

Australian Standard™

**Conformity assessment—Vocabulary
and general principles**

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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Australian members of the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR-010, Conformity Assessment. After consultation with stakeholders in both countries, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand decided to develop this Standard as an Australian Standard rather than an Australian/New Zealand Standard. It supersedes HB 18.2:2003.

This Standard is identical with, and has been reproduced from the English language part of ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment—Vocabulary and general principles*.

The objective of this Standard is to specify general terms and definitions relating to conformity assessment, including the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, and to the use of conformity assessment to facilitate trade.

As this Standard is reproduced from an international standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number appears on the cover and title page while the international standard number appears only on the cover
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The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the annex to which it applies. An 'informative' annex is only for information and guidance.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Terms and definitions applicable to conformity assessment

ISO and ISO/IEC Guides and, more recently, International Standards relating generically to conformity assessment activities such as testing, inspection and various forms of certification are prepared by working groups of the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO). For many years, ISO/IEC Guide 2, last revised in 1996, has included a core vocabulary for conformity assessment, built up from a small number of terms and definitions first compiled to facilitate communication and understanding about product certification based on standards for traditional manufactured goods.

In 2000, CASCO decided to take conformity assessment terminology (Clauses 12 to 17) out of ISO/IEC Guide 2 and provide instead a self-contained vocabulary more readily applicable within the planned ISO/IEC 17000 series of standards and in the drafting or revision of related guides. CASCO Working Group 1, *Definitions*, has accordingly prepared this International Standard in consultation with other active CASCO working groups, as a consistent framework within which more specific concepts may be defined appropriately and denoted by the most appropriate terms. Extra terms for concepts unique to particular activities within conformity assessment, such as accreditation, certification of persons and marks of conformity, are found in the International Standard or Guide related to that activity. Such concepts are not included in this International Standard.

Until pre-existing CASCO publications are revised, the terminology used in those documents remains valid in its context; this International Standard is not intended to be applied retrospectively.

Conformity assessment interacts with other fields such as management systems, metrology, standardization and statistics. This International Standard does not define the boundaries of conformity assessment. These remain elastic.

0.2 Terms and definitions applicable to trade policy

Clause 7 includes some terms and definitions, drawn mainly from the superseded clauses of ISO/IEC Guide 2, for several broader concepts. These are intended not only to standardize usage within the conformity assessment community, but also to help policy makers concerned with the facilitation of trade within regulatory and international treaty frameworks.

0.3 A functional approach to conformity assessment

The terms and definitions specified in this International Standard, particularly under Clauses 4 and 5, reflect the adoption by CASCO in November 2001 of the functional approach recommended earlier that year in the final report of a CASCO – CEN/CENELEC TC 1 joint working group.

To provide a better understanding of the defined concepts, their grouping and their relationships, a description of the functional approach is included in Annex A for information.

0.4 Selection of terms and definitions

Some of the terms included in this International Standard relate to concepts it was considered essential to define. Others it was thought helpful to explain. Many of the general terms used to distinguish conformity assessment concepts are used in common language in a broader sense or with a wider range of meanings. Some also appear in other standard vocabularies with definitions specific to the relevant field of application.

An alphabetical index lists the terms defined in this International Standard. Standards defining other relevant terms are given in Annex B with separate alphabetical lists. First are terms applicable to specific aspects of conformity assessment, as defined in other standards in the ISO/IEC 17000 series. Second are terms for which the definitions given in either the *International vocabulary of basic and general terms in metrology* (VIM) or ISO 9000 are generally applicable in conformity assessment contexts. For the terms “procedure” and “product”, both used extensively in other definitions, the ISO 9000:2000 definitions are reproduced in 3.2 and 3.3.

0.5 Changes in terminology

Attention is drawn to significant changes in the terms or their definitions from the superseded clauses of ISO/IEC Guide 2.

This International Standard does not include a definition of “conformity” on the grounds that it is not necessary to do so. “Conformity” does not feature in the definition of “conformity assessment”. The concept of “conformity assessment” is concerned with “fulfilment of specified requirements”, not with the wider concept of “conformity”. A definition of the term “specified requirement” (3.1) is included. In English, the term “compliance” is used to distinguish the action of doing what is required (e.g. an organization “complies” by making something conform or by fulfilling a regulatory requirement).

The ISO 9000 definition of “product” (3.3) includes services as a product category, so that it is no longer correct to refer to “products and services”.

Instead of “product, process or service”, the generic expression used in ISO/IEC Guide 2 for the “subject of standardization”, Note 2 to 2.1 introduces the expression “object of conformity assessment” as a means of referring to the product, process, system, person or body to which conformity assessment is applied. (The “subject” would more logically be the body doing the assessment.)

Instead of “assurance of conformity”, the term “attestation” (5.2) is used for the activity of conveying assurance through the issue of a “statement of conformity”.

The term “accreditation” is now applicable only to attestation regarding a conformity assessment body. The definition in ISO/IEC Guide 2, by contrast, would have been equally applicable to the certification of persons, as specified in ISO/IEC 17024. Following this change, the terms “conformity assessment body” (2.5) and “accreditation body” (2.6) are defined separately. More specific terms relating to accreditation are defined in ISO/IEC 17011.

To avoid ambiguity, the term “body” is used in this International Standard only when referring to conformity assessment bodies or accreditation bodies. Otherwise the term “organization” is used in its general meaning, as in the ISO 9000 definition. The more specific ISO/IEC Guide 2 definition of an organization as a body based on membership is not applicable to the field of conformity assessment.