

**The Open Group<sup>®</sup> Professional  
Certification Program**

**Accreditation Requirements**

Version 1.0  
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## **The Open Group<sup>®</sup> Professional Certification Program: Accreditation Requirements**

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# 1. Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

The Open Group Professional Certification Program (the Program) is designed to validate the existence of those qualities and skills in a professional that enable the effective development, implementation, and operation of Business or IT-related specializations. The Program is skills and experience-based and goes beyond validating the mastery of any specific knowledge base.

Currently, the Program covers the following Professions:

- Architect, leading to certification as an Open Certified Architect (Open CA)
- Data Scientist, leading to certification as an Open Certified Data Scientist (Open CDS)
- Technical Specialist, leading to certification as an Open Certified Technical Specialist (Open CTS)
- Trusted Technology Practitioner, leading to certification as an Open Certified Trusted Technology Practitioner (Open CTTP)

Other related Professions may be introduced under this policy in future, without change to this document.

The Program includes a framework for the accreditation of third parties to establish and operate professional certification programs affiliated to The Open Group. The framework of accreditation and certification is specifically intended to standardize the process and criteria for The Open Group Professional Certification and to establish a foundation for the required skills and experience necessary to achieve such a distinction. The Program has been designed to be flexible and extensible so that the framework may be adopted by any industry, country, or organization.

The Program therefore supports two different routes to certification:

- The first route is Direct Certification by The Open Group
- The second route is Indirect Certification through third-party programs accredited by The Open Group

The Conformance Requirements for each of the Professions in the Program apply equally to Direct and Indirect Certification.

Beyond the Conformance Requirements for a Certified Professional, third parties operating Accredited Certification Programs may levy additional requirements on their Candidates in order to satisfy their internal skills requirements. Such additional requirements are called *extended certification requirements* or simply *extended requirements*. For example, extended certification requirements might include experience with proprietary corporate tools or architecture methods, or appropriate industry or cultural requirements.

The Program requires Accredited Certification Programs' extended certification requirements to be effectively documented and communicated within the accredited program. In addition, extended certification requirements must not relax the skills, experience, or process requirements set forth by the framework established herein.

## 1.2 Key Documents

The Program is based upon key documents:

- The Open Group Professional Certification Program Certification Policy, which sets out the policies and processes by which a professional may achieve certification
- The Open Group Professional Certification Program Conformance Requirements, in which are documented the skills and experience that a professional must possess to achieve certification – each Profession will have its own document
- The Open Group Professional Certification Program Configuration Document, which outlines the specific certification policies and processes for a Profession – each Profession will have its own document
- The Accreditation Policy, which sets out the policies and processes by which an Organization may achieve accreditation
- The Accreditation Requirements (this document), in which the criteria that must be met by an Accredited Certification Program are documented

## 1.3 Levels of Certification

The Program recognizes three levels of certification:

- Level 1: A professional who is able to perform with assistance/supervision with a wide range of appropriate skills as a contributing professional.
- Level 2: A professional who is able to perform independently and take responsibility for delivery of solutions as lead professional.
- Level 3: A professional who has achieved significant breadth and depth of impact on the business through the application of their profession.

## 1.4 Migration and Change History

This Version 1.0 of The Open Group Professional Certification Program Accreditation Requirements replaces and supersedes the Accreditation Requirements documents that were included in the Open CA and Open CTS programs.

This document applies to new applications for accreditation for the Open CA and Open CTS Professions from the date(s) published on The Open Group website.

Organizations whose certification programs were accredited prior to the publication of this document are not required to make any changes to their programs because of publication of this document. However, they may do so at their discretion. Any such changes will be reviewed when re-accreditation becomes due.

## 1.5 Fees

The Certification Authority charges fees for the accreditation of professional programs. These fees are published on the Certification Authority's website.

## 1.6 Terminology and Definitions

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

Accreditation Agreement	The agreement between the Organization and the Certification Authority that defines the accreditation service to be provided and contains the legal commitment by the Organization to the conditions of the accreditation program.
Accreditation Application Form	Identifies contacts and provides key information needed to guide the assessment for accreditation; for example, which levels of certification are supported.
Accreditation Logo	The trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use in association with Accredited Certification Programs.
Accreditation Policy	The policies and processes by which an Organization may become accredited.
Accreditation Register	The official list of all Accredited Certification Programs, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made available via the Internet.
Accreditation Requirements	The criteria that a certification program and Organization operating the certification program must meet in order for that certification program to be considered conformant.
Accreditation Trademark License Agreement (Accreditation TMLA)	The agreement between the Organization and The Open Group that contains the legal commitment by the organization to the terms and conditions for use of the Accreditation Logo.
Accredited Certification Program (ACP)	A certification program, operated by a group of people under the leadership of a Certification Program Manager, that has successfully completed the accreditation process and for which the organization has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that accreditation has been achieved.  Depending on context, the term is also used to mean the company or organizational unit that operates an Accredited Certification Program.
Applicant	The organization applying for accreditation.
Assessment	An inspection of an Organization's processes, procedures, and staff to determine the degree to which the Organization's Candidate Certification Program is operating in accordance with the Accreditation Requirements.
Assessor	An individual who has been qualified by the Certification Authority as competent to perform Assessments.
Board Member	A Certified Professional who agrees to participate in Peer Review Boards at the request of the Certification Authority.  Board Members must have been certified unanimously by their Peer Review Boards, and their Peer Review Boards must have unanimously recommended that they be invited to become Board Members.
Candidate	A person seeking certification in the Program.
Candidate Certification Program (CCP)	An Organization's internal certification program that has not yet been accredited.

Certificate	The credential made available to Candidates who have successfully completed the certification process and whose details have been entered into the Register of Certified Professionals.
Certificate of Accreditation	A document issued to Organizations certifying that a Candidate Certification Program has successfully met the requirements for accreditation and thus is considered an Accredited Certification Program.
Certification Agreement	The agreement between the Candidate and the Certification Authority that defines the certification service to be provided and contains the legal commitment by the Candidate to the conditions of the Program.
Certification Authority (CA)	The organization that manages the day-to-day operations of the Program in accordance with the policies defined in the Accreditation Policy. The Open Group is the Certification Authority for the Program.
Certification Badge	The digital credential issued to a Candidate that demonstrates successful achievement of certification within a Profession.
Certification Logo	The logo or other trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use by Certified Professionals in accordance with the terms of the Trademark License Agreement.
Certification Package	<p>The detailed description of the evidence for the skill levels and experience attained that provides the Certification Authority or Accredited Certification Program with sufficient information to determine whether the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements. The Certification Package is never made public.</p> <p>The Certification Package is assembled by the Certification Authority or the Accredited Certification Program after all Milestone Application Forms and the Experience Application Form have been approved and is then submitted to a Peer Review Board for review.</p>
Certification Program Manager (CPM)	The specific individual(s) identified within an Organization as having the overall responsibility for managing the Accredited Certification Program on a day-to-day basis and ensuring that it is carried out in accordance with its documented processes and procedures.
Certification Record	<p>The information identifying the Candidate, including contact details, and identifying the Profession 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, and their Discipline/Stream/Specialization(s).</p> <p>The Certification Record of a Certified Professional is made available by the Certification Authority at the discretion of the Certified Professional.</p>
Certification System Deficiency (CSD)	An agreed error in the certification or accreditation system which is inhibiting the certification or accreditation process. A Certification System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Certified Professional	A person who has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that they have successfully completed the process to achieve certification in the Program and such certification has not lapsed or been revoked.

Configuration Document	<p>For each Profession, a Configuration Document defines Profession-specific details including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Conformance Requirements document(s) that apply to the Profession</li> <li>• The Discipline/Stream/Specialization(s) included in the Profession</li> <li>• The Milestone Badges and their related Conformance Requirements</li> <li>• The levels of certification and their corresponding Peer Review Board parameters</li> <li>• The Specification Authority for the Profession and Program</li> <li>• Logos and labels for use by Certified Professionals</li> <li>• The policy for transition from the previous “monolithic” process to the Milestone approach defined in this document</li> </ul>
Conformance Requirements	<p>For each Profession in the Program, a Configuration Document defines the Profession’s set of Conformance Requirements by reference to one or more documents published by The Open Group. A Profession’s Configuration Document may also include Conformance Requirements by reference to documents published by third parties.</p> <p>Conformance Requirements are typically divided up into core basic skills, Discipline/Stream/Specialization-specific skills, and Experience Requirements.</p>
Direct Certification	<p>Direct Certification is achieved by applying directly to The Open Group, or to a third party operating the Program on behalf of The Open Group, and successfully completing the certification process.</p> <p>Direct Certification is open to any Candidate, regardless of who they work for, or where in the world they live and work.</p>
Discipline/Stream/Specialization	<p>A branch or area of specialization within a Profession; e.g., Business Architecture, Application Developer.</p>
Evaluation Process	<p>The documented process by which the Certification Authority and Peer Review Board together determine whether a Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements.</p>
Evaluation Process Deficiency (EPD)	<p>An agreed error in the Evaluation Process that is inhibiting the certification process. An Evaluation Process Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.</p>
Experience Application Form	<p>A template document provided by the Certification Authority to allow Candidates to describe how their experience meets the Profession’s Experience Requirements.</p>
Experience Requirements	<p>The Experience Requirements for each Profession define the amount of experience a Candidate must have as a practitioner in their chosen Discipline/Stream/Specialization to achieve certification.</p>
Indirect Certification	<p>Indirect Certification is achieved by applying to an Accredited Certification Program and successfully completing the certification process.</p> <p>Ordinarily, in order to be eligible for certification by a particular Accredited Certification Program, Candidates must work for the organization running the Accredited Certification Program.</p>



Interpretation (INT)	A decision made by the Specification Authority that elaborates or refines the meaning of the Conformance Requirements, Certification Policy, Accreditation Policy, Accreditation Requirements, or a standard or best practice referenced therein. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Milestone	A predefined subset of the Conformance Requirements, which can be evaluated as a group. Milestones are documented in each Profession's Configuration Document.
Milestone Application Form	A template document provided by the Certification Authority to allow Candidates to describe how their experience meets the Profession's Conformance Requirements required for a Milestone, as defined in the Profession's Configuration Document. For each Profession, there are different Milestone Application Forms for each different type of Milestone.
Milestone Badge	The digital credential issued to a Candidate who has reached a Milestone.
Organization	An organization that operates a certification program for professionals, and which is interested in applying for accreditation of their program within the Program. During the period in which an Organization is going through the accreditation process to get their program accredited, the Organization may be referred to as an Applicant.
Peer Review Board	The group of Board Members appointed by the Certification Authority or by an Accredited Certification Program to evaluate applications for certification or for Milestone Badges.
Problem Report	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of an accreditation or certification document, or the web-based certification or accreditation systems, which, if accepted by the Certification Authority, will be resolved into an Interpretation, an Evaluation Process Deficiency, or a Certification System Deficiency.
Profession	A Profession is defined by a set of Conformance Requirements and the related Configuration Document – a group of related professional disciplines described in the Conformance Requirements and related Configuration Document.
Register of Certified Professionals	The official list of all Certified Professionals, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made publicly available on the Certification Authority's website.
Specification Authority (SA)	The Open Group working group(s) responsible for developing, maintaining, and interpreting the Certification Policy, Conformance Requirements, Configuration Documents, Accreditation Policy, and Accreditation Requirements of the Program and each of the Professions within it.
Trademark License Agreement (TMLA)	The agreement between the Certified Professional and The Open Group that contains the legal commitment to the conditions for use of the Certification Logo.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

This document defines the requirements that must be met by an Organization to be accredited to operate the Program.

Although the applying Organization (Applicant) does not have to demonstrate conformity to each and every one of the requirements in this document to gain accreditation, any non-conformance must be identified and justified by the Applicant based upon adherence to the principles embodied in this document. All such justifications must be reviewed and accepted by the Certification Authority.

Requirements that are stated as applying to Accredited Certification Programs apply equally to Applicants for accreditation and *vice versa*.

Accredited Certification Programs may certify only their own employees and contract staff that have been employed by or contracted to the Accredited Certification Program's parent organization or affiliate for a continuous period of 12 months or more.

Accredited Certification Programs develop and maintain their own evaluation procedures.

It is recognized that an Accredited Certification Program, by virtue of being the organization that employs the Candidate, has knowledge of the Candidate that would not be available to the Certification Authority or a Direct Certification Peer Review Board. The availability of such knowledge is considered when the Certification Authority assesses an Accredited Certification Program for the functional equivalence of their evaluation procedures.

The Evaluation Process used in Indirect Certification delegates most of the activity of the Certification Authority and the Peer Review Board to an Accredited Certification Program.

An Accredited Certification Program may use either a monolithic approach to certification or a step-by-step approach. A monolithic approach requires the certification Candidate to complete a single Certification Package with evidence that meets the entire set of Conformance Requirements. This package is then submitted to a Peer Review Board for review.

In the step-by-step approach, Candidates may demonstrate conformance with a number of defined subsets of the Conformance Requirements in succession.

Accredited Certification Programs are allowed to impose extended certification requirements.

To achieve certification, a complete Certification Package is assembled and sent to a Peer Review Board for review.

In either approach to certification, the Accredited Certification Program must ensure that:

- All their Candidates meet the Conformance Requirements as defined by The Open Group certification program for a given Profession, level, and Discipline/Stream/Specialization
- The Certification Policy states that the evaluation methods and procedures must be functionally equivalent to those defined in the Certification Policy and the Profession's Configuration Document

This means that the evaluation methods and procedures must deliver the same outcomes as those defined in the Certification Policy and the Profession's Configuration Document and must demonstrate an equivalent degree of certainty and integrity. The Certification Authority has to be confident that an individual going through this process would achieve the same results whether going through the Accredited Certification Program or the Direct Certification process.

In the step-by-step approach, an Accredited Certification Program may either define its own Milestones or may choose Milestones defined by the Certification Authority:

- Accredited Certification Program defines its own steps

In this approach, the Accredited Certification Program only assures that Candidates who have achieved certification have met the Conformance Requirements that apply to the Candidate's chosen Profession, level, and Discipline/Stream/Specialization.

- Accredited Certification Program adopts the steps defined by The Open Group

In this approach, the Accredited Certification Program fully adopts the Milestones defined in the Configuration Document for that Profession. The Accredited Certification Program may choose to use the Certification Authority to issue Milestone Badges.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

The following parties are involved:

- The Certification Authority
- The Certification Authority's appointed Assessor
- The Applicant, and in particular the person responsible for the operation, quality, and integrity of the Accredited Certification Program termed in this document the Certification Program Manager

If an Accredited Certification Program's Certification Program Manager is a role that is distributed among several people, one person will be nominated as Certification Program Manager for the purposes of accreditation.

## **4. Technical Requirements**

This section will define the requirements that the Applicant must meet to be eligible for accreditation.

Accredited Certification Programs must adhere to the Certification Policy and Accreditation Policy at all times.

### **4.1 Professional Assessment Criteria**

The Program Assessment criteria (Conformance Requirements, Configuration Document, Certification Policy and optionally Milestone definitions) must be instantiated within the Accredited Certification Program's own Assessment criteria and there must be a clear delineation between base and extended certification requirements. This is required to clarify how the baseline requirements are met.

The Assessment process used by the Accredited Certification Program must be designed to evaluate fairly and objectively whether the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements.

Accredited Certification Programs may employ evaluation procedures and criteria that are more stringent or wider in scope than those used by the Certification Authority.

There must be an explicit and complete mapping between the Accredited Certification Program's documentation and the Program Assessment criteria.

Accredited Certification Programs are required to update their evaluation procedures and criteria whenever the Certification Policy is updated in a way that materially affects the Accredited Certification Program's evaluation procedures.

For major changes in the Program Assessment criteria, Accredited Certification Programs must use the updated criteria no later than six (6) months after publication of the new version by the Certification Authority. For bug-fixes and minor changes, Accredited Certification Programs must use the updated versions no later than three (3) months after publication of the new version by the Certification Authority. Categorization of changes into major, minor, or bug-fix is done by the Specification Authority.

### **4.2 Assessment Methods and Procedures**

The Accredited Certification Program Organization must demonstrate how continuity, repeatability, reproducibility, and objectivity of the Program are ensured. The means by which this is achieved should be presented as evidence.

The purpose of the Assessment for accreditation is to determine whether the evaluation methods and procedures deliver the same outcomes to those defined in the Certification Policy and the Profession's Configuration Document and must demonstrate an equivalent degree of certainty and integrity. The Certification Authority has to be confident that an individual going through this process would achieve the same results whether going through the Accredited Certification Program or the Direct Certification process.

#### **4.2.1 Roles, Duties, and Experience of the Applicant's Accredited Certification Program Staff**

The Organization must define the roles of the staff involved in the certification process and their responsibilities.

The Certification Program Manager may serve on Peer Review Boards but must do so without conflict of interest, particularly in the context of any subsequent appeals.

Conflicts of interest must be avoided in all aspects of the certification process.

### **4.3 Procedures to Evaluate Applications**

The evaluation consists of an initial documentation audit followed by the review process as defined in the Certification Policy for those that pass the initial review.

The evaluation procedures must be defined and documented sufficiently to ensure the repeatability, reproducibility, and fairness of evaluation of Candidate Professionals within the Accredited Certification Program and to enable the Certification Authority to ensure repeatability, reproducibility, and fairness of evaluations between the Accredited Certification Program and other Accredited Certification Programs.

An Accredited Certification Program may either define their own Indirect Certification process or may choose to implement the Direct Certification process defined by the Certification Authority.

#### **4.3.1 Process Management**

The means facilitating the certification process must include:

- Timely processing
- Communication with and between the parties involved
- Overall monitoring
- Record keeping

#### **4.3.2 Documentation Application**

The Candidate must be given the opportunity to correct errors or inconsistencies before his/her application is formalized.

The documentation audit must be fair, consistent, and repeatable.

Consistency in decision-making must be ensured.

#### **4.3.3 Evaluation Procedures**

The Board Members must be given clear instructions on how to assess Candidates consistently for their compliance with the Conformance Requirements.

The Accredited Certification Program Organization operating the certification program may choose to use The Open Group Board Member Handbook.

If the Organization operating the certification program chooses to use the Board Member Handbook, it must ensure that the valid version is used at all times.

The Board Member Handbook or other instructions must be accessible to all Board Members.

Objectivity of the Board Members must be monitored. Any inappropriate subjectivity or prejudice must be drawn to their attention.

#### **4.3.4 Outcome and Notification**

There must be a mechanism in place to determine the overall outcome of the evaluation and how the Candidate is informed of that outcome.

#### **4.3.5 Re-Certification**

There must be a mechanism in place to ensure that the Certified Professionals will renew their certification every three (3) years.

#### **4.3.6 Revocation**

The Applicant must document the procedures and processes it uses to ensure that Certified Professionals remain in conformity with the Conformance Requirements and the consequences of a Certified Professional failing to do so.

#### **4.3.7 Interface with the Certification Authority**

The interface with the Certification Authority must be documented and must meet the requirements set out in the Certification Policy and the Accreditation Policy.

The Accredited Certification Program shall in a timely manner inform the Certification Authority when:

- A professional achieves a Milestone (if the Accredited Certification Program accreditation includes the Milestones)
- A Professional is initially certified
- A Professional is re-certified
- A Professional's certification is revoked
- A Professional's Certification Record needs to change (for example, the individual ceases employment with the Accredited Certification Program's Organization)

The Accredited Certification Program must provide supporting documentation of these processes on request.

### **4.4 Appeals**

The Accredited Certification Program must operate a documented appeals process that meets the requirements of the Certification Policy.

#### **4.5 Problem Reporting**

The Accredited Certification Program must operate a documented Interpretation process to deal with perceived errors in its Program documentation or the certification process itself.

The Accredited Certification Program must document how it reports problems encountered with the Certification Authority's documentation into the Certification Authority's problem reporting process.

#### **4.6 Support to Candidates**

Accredited Certification Programs are required to provide a mechanism for their Candidates to request support and clarification of certification requirements, policies, and procedures.

#### **4.7 Extended Requirements**

Accredited Certification Programs' extended certification requirements must be effectively documented and communicated to the participants of the Accredited Certification Program. In addition, extended certification requirements may not relax the skills, experience, or process requirements of the Program.