

The Open Group[®] Certification for People

Certification Policy

for Examination-Based Programs

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The Open Group[®] Certification for People: Certification Policy for Examination-Based Programs

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Open Group operates a number of certification programs for people in which certification is awarded to people who demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a Body of Knowledge by passing one or more examinations. These certification programs are referred to collectively as “the Programs” in this document.

This document, The Open Group Certification for People Certification Policy for Examination-Based Programs, sets out the policies and processes by which a person may achieve certification and is an integral part of the terms and conditions of each Certification for People Program of The Open Group. Defined terms herein are in addition to definitions provided in the Program Configuration document of the particular Program.

The Programs are designed with the following attributes:

Openness	Certification is open to applicants from all countries. ¹ Materials and examinations may initially be available only in English, though The Open Group and its Accredited Training Course providers work to provide courses and examinations in other languages.
Fairness	Certification is achieved only by passing an examination that is the same as that taken by any other Candidate. In general, Candidates may choose whatever training or self-study they believe matches their needs in preparation for certification, unless indicated otherwise for a particular Program in the Program Configuration document.
Market Relevance	Each Program is designed to meet the perceived needs of the market. A Program may have multiple levels of certification, support more than one version of the Body of Knowledge, have provisions for dealing with migration from previous versions of the Body of Knowledge, or recognize third-party programs. The Program Configuration document defines the Program-specific aspects of policy on levels, versions, migration, and recognition of any third-party programs.
Learning Support	Training courses are provided by third parties, according to the needs of the market.
Quality	Accredited Training Course providers may choose to seek accreditation from The Open Group for their courses. Accredited Training Courses are listed on The Open Group website. Only accredited courses may use The Open Group logo and include the examination(s) within the course.
Best Practice	The Programs are designed to comply with ISO/IEC 17024:2003. ² The IAF Guidance Document for ISO/IEC 17024:2003 ³ has also been used to assist in the development of the Programs.

¹ Subject to compliance with applicable United States laws, regulations, or orders including those relating to export including but not limited to International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and/or Export Administration Act/Regulations (EAR).

² ISO/IEC 17024:2003: Conformity Assessment – General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons (superseded by ISO/IEC 17024:2012).

Community Each Program may be associated with one or more professional communities or associations. Any such relationships are described in the Program Configuration document.

1.2 Scope and Applicability

This Certification Policy applies to certification of people who demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a Body of Knowledge by passing one or more examinations.

This Certification Policy is intended to cover certification to future versions of the documents that compose the Body of Knowledge for a Program and is intended to remain in place as the Programs to which it applies are introduced and evolved over time.

1.3 Certification

Candidates qualify for certification by first passing the applicable examination(s) and then completing the certification process, including acceptance of the legal terms and conditions of the Program, on The Open Group website for the Program.

Certification examinations are available worldwide through The Open Group Examination Provider(s) and may also be available as an integral part of an Accredited Training Course, if the Accredited Training Course provider chooses to provide this service and it is allowed by the Program, as indicated in the Program Configuration document.

1.4 Levels of Certification

The levels of certification available in a Program at any particular time are listed in the Program Configuration document. The requirements for certification at each level are described in detail in the Conformance Requirements document.

1.5 Languages

The definitive version of the Body of Knowledge for each Program is written in English. Translations to other languages may be made available, according to market demand.

Examinations will be available in English for each Program. Examinations may also be made available in other languages. Information on supported languages is available on the Program website.

If an examination is not available to a Candidate in their first language, the Candidate can take the English language examination. Extra time will be provided for taking the examination if a Candidate meets the English as a Second Language (ESL) criteria for the Program, as defined on the Program website.

³ Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC 17024:2003 (IAF GD 24 2004), published by the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (www.iaf.nu). This document provides guidance to certification bodies seeking accreditation to ISO/IEC 17024:2003, and enables accreditation bodies to harmonize their application of the standards against which they assess certification bodies.

Providers of Accredited Training Courses delivered wholly or partly in a language for which no corresponding examination is available may offer other means of assessment, subject to approval by The Open Group.

1.6 Certification Mark Logo

People certified within one of the Programs are able to use The Open Group Certification Mark logo on their business cards, in proposals, in marketing materials, etc. In accordance with the Trademark License Agreement and Trademark Usage Guide, the logo is used with labels to identify the Program and specific Body of Knowledge against which the person is certified and the level of certification achieved.

The authorized labels are documented in the Program Configuration document. Artwork for the logo with the applicable labels is made available to Certified Persons from each Program’s website.

1.7 Terminology and Definitions

This table defines terms or clarifies the meaning of words used within this document. Where an acronym is also used, it is provided in parentheses.

Accredited Training Course (ATC)	A training course, operated by a third party, that has successfully completed the accreditation process and which is listed in the register of Accredited Training Courses on the Certification Authority’s website.
Body of Knowledge	The standard(s) and/or publication(s) that contain the knowledge covered by the Program, as defined in the Program Configuration document.
Candidate	A person seeking certification in the Program.
Certification Authority (CA)	The organization that manages the day-to-day operations of the Program in accordance with the policies defined in this document. The Open Group is the Certification Authority for each of the Programs.
Certification Directory	The official list of all Certified Persons, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made publicly available on the Certification Authority’s website.
Certification Mark Logo	The logo or other trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use within each Program in relation to Certified Persons in accordance with the terms of the Trademark License Agreement.
Certification Record	The information identifying the Candidate, including contact details, and identifying the Program in which the person is certified, together with a description of the way in which the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements, including the Candidate’s level(s) of certification.
Certification System Deficiency (CSD)	An agreed error in the certification system that is inhibiting the certification process. A Certification System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Certified Person	A Candidate who has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that the certification requirements have been met, accepted the Trademark License Agreement, successfully completed the process to achieve certification and such certification has not lapsed or been revoked.

Conformance Requirements	The document defining what elements of the Body of Knowledge the Candidate must know, understand, or be able to do, including the depth of knowledge required, in order to achieve a given level of certification.
Examination Provider	The organization(s) contracted by The Open Group to provide and administer examinations at test centers throughout the world.
Interpretation (INT)	Decision made by the Specification Authority that elaborates or refines the meaning of the Conformance Requirements, Certification Policy, Accreditation Requirements, Accreditation Policy, Body of Knowledge, or a standard or best practice referenced therein. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Problem Report (PR)	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of a certification or accreditation document, or the web-based Certification System, which, if accepted by the Certification Authority, will be resolved into an Interpretation or a Certification System Deficiency.
Program	The Open Group Certification for People Program specifically identified in the Program Configuration document of which this document forms an integral part.
Specification Authority (SA)	The Open Group Forum or working group that is responsible for interpreting the Certification Policy, Conformance Requirements, Accreditation Policy, Accreditation Requirements, and Body of Knowledge of the Program. The Forum or Working Group is identified in the Program Configuration document.
Trademark License Agreement (TMLA)	The agreement between the Certified Person and The Open Group that contains the legal commitment by the Candidate to the terms and conditions of the Program and for use of the Certification Mark Logo.

2. Certification Process

This section defines the process a Candidate must follow to achieve certification.

In all cases, Candidates achieve certification only by passing the applicable examination defined by the Certification Authority, or by passing another assessment approved by the Certification Authority.

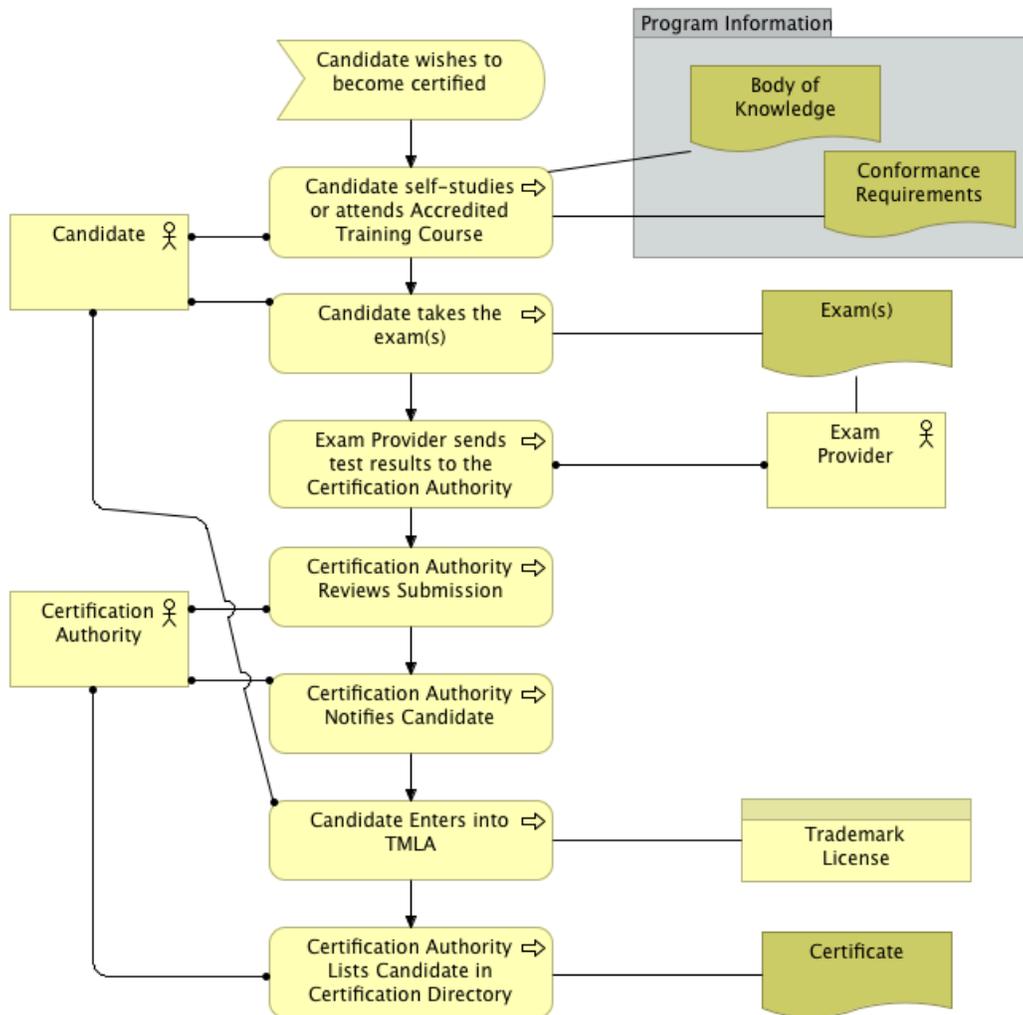


Figure 1: Certification Process

1. Candidate Acquires Knowledge and Understanding of the Body of Knowledge

The two key inputs to the learning process are the Body of Knowledge and the Conformance Requirements. The Conformance Requirements identify which elements of the Body of Knowledge must be known to achieve certification at the chosen level.

To attain certification in one of The Open Group examination-based certification Programs, Candidates must possess a thorough knowledge of the elements of the Body of Knowledge identified in the Conformance Requirements as being mandatory for the Candidate's chosen level of certification.

To assess their learning requirements, Candidates should first review the Body of Knowledge and identify any gaps in their personal knowledge.

Candidates must then choose how to gain the additional knowledge of the elements needed to close the gaps in their knowledge. This could be through self-study, being mentored, or by attending an Accredited Training Course or other course. Some of the factors that may influence this decision are:

- The Candidate's degree of familiarity with the Program's Body of Knowledge
- The local availability of an applicable Accredited Training Course
- Availability of time to attend a course

2. Candidate Takes Examination

Regardless of how knowledge of the subject matter is acquired, certification is only awarded to individuals who have passed the examination(s) defined by The Open Group (or equivalent form of assessment approved by The Open Group).

The examinations are available worldwide at The Open Group Examination Provider's test centers (contact information is available on the Program website).

Candidates who fail to meet the required pass mark will be informed of this by the Examination Provider and are encouraged to undergo further study and re-take the examination at a later date. Arrangements for further study between an Accredited Training Course provider and a failed Candidate are not within the scope of the Program.

Candidates who fail an examination are not allowed to re-take any examination again within that Program for a period of one (1) month.

3. Certification Authority Reviews Submission

Examination results for all Candidates are sent to the Certification Authority for review. The Certification Authority will check to ensure that the Candidate took the correct examination(s) and that the pass mark has been met.

The Certification Authority will also ensure that Candidates have not failed an examination in the Program within the previous month.

4. Certification Authority Notifies Candidate

The Certification Authority will notify the Candidate in writing of the decision. If the decision is to accept the application for certification, the Certification Authority will issue credentials to the successful Candidate that will enable the Candidate to access the Certification Authority's website to complete the certification process.

5. Candidate Enters into Trademark License Agreement

The Candidate then uses the credentials to access the Certification Authority's website to accept the terms of, and enter into, a Trademark License Agreement with the Certification Authority and to obtain the artwork for the applicable Certification Mark Logo.

6. Certification Authority Lists Candidate in Certification Directory

The Certification Authority will make a certificate available to the Candidate in electronic form and enter the Candidate's Certification Record into the Certification Directory.

The credentials will also allow the Certified Person to control to whom the Certification Record is disclosed and to update contact and employer information in the Certification Record.

3. Conformance

3.1 Conformance Requirements

It is an explicit condition of the Program that Certified Persons warrant and represent that the applicable Conformance Requirements are met at the time of certification and subsequently.

3.2 Certification Record

Certification Records are created and maintained by the Certification Authority upon receipt of the examination results from The Open Group Examination Provider.

The Certification Record will be included in the Candidate's entry in the Certification Directory once certification is complete.

Certified Persons must ensure that their Certification Record is kept accurate and up-to-date and they will be required to confirm the correctness of the Certification Record annually at the request of the Certification Authority.

If a Certified Person wishes to change administrative details – such as contact information (address, phone number, email address, etc.) – they will be able to do so directly on the Certification Authority's website.

The Certification Record will contain the following information:

Field alterable by Certification Authority on receipt of proof of change of name:

- Full Name

Fields editable by Certified Persons (the “contact details”):

- Contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- Employer name, if applicable
- Mailing addresses (personal and/or business)

Fields not editable by Certified Persons:

- Certification state – current or lapsed
- Conformance Requirements met
- History of past certifications (date of first certification, any certification at a new level)

All Certification Records are in English.

4. Use of the Certification Mark Logo

4.1 Use by Certified Persons

All Certified Persons will be licensed to use The Open Group Certification Mark Logo, with the applicable labels (tag lines), in relation to the services they offer and in descriptions of themselves and their knowledge; for example, on business cards, in proposals, and in marketing materials.

4.1.1 Licensing the Certification Mark Logo

As part of the certification process, the successful Candidate enters into a Trademark License Agreement for the Certification Mark Logo with The Open Group. The Open Group then issues the artwork for the Certification Mark Logo that includes labels (tag lines) that identify the specific Body of Knowledge against which the person is certified and the level of certification that has been achieved. The Trademark License Agreement is the legal contract governing how the Certification Mark Logo may be used and defines the rights and obligations of the Certified Person.

Award of the Certification Mark Logo is not an endorsement of any person, product, or service by The Open Group.

4.1.2 Use of the Certification Mark Logo

Certified Persons shall only use the Certification Mark Logo as defined in the Trademark License Agreement.

The Certification Authority has the right at any time to audit a Certified Person's use of the Certification Mark Logo and adherence to the requirements of this Policy and to the Trademark License Agreement.

Customers and prospective customers of a Certified Person who discover a misuse of the Certification Mark Logo may report such non-conformance to the Certification Authority.

Use of the Certification Mark Logo with a label for a level higher than the one to which the person is certified or for a Body of Knowledge other than one to which a person is certified is not permitted. If a Certified Person is found to be doing so, then the Certification Authority may remove them from the Certification Directory, in which case they cease to be certified and may no longer use the Certification Mark Logo.

If a Certified Person is found by any means to no longer meet the applicable Conformance Requirements, the Certification Authority will notify the Certified Person who shall:

1. Within 90 days rectify the non-conformity and satisfy the Certification Authority of the efficacy of the rectification; or
2. Within 90 days satisfy the Certification Authority that they are conformant; or
3. Within 90 days cease all use of the Certification Mark Logo, in which case they cease to be a Certified Person; or
4. Within 45 days invoke the appeals process as described in Section 8.

If option (4) is selected, the Certified Person will have 45 days from the completion of the appeals process to implement the decision or cease all use of the Certification Mark Logo.

If the individual fails to take one of the above actions within the timescales described above, they will cease to be a Certified Person.

4.1.3 Removal of the Certification Mark Logo

If an individual ceases to be a Certified Person, any and all rights they have to use the Certification Mark Logo cease immediately and at their own expense they shall remove the Certification Mark Logo from all business cards, marketing materials, proposals, websites, and other materials. The Certification Authority may inspect any such materials to ensure adequate removal of the Certification Mark Logo.

Once the rights to the Certification Mark Logo have been removed, any future use of the Certification Mark Logo will require re-certification.

Failure to adhere to these provisions will be a breach of the Trademark License Agreement and shall result in its termination.

5. Certification Directory

5.1 Inclusion in the Certification Directory

The Certification Directory is a web-accessible record of all Certified Persons and is maintained by the Certification Authority. The Certification Directory contains the name of each Certified Person and their Certification Record.

Once the Certification Authority is satisfied that the Candidate meets the applicable Conformance Requirements, as demonstrated by passing the applicable examination, and all other requirements for certification, including the Candidate accepting the terms of the Trademark License Agreement, the Certification Authority will issue written notice to the Candidate that they have met the Conformance Requirements of the Program and are now certified, as described in Section 2.

Once the Candidate is certified, the Certification Authority will enter their Certification Record into the Certification Directory.

5.2 Visibility

A Certified Person may at any time specify whether their Certification Record is displayed in the public Certification Directory or kept private and how much of their contact information is visible publicly. By default, entries in the Certification Directory are listed in the public directory with minimal contact information.

A Certified Person may elect to keep some or all of their certification information private. However, customers and prospective customers of a Certified Person or their employer must be able to verify that someone they have been sent, or whose services they have been offered, is indeed certified. Therefore, a Certified Person may specify credentials they can provide to such individuals to allow them to query the web-based Certification Directory and view select private information in the Certification Record.

The Certification Authority will not disclose any information about a Certified Person without their permission.

A Candidate's examination results will not be made public by the Certification Authority or by an Accredited Training Course provider.

5.3 Removal from the Certification Directory

A person shall cease to be certified in a Program if:

- They request that the Certification Authority withdraw them from the Certification Directory.
- Their certification Trademark License Agreement for the Program is terminated.
- They violate The Open Group confidentiality agreement, accepted when taking the examination, by disclosing the examination materials.

Individuals found to have achieved certification under false pretenses or who have breached the terms and conditions of the Program will have their certification terminated and be removed from the Certification Directory in each of The Open Group Certification for People Programs in which the person is listed.

6. Duration of Certification

The length of time for which certification is valid is defined in the Program Configuration document.

From time to time The Open Group may introduce new versions of the Body of Knowledge and Conformance Requirements for a Program. Certified Persons are encouraged to learn about the new version, by means of a conversion course or self-study, and to certify again to the new version.

7. Problem Reporting and Interpretations

7.1 Overview

During the certification process or during the preparation phase, a Candidate may encounter a problem that inhibits or will inhibit their certification submission or evaluation. The Candidate may file a Problem Report via the Certification Authority's website to obtain resolution to the issue. The Certification Authority is the sole interface with the Candidate for problem reporting, though other parties may be involved in determining the resolution.

The types of problems that may be found include:

- Errors or ambiguities in the Conformance Requirements against which certification is based or the underlying standards or other documents referenced by the Conformance Requirements
- Errors in the Certification System itself, specifically related to the registration process, agreements, and completion of Certification Records

The Problem Report is used specifically for the types of errors listed above which are inhibiting the certification effort. For general questions on the certification process, or other problems not covered above, the Certification Authority can provide assistance on obtaining further information.

7.2 Problem Report Resolution

The Specification Authority is responsible for reviewing and providing a resolution to all Problem Reports. The key element of the review process is a deterministic timeline for a formal resolution to the Problem Report.

The Specification Authority will provide a resolution via the Certification Authority to the Candidate within 25 business days of the Problem Report submission.

In most cases, 25 business days is sufficient to provide a final Problem Report resolution. However, in exceptional circumstances, final resolution may take longer. If possible, the Problem Report will be addressed sufficiently within the 25 business days to allow the certification process to proceed pending final resolution. The Certification Authority will notify the Candidate by the 25th day of the delay and any preliminary resolution, if available.

If the Candidate is not satisfied with the final resolution, the Candidate may invoke the appeals process (see Section 8).

The Problem Report resolution process will allow the Candidate to remain anonymous, so pre-certification activity is kept entirely confidential. The anonymous review process requires that requests be filtered automatically prior to distribution to the review group. Filtering will remove the section of the Problem Report intended to identify the Candidate, so these are the only sections that should contain a person's name, company name, or other confidential information. Please note that if Candidate-specific information is included in the sections reserved for the problem or technical descriptions, filtering will not result in an anonymous request.

In order for the Specification Authority to resolve Problem Reports for issues related to the Certification System, the Specification Authority will require an opinion from the Certification Authority. These opinions must be provided within six (6) business days, in order for the Specification Authority to provide its response on time.

The process is outlined in the following diagram.

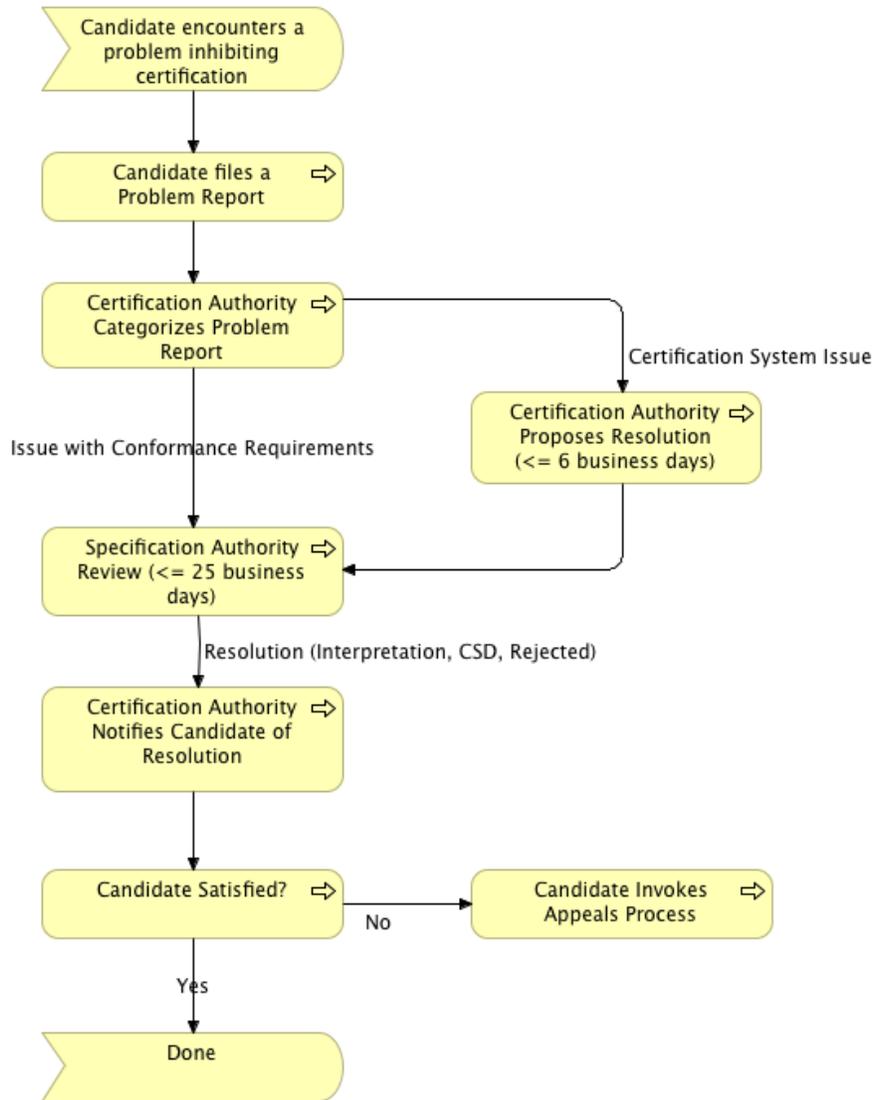


Figure 2: Problem Reporting Process

7.3 Resolution of Problem Reports

The possible outcomes for Problem Report resolution are:

- Accepted as an error or ambiguity in the Conformance Requirements or any of the documents that compose the Program’s Body of Knowledge (an Interpretation)
- Accepted as an error in the Certification System (Certification System Deficiency)
- Rejected

The issuance of Interpretations and Certification System Deficiencies will not cause any Certified Persons to be “un-certified”.

The Problem Reporting and Interpretations process may not be used to dispute the outcome of the certification process. Such issues should instead use the appeals process defined in Section 8.

7.3.1 Interpretations

An Interpretation elaborates or refines the meaning of a set of Conformance Requirements, by clarifying an error or ambiguity in the Conformance Requirements document or a document referenced therein. Interpretations apply to a specific version of a Conformance Requirements document and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until the Conformance Requirements document is updated, at which time the elaboration or refined meaning should be incorporated into the updated version.

The Specification Authority of each Program is responsible for deciding the meaning of conformance to third-party specifications or other documents that are referenced in the Conformance Requirements for their Program(s), as well as to any of the other documents in or referenced from the Body of Knowledge. Problem Reports regarding third-party specifications in the context of each Program will be processed as normal. Problem Reports regarding third-party specifications in any other context will be rejected.

7.3.2 Certification System Deficiency

A Certification System Deficiency is an agreed error in the Certification System. The Certification System includes the workflow and information systems provided to implement the certification process. Certification System Deficiencies apply to the version of the Certification System in which they are found. If the problem is blocking the certification effort, a patch will be made to the Certification System to enable certification to proceed. Otherwise, the problem will be fixed in a future update of the Certification System and the Certification System Deficiency will remain in force until such update.

7.4 Problem Report Repository

The Certification Authority will maintain a web-accessible repository of all submitted Problem Reports. This repository will be publicly accessible. The publicly accessible information will contain the technical details – such as the nature of the problem and its current status of resolution – but will not contain sections reserved for Candidate details, thus maintaining the confidentiality of the Candidate.

A Candidate may cite an Interpretation or Certification System Deficiency to resolve discrepancies in their application for certification, or to support their application for certification in any other way, irrespective of the origin of the Problem Report.

8. Appeals Process

Candidates may appeal decisions made by the Specification Authority or Certification Authority. The occasions that may give rise to an appeal include, but are not limited to:

- The Candidate disagrees with the resolution of a Problem Report.
- The Candidate disagrees with the Certification Authority's grounds for denying the award of certification.

Appeal requests should be made to the Certification Authority.

There are two levels of appeal:

- A Technical Review
- A Board Review

At each level of appeal, the Candidate has the right to representation at the review meeting to make their case, though is not required to do so. The appeals process will be anonymous if the Candidate does not wish to be represented at the review meetings. In such case, the Certification Authority will remove the details of the Candidate from all information provided for the Technical and/or Board Reviews.

A Candidate wishing to dispute a decision may request a Technical Review. Technical Review requires the Specification Authority to consider the matter and produce a response with a recorded vote according to normal voting rules of The Open Group, within 30 calendar days of the request. The Specification Authority may commission reports from independent experts, and may seek input from other committees within The Open Group as it sees fit.

If the Candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the Technical Review, the Candidate may request an appeal to The Open Group Board of Directors within 14 calendar days of being notified in writing by the Certification Authority of the results of the Technical Review. The Open Group Board of Directors may ask for technical reports from the relevant working groups and may also ask for reports from independent experts. The Board Review will be completed within 90 calendar days of the Candidate's written request for a Board Review. The results of a Board Review are final and cannot be further appealed.

9. Confidentiality and Disclosure

9.1 Confidentiality

Prior to the award of certification, all information relating to a Candidate will be held confidential to the Certification Authority, the Examination Provider, and, if applicable, the Accredited Training Course provider. This includes information related to the Certification Record and any Problem Reports.

Candidates' examination results and scores will always be considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed in any publicly available document or to any third party by the Certification Authority, the Examination Provider, or the Accredited Training Course provider.

In addition, the Certification Authority will always hold confidential any and all information it holds regarding unsuccessful applications for certification.

9.2 Disclosure of Information

Any claims of conformance or information related to the certification process may only be made public after the Certification Authority has notified the Candidate in writing that they have successfully completed the certification process and are now a Certified Person.

Certified Persons who claim to be certified must produce their certificates or provide access to their Certification Records to actual and prospective customers at the customer's request.

The Certification Authority will make certification information available as described in Section 3.2 and Section 5.2.