

Rules for assessors

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Scope:

Within the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, the verification of the technical competence on-site is a decisive aspect. The results of the assessment on-site essentially determine whether an accreditation can be granted. The on-site assessment is performed by assessors and technical experts with profound knowledge and experience in the technical area or quality management to be assessed. The aim of DAkkS is to provide a workable pool of assessors for all offered accreditation activities and technical fields. Assessors of DAkkS, assessors of the power-conferring authorities as well as (external) assessors and technical experts from private and public institutions belong to this pool. The requirements as to the qualification and further training of assessors shall ensure a comparable and technically sound approach of the assessors. This document bindingly regulates the requirements referred to and the requirements as to the procedure of appointment, maintenance of the appointment, assignment and monitoring of assessors and technical experts being simultaneously a source of information for persons striving for an appointment as DAkkS assessors.

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1 Introduction and purpose

Within the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, the verification of the technical competence on-site is a decisive aspect. The results of the assessment on-site essentially determine whether an accreditation can be granted. The on-site assessment is performed by assessors and technical experts with profound knowledge and experience in the technical area or quality management to be assessed.

The aim of DAkkS is to provide a workable pool of assessors for all offered accreditation activities and technical fields. Assessors of DAkkS, assessors of the power-conferring authorities as well as (external) assessors and technical experts from private and public institutions belong to this pool. The requirements as to the qualification and further training of assessors shall ensure a comparable and technically sound approach of the assessors. This document bindingly regulates the requirements referred to and the requirements as to the procedure of appointment¹, maintenance of the appointment, assignment² and monitoring of assessors and technical experts³ being simultaneously a source of information for persons striving for an appointment as DAkkS assessors.

2 Terms and definitions

Assessment	Process undertaken by an accreditation body to assess the competence of a CAB, based on particular standard(s) and/or other normative documents and for a defined scope of accreditation.
Assessor	Person assigned by an accreditation body to perform, alone or as part of an assessment team, an assessment of a CAB. The person may be assigned as technical or system assessor.
Lead assessor	Assessor who is given the overall responsibility for specified assessment activities.
System assessor	Assessor primarily to assess the quality management in CABs (system assessment).
Technical assessor	Assessor primarily to assess the technical parts of conformity assessments of a CAB (technical assessment).

¹ DIN EN ISO/IEC 17011:2005 refers to the term „formal approval“.

² DIN EN ISO/IEC 17011:2005 refers to the term „appointment“

³ In the areas, in which, according to Section 1 (2) sentence 2 AkkStelleG the power conferring authorities shall be assigned, the respective current framework agreements and procedure descriptions shall apply. This also applies to the terms and definitions.

Technical expert	Person assigned by an accreditation body to provide specific knowledge or expertise with respect to the scope of accreditation to be assessed.
Appointment	Formal approval of an assessor or technical expert to be assigned in accreditation processes for specified areas, for which the assessor or technical expert demonstrated his competence in performing an assessment. The term is synonymously used with the term „formal approval“ referred to in DIN EN ISO/IEC 17011.
Assignment	DAkKS assignment to an assessor or technical expert to perform a specific assessment

3 Rules for assessors

3.1 Requirements for assessors and technical experts

DAkKS assessors and technical experts shall demonstrate that they meet the following requirements as to the:

- professional education;
- professional knowledge and experience;
- personal attributes;
- independence;
- confidentiality;
- training of assessors (not for technical experts);
- maintenance of the qualification;
- where applicable, function as lead assessors (not for technical experts).

Specific requirements for assessors in certain technical fields (such as technical modules in the officially regulated environmental field or specific features in sensible areas according to Section 1 (2), sentence 2 of the AkkStelleG) can apply. These requirements are documented, made known and shall apply according to their drawing as specific rules in addition to the requirements already listed above. Assessors of foreign accreditation bodies signatories to the multilateral recognition agreements of EA, ILAC and IAF - except for cases according to Section 1 (2) sentence 1 AkkStelleG - without additional verification, may be assigned for the scope specified by the respective accreditation body. The specific requirements listed above shall also apply to assessors of other national accreditation bodies.

3.1.1 Vocational training

University degree, college degree or master according to the future work area of the assessor/technical expert. In case of special qualification or professional experience, other scientific-technical degrees may exceptionally be accepted.

3.1.2 Professional knowledge and experience

- a) **Technical assessors and technical experts:** At least four years of full-time position (≥ 19 hours per week), out of this at least two years activity with testing, surveillance and/or assessment tasks in a calibration or testing laboratory, in an inspection or certification body or in a comparable institution in technical and where applicable legal areas which correspond to the scope of the technical assessor or technical expert. These activities shall not date back more than 4 years. Where applicable, objective evidence shall be provided in so far as the knowledge and skills conform to the current state of technology. Based on the area of assignment, assessor activities for accreditation bodies or power conferring authorities are appropriately taken into consideration provided the knowledge and skills conform to the current state of technology. Knowledge of quality assurance working methods and comprehensive knowledge of standards in the respective technical area are essential. In individual cases, the head of division of DAkkS decides on exceptions from the above-mentioned time requirements as to the professional experience, provided the professional quality does not affect the assessment. Where relevant, knowledge of requirements of valid legal provisions (e.g. EU directives, national regulations) is required. Where applicable, compliance with subject-specific requirements predetermined by the responsible sectoral committees is necessary.
- b) **System assessors:** At least four years of full-time position (≥ 19 hours per week), out of this at least two years activity with testing, surveillance and/or assessment tasks in a calibration or testing laboratory, in an inspection or certification body or in a comparable institution in technical and where applicable legal areas which correspond to the scope of the technical assessor or technical expert. Assessor activities for accreditation bodies or power conferring authorities are considered comparable. Knowledge of quality management in the fields of testing, calibrations, certifications or inspections based on practical experience in the industry and/or successful participation in relevant training activities is required, where relevant, knowledge of requirements of valid legal provisions (e.g. EU directives, national regulations).

3.1.3 Personal attributes (in line with DIN EN ISO 19011, Section 7.2)

An assessor should be

- ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet;
- open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view;

- diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people;
- observant, i.e. actively aware of physical surroundings and activities;
- perceptive, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations;
- versatile, i.e. adjusts readily to different situations;
- tenacious, i.e. persistent, focused on achieving objectives;
- decisive, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis; and
- self-reliant, i.e. acts and functions independently while interacting effectively with others.

3.1.4 Independence

Assessors and experts shall be free from commercial, financial or other pressure or conflicts of interests that possibly influence their impartial and non discriminating assessment. They are obliged to inform DAkKS about any facts and changes that are important for their assignment.

If known, prior to the assessment, external assessors and technical experts shall inform DAkKS about previous, present or foreseeable connections or competition between them and the CAB to be assessed. An assignment is excluded where an assessor or his employer provided consultancy for a body to be accredited less than three years ago. Assessors are allowed to reject an assignment for an assessment. In particular, a rejection shall be effected under the circumstance that the CAB and the assessor or his employer are a direct competitor or that there are prejudices for some other reasons. A rejection of an assignment has no negative effects on prospective assignments.

3.1.5 Confidentiality

DAkKS assessors and technical experts shall treat strictly confidential all information to which they have access during an accreditation process unless this information is publicly available.

The assessors and technical experts shall observe secrecy of all information they gained in the context of the accreditation process even after termination of the contractual relationship with DAkKS.

Only DAkKS is allowed to pass information to third parties exclusively on a legal basis and in compliance with the statutory data protection regulations of the federal government.

3.1.6 Training of assessors (not valid for technical experts)

Knowledge of the objectives, organisation and range of DAkKS services, knowledge of the relevant legal fundamentals (REGULATION (EC) No 765/2008, AkkStelleG), normative bases (including ISO/IEC 17011) and sectoral rules, knowledge of the assessment and accreditation process (demonstrated participation in the training module B according to the DAkKS framework programme - see document 62 SD 002), participation in on-site practical training activities and where applicable, assessments under supervision (on-site observations).

3.1.7 Requirements for the maintenance of an appointment

The requirements for the appointment of an assessor or technical expert apply continuously. Without being requested, the assessor or technical expert is obliged to immediately report to DAkKS any changes affecting the fulfilment of the set requirements. For the maintenance of the appointment, the annual participation in the exchange of experience of assessors (module E) is mandatory.

3.1.8 Lead assessors

Appointed system and technical assessors may be assigned as lead assessors. Lead assessors shall additionally have knowledge and skills in leading assessment teams to perform the assessment efficiently and effectively. In particular the following aspects shall be considered:

- leverage resources during the assessment,
- representing the assessor team in communicating with DAkKS and the body to be assessed,
- leading the assessor team to draw assessment conclusions and
- avoiding and solving conflicts.

In addition, lead assessors shall have detailed knowledge concerning the DAkKS structure, functions of DAkKS boards and committees and the course of an accreditation procedure.

Team members, having at least participated in three assessments shall prove that they comply with the above-mentioned requirements, the evaluation of which to be performed in the monitoring of assessors. If the result is positive, the assessor may be appointed as a lead assessor with the decision to be taken by the respective head of division of DAkKS.

3.2 Procedure for appointment

3.2.1 Application for appointment

Usually the assessor submits an application for appointment as assessor at the DAkKS office. The application shall contain the following data including appropriate evidence:

- testing, calibration, inspection and/or certification field and possibly types of test/test methods (calibration methods) or inspection and certification systems and basic specifications (e.g. standards) for which the appointment is applied (if necessary, sector-specific questionnaires),
- professional career and experience in the test, calibration, inspection and/or certification field and in the types of test/test methods (calibration methods) or inspection and certification systems for which the appointment is applied,
- professional qualifications, references, work certificates, information on the authorship of scientific publications, etc.,

- professional status,
- participation in relevant national and international standardisation and technical committees,
- experience in testing, calibration, inspection and/or certification activities, in quality management as well as experience as an assessor or in a comparable activity,
- detailed knowledge of and experience in the relevant standards ISO/IEC 17000 ff., ISO 15189 and EN 45011.

A different approach is possible due to framework agreements with institutions.

3.2.2 Review of application documents

The division shall review the submitted documents for completeness as well as for suitability and the possible scope of the applicant. If the results of the review do not show any possible use in practice, e.g. due to a lack of qualification or already sufficient capacities in the applied area, the application is rejected with the applicant to be informed by the head of division of DAkKS.

In case of a positive review of the application, the data are forwarded to the appropriate sectoral committee/s for further consideration/recommendation. If several divisions are concerned, the application is forwarded appropriately.

3.2.3 Decision on the appointment/maintenance of the appointment/extension of the appointment scope

The respective head of division of DAkKS - usually based on a recommendation of the relevant sectoral committee with all requirements fulfilled - decides on the appointment of the assessor. To be able to make a recommendation the relevant committee may invite the applicant for a personal interview.

The applicant is given a written notice if the application is rejected. The assessor can raise an appeal against the decision with the DAkKS management to decide on it. A claim for being appointed as a DAkKS assessor does not exist.

After signing the framework agreement, the assessor/technical expert is registered in the pool of DAkKS assessors.

As a rule the appointment is for an indefinite period and for specified scopes. An appointment for a definite period is also possible. The appointing division shall review the fulfilment of the requirements for the appointment at intervals of no more than 4 years. For the purpose, the assessor is requested to update his documents. The monitoring results since the previous review shall also be checked. Given the fulfilment of requirements based on positive monitoring results, the appointment remains in effect. If the requirements are no longer or only partially fulfilled, the appointment can be withdrawn or reduced at any time. Should there be significant changes as compared to the initial

appointment, for the maintenance of the appointment, a recommendation of the respective sectoral committee is required. The same also applies to extensions of the appointment scope.

3.2.4 On-site practical training

An on-site practical training is required prior to the assignment as an assessor. The participation in an assessment team together with an experienced assessor is considered an on-site practical training. The trainee assessor shall be integrated in the assessment course by taking over parts of the assessment. The trainee assessor is required to prepare a report on the assessment.

Technical experts who have participated at least at three assessments may be assigned as assessor upon fulfilment of all other requirements for the assignment (including a positive Monitoring – see section 3.4). In this case an additional on-site practical training is not necessary.

3.2.5 Appointment of technical experts

The appointment of technical experts is made equivalently to the appointment of assessors. Due to the non-participation in training activities for assessors (module B) and the non-required annual training activities (module E) technical experts are only allowed to take part in an assessment when accompanied by a system or a technical assessor.

3.3 Assignment of assessors/technical experts

As a rule, the conditions under which an assignment is made are specified in the framework agreement between the assessor/technical expert and DAkKS. The framework agreement states the conditions of the cooperation. If several staff of an institution work as assessors for DAkKS, alternatively, a framework agreement with the institution in question may be concluded. This agreement shall become effective upon signature of both parties. The assignment for individual assessments is made in writing or electronically by the DAkKS customer manager. The assignment provides information on the body to be assessed, the location and the determined assessment date as well as on the fees for the assessment service. The assessor/technical expert accepts the assignment by confirming it in writing or electronically. Being appointed as an assessor, the assessor has no claim to be assigned for specific assessments.

3.4 Monitoring

The elements for monitoring assessors and technical experts are as follows:

- evaluation by the assessed body
- evaluation by on-site observations (witness assessments)
- evaluation of the documentation of the assessment

3.4.1 Evaluation by the assessed body

To evaluate the performed assessment, the customer manager sends the forms to the conformity assessment body. The detailed feedback responses are recorded.

3.4.2 Witness assessments

Each assessor and technical expert should be monitored on site by a witness assessment in the following calendar year after his appointment at the latest. For each witness assessment a report has to be prepared. The assessor will receive a copy of the report.

Assessors who are appointed in several divisions for different technical sections should – if possible – be monitored by witness-assessments through several divisions.

Witness-assessments may only be performed by assessors or heads of divisions of DAkKS. Where time allows, a direct feedback discussion should follow after the assessment between the witness-assessor and the assessor/technical expert.

The interval for monitoring by a witness-assessment is for all assessors and technical experts normally 3 years.

If the monitoring results are mainly positive, the interval to the next witness assessment might be extended within the overall evaluation of monitoring results (see section 3.4.4) for one year each time (not more than 5 years).

Does the evaluation show that a future assignment of the assessor/technical expert is questioned the head of division of DAkKS, who defines additional measures if applicable, is to be informed immediately.

3.4.3 Evaluation of the documentation of the assessment

Only in the case of a non-satisfying reporting, the responsible customer manager evaluates the documentation of the assessment as well as the cooperation of the assessor with DAkKS.

3.4.4 Evaluation of the monitoring

As a rule, the evaluation is done as part of the review process for the maintenance of the appointment. In case of particularly negative evaluations, individual cases are reviewed and measures taken, if necessary. The review is made in the responsibility of the relevant head of division of DAkKS. The result of the evaluation is given to the respective assessor in an appropriate way.

3.5 Further training

According to the framework training programme considering recommendations of the sectoral committees, DAkKS offers annual trainings to realise exchange of experience and to inform about changes in the accreditation system. .

The participation in a further DAkKS training activity is mandatory for assessors. Repeated non-attendance may result in downgrading the assessor to be a technical expert or in a dismissal of the assessor.

3.6 Dismissal of assessors

The framework agreement can always be terminated by either party upon three months to the end of the quarter. Assignments accepted prior to the termination are continued to be processed, unless any other agreement has been concluded between the parties. Reasons for the dismissal may be as follows: repeated insufficient reporting, repeated poor evaluations in the monitoring or breach of DAkKS rules.

3.7 Records on assessors and technical experts

Records on assessor and technical experts shall be made and kept updated. Personal data of assessors and technical experts may electronically be processed and filed. The records are subject to the requirements of the Federal Information Protection Law and are exclusively used for purposes required for the appointment procedure or for exercising assessor activities and handling accreditation processes. Only with the explicit permission of the assessor/technical expert on a legal basis, the records may either entirely or partially be passed on with the exception of forwarding the qualification documents to the responsible members of sector committees for appointment purposes.

4 Further applicable documents⁴

(EC) No 765/2008	Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 339/93
AkkStelleG	Act on the Accreditation Body (Accreditation Body Act - AkkStelleG)
DIN EN ISO 19011	Guidelines for auditing management systems
DIN EN ISO/IEC 17011	Conformity assessment - General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
62 SD 002	Framework program to train assessors in accreditation procedures

⁴ In the respective valid version