

7 IMPARTIALITY

7.1 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

This Quality Management Manual is based on the following Standards:

ISO/IEC 17021:2015	CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT – REQUIREMENTS FOR BODIES PROVIDING AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.
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7.2 INTRODUCTION

Management System Certification Bodies are service providers to all industries with the main objective of verifying a customer's conformance to an international standard through a recognized audit process. It is therefore important that the service generates a high level of confidence by customers and users of certificates related to claimed conformance and consequential performance expectations of certified companies by their clients.

To ensure that the trust and confidence in the value of the certificate and related performance are fulfilling the business environment's expectations on an international basis, EQCSA (Pty) Ltd need to ensure that they operate processes generating and maintaining the required confidence levels.

7.3 OBJECTIVE

The required confidence in a consistent and high level of conformance verification result by EQCSA (Pty) Ltd requires visible indicators for customers seeking professional independent conformance assessment services and documented certification of compliance, that they are capable to provide the service under internationally recognized conditions.

The expected indicators for confidence in appropriate certification services are as follows:

- Conformance of the Management Systems Certification Body to an internationally recognized standard management framework (ISO 17021:2015)
- Independent verification of the operating system's compliance by an independent verification organization (Accreditation)

EQCSA (Pty) Ltd is committed to conform to ISO 17021:2015 and undergoes verification of conformance by SANAS. Within the structures of the ISO 17021:2015 Impartiality becomes an integral part for assurance that conformance verification services as provided by EQCSA (Pty) Ltd are trustworthy and provide confidence to the certificate user that the indicated conformance by the certified organization is not influenced by factors affecting the ownership and independence of the certified management system.

7.4 UNDERSTANDING OF IMPARTIALITY

The basic point of departure for understanding "impartiality" is to ensure that the most common connection between the term and the intended objectives of impartiality practice is maintained. Therefore, we establish the most common understanding by referring to generic dictionary and relevant ISO standard definitions:

- Oxford Dictionary: "Impartial" is referenced as "not partial", "fair". Following through, "fair" is defined as "just", "equitable", "in accordance with rules".

Impartiality is consequently the attribute of fairness and balanced conduct/control of a process or action under the control of the established rules.

- ISO 17021:2015 Section 4.2: “Impartiality” is actual and perceived presence of objectivity.

To understand objectivity, ISO 17021 explains the following:

Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the certification body.

For EQCSA (Pty) Ltd “Impartiality” means that control mechanisms are established in the management system which ensure that the absence of conflicts of interest are demonstrable within the certification process. To ensure that the certification process remains a customer-oriented service of actual and perceived high quality and hence objectivity is delivered, the following terms are used to ensure that “Impartiality” is maintained at the same time.

- Objectivity
- Independence
- Freedom of conflicts of interest
- Freedom from bias
- Lack of prejudice
- Neutrality
- Fairness
- Open-mindedness
- Even-handedness
- Detachment
- Balance

Comparing the sources of understanding “impartiality”, we find that there is no contradiction or discrepancy between the common understanding through the dictionary and the tailored definition by ISO 17021:2015.

7.5 INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAINTAIN IMPARTIALITY

EQCSA (Pty) Ltd considers two aspects needed by an infrastructure which demonstrate and maintain “Impartiality” within the management system.

7.5.1 Formal Structures in the Documented System:

EQCSA (Pty) Ltd maintains formal procedures and process documentation for certification and related processes to ensure that all personnel involved in the activities from customer acquisition to certificate issue is guided by consistent and objective information.

Working documents are available ensuring trace ability of the aspects of “Impartiality”. These documents undergo a review process to ensure that improvements supporting impartiality during the certification service is optimized. (Procedures, working documents, forms, flow diagrams, templates).

7.5.2 Formal Structures relating to Competence and Human Impacts:

To minimize the variation factor of human behavior and maintain control of “Impartiality” by all personnel involved in certification and related processes, EQCSA (Pty) Ltd maintains documents and HR development processes for constant awareness of personnel of the importance of “Impartiality”.

At defined stages, the certification process undergoes independent review steps ensuring the “Impartiality” is maintained. (Management review, internal audit, certification decision making, auditor selection, auditor development, auditor performance monitoring, performance monitoring of all personnel, transparency to customers, independent communication).

7.6 THREE CORNERSTONES OF IMPARTIALITY

Three cornerstones are established within EQCSA (Pty) Ltd which are of highest level of importance to all staff and contract auditors of EQCSA (Pty) Ltd.

7.6.1 Cornerstone 1

Competence, care, honesty and open-mindedness of all personnel representing EQCSA (Pty) Ltd always.

7.6.2 Cornerstone 2

Independence, objectivity and freedom of conflict of people involved and interested in EQCSA (Pty) Ltd willing to add value to the “Impartiality” of EQCSA (Pty) Ltd and support EQCSA (Pty) Ltd as a recognized highly professional Management System Certification Body.

7.6.3 Cornerstone 3

A committed Customer base to maximize the benefits of the Management System Standards and certification through involvement at all levels and an effective Continual Improvement Process, customer workshops and involvement of external people with open mind understanding and interest in creating a lateral view of the certification industry and service benefits.

7.7 IMPARTIALITY COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Although formal structures are required to manifest and maintain consistent impartiality with sound understanding of its importance, true impartiality must be lived and practiced by all interested and affected parties who have the excellent and professional reputation of EQCSA (Pty) Ltd at heart. To focus our minds on the importance of “Impartiality” the following statement should be internalized and be alive:

We will uphold “Impartiality” throughout all interactions with our customers as integral part of maximizing customer service.

Signed By:

EQCSA (Pty) Ltd:

Committed Supporters: