemented, have the action(s) taken been demonstrated as effective?					
82	Are all process participants encouraged to be involved in identifying improvements?					

List of Documents to Enclose

No	Document	Enclosed	Comment
1	Commercial register extract		
2	Organizational chart		
3	Process map		
4	Descriptions and guidelines for processes		
5	Description of the certification scheme(s)		
6	Evaluation criteria for the relevant exam types		
7	Certificate sample		
8	Non-disclosure agreement sample		
9	Data protection declaration sample		
10	Exam conditions		
11	Job descriptions		
12	CVs of the employees		
13	Sample work contract		
14	Evidence of separating certification and training activities (if applicable)		
15	Sample partner/subcontractor contract		
16	Internal audit checklist		
17	Internal audit guidelines		
18	Quality assurance policies		
19	Quality objectives		
20	Documentation management policies		
21	Data protection policies		
22	List of nonconformities		
23	List of improvements		