HKCAS 003: 2015

Abridged Version
(Requirements and notes of ISO/IEC 17021-1 are not included in this document.   This document should be read in conjunction with ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Technical Criteria for Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies

(ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements, MOD)

Hong Kong Accreditation Service
July 2015
(Incorporating Amendment No. 2 : January 2022)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HKAS Introduction

The Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS) was set up in 1998 by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to provide accreditation service to the public. It was formed through the expansion of the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS). HKAS now offers accreditation for laboratories, proficiency testing providers, reference material producers, certification bodies, validation or verification bodies and inspection bodies. It may offer other accreditation services in the future when the need arises.

The principal aims and objectives of HKAS are:

- to upgrade the standard of operation of conformity assessment bodies;
- to offer official recognition to competent conformity assessment bodies which meet international standards;
- to promote the acceptance of endorsed reports and certificates* issued by accredited conformity assessment bodies;
- to conclude mutual recognition arrangements with other accreditation bodies; and
- to eliminate the need for repetition of conformity assessment in the importing economies and thereby reducing costs and facilitating free trade across borders.

  * *An endorsed report or certificate means a report or certificate on which the accreditation status of HKAS or its mutual recognition arrangement partners has been claimed (e.g. by bearing the accreditation symbol or a statement on the accreditation status of the accredited conformity assessment body).*

The operating cost of HKAS is funded by the Government and is partly recovered by charging fees for services provided by HKAS.

HKAS Executive is responsible for administering HKAS and its accreditation schemes. At present, there are three schemes: the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS) for laboratories, proficiency testing providers and reference material producers, the Hong Kong Certification Body Accreditation Scheme (HKCAS) for certification bodies, validation and verification bodies, and the Hong Kong Inspection Body Accreditation Scheme (HKIAS) for inspection bodies. All accreditation schemes of HKAS are operated in accordance with the requirements of an international standard, i.e. ISO/IEC 17011, and the criteria established by relevant international and regional cooperations of accreditation bodies. Participation in the three schemes is voluntary.

Organisations applying for accreditation or those have been accredited under any of the three schemes are required to demonstrate that:

- they are competent to perform the specific activities for which they are applying for accreditation or have been accredited;

- they have implemented an effective management system which complies with the accreditation criteria of the relevant scheme; and

- they comply with all the regulations in HKAS 002 - Regulations for HKAS Accreditation. These regulations are the governing rules for the administration of the three schemes and contain the obligations of any organization which has applied for HKAS accreditation or has been accredited by HKAS.

HKAS will grant accreditation for an activity to an organisation only when it meets the conditions given in clause 4.15 of HKAS 002.

i **Basis of HKCAS 003 Technical Criteria for Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies - ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015**

This booklet serves as a domestic publication which is applicable to all management system certification bodies accredited by HKAS or seeking HKAS accreditation.

This booklet is the modified adoption of International Standard ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 'Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification management systems – Part 1: Requirements'. The ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 which was jointly published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of bodies providing audit and certification of all types of management systems.

The title of this booklet varies from the ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and is entitled as 'Technical Criteria for Accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies'. HKAS is responsible for publishing this booklet. In Sections 1 to 10 of this booklet, the requirements and notes of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 are reproduced verbatim as the main text and relevant HKCAS policies are given in shaded boxes following the main text. Annexes A to E are also added following the original text of the ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. The notes provide clarification of the requirements, examples and guidance. HKAS will consider that a management system certification body has met the requirements if it follows the notes. The HKCAS policies serve as additional explanation of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and shall be regarded as mandatory. The reference documents, if any, referred to in the HKCAS policies are given for information only. They are not part of the requirements unless explicitly stated as such. A complete list of modifications, together with their explanations, is given in Annex AA.

The term 'shall' is used throughout this booklet to indicate those provisions which are mandatory. The term 'should' is used to indicate guidance which, although not mandatory, is provided by HKAS as a recognised means of meeting the requirements.

This booklet sets out the accreditation requirements that an accredited management system certification body shall meet. It is the responsibility of the certification body's management to determine the best method to meet such requirements, the relative significance of individual activities to the overall quality of the certification body and the emphasis and resource that should be allocated to each of them. The certification body's management may be required to demonstrate to the assessment team that the method it has selected is adequate in meeting the accreditation requirements.

A list of HKAS and HKCAS Supplementary Criteria is available from HKAS Executive and the HKAS website. Such website also provides links to other websites which contain useful information on accreditation and certification body operation.

ii   **Scope of Accreditation**

Specific management system certification for which a management system certification body is accredited under HKCAS is clearly given in the 'scope of accreditation' of the accredited certification body.

HKAS Executive will define from time to time the specific certification activities which are available for accreditation under HKCAS. The scope of accreditation of an accredited management system certification body may include:

- Energy Management System Certification

- Environmental Management System Certification

- Food Safety Management System Certification

- Information Security Management System Certification

- Occupational Health and Safety Management System Certification

- Quality Management System Certification

- Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Service Providers' Management System Certification

Other management system certification may be added when significant needs are identified.

iii   **Accreditation Criteria**

An applicant certification body shall demonstrate its conformity with the criteria in Sections 5 to 10 of this booklet, Annex A and relevant HKAS/HKCAS Supplementary Criteria as well as the regulations listed in HKAS 002, relevant requirements as specified in IAF Mandatory Documents or IAF GA Resolutions before accreditation can be granted. To maintain HKAS accreditation, the accredited certification body shall comply with the same criteria at all times. An applicant or accredited certification body may also be required to demonstrate to HKAS Executive that it can competently perform all the activities proposed for accreditation or accredited activities.   In addition, the applicant or accredited certification body shall maintain its integrity and impartiality under all circumstances.

Introduction

(The main text of introduction is the text of the same introduction of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

1   Scope

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

2   Normative references

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

3   Terms and definitions

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

4   Principles

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

5   General requirements

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

**5.1.C   HKCAS Policy on
Legal and contractual matters**

It is the responsibility of the certification body to carry out certification activities in accordance with the applicable Laws and Regulations of Hong Kong and the country/economy where its certification activities are carried out.   It should be emphasized that assessment of the certification body's compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements is outside the scope of HKAS accreditation.

An accredited certification body shall have an enforceable arrangement with each organization holding a HKCAS accredited certificate which commit the organization to allow, on request, HKAS assessment teams to witness the certification body's audit teams performing audits, including access to the organization's premises for doing so.

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6   Structural requirements

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

7   Resource requirements

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

7.5.C   HKCAS Policy on Outsourcing

If an accredited certification body intends to subcontract any part of its activities for which it is accredited, the certification body shall ensure that the subcontracted certification body is competent to perform the activities. A certification body accredited for performing the activities by HKAS or an accreditation body which has concluded a multilateral recognition arrangement with HKAS is one of the means to demonstrate its competence.   A list of such accreditation bodies is obtainable from HKAS Executive.   The certification body shall notify the client in writing of its intention to subcontract the activities, the extent of such subcontract and the name of the subcontractor.   The certification body shall further ensure that its client agrees to such arrangement and shall keep all records of such subcontracted activities.

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8   Information requirements

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

9   Process requirements

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

**9.9.C   HKCAS Policy on
Records of applicants and clients**

An applicant or accredited certification body shall keep all certification records and certification documents for at least 3 years after the expiry of the certificate of conformity or termination/withdrawal of certification, or for the minimum period defined by the regulatory authority.

An accredited certification body shall keep an up-to-date list of countries/economies in which the certification body has issued certificates under HKAS accreditation. The list shall be provided to HKAS Executive.

Where records are stored, retrieved, transmitted or processed electronically, an applicant or accredited certification body shall establish and implement procedures to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the records.

When an accredited certification body performs activities having significantly impact on audit and certification results in its branch offices, relevant certification records shall be available at such branch offices within a reasonable time of making the request for such records.

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10   Management system requirements for certification bodies

(The main text of this clause is the text of the same clause of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

10.2.4.C HKCAS Policy on Control of records

The minimum period for retention of records (except the records of applicants and clients as specified in Clause 9.9 of ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015) set by the HKAS Executive is four years unless a longer period is specified by regulatory authorities, in relevant HKAS or HKCAS Supplementary Criteria, or in other requirements such as the customer's instructions.   For personnel records, the retention period of at least four years shall be counted from the date of departure of the staff member concerned

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Annex A
(normative)

Required knowledge and skills

(The main text of this annex is the text of the same annex of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Annex B
(informative)

Possible evaluation methods

(The main text of this annex is the text of the same annex of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Annex C
(informative)
Example of a process flow for determining and maintaining competence

(The main text of this annex is the text of the same annex of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Annex D
(informative)

Desired personal behaviour

**(The main text of this annex is the text of the same annex of
ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)**

Annex E
(informative)

Audit and certification process

(The main text of this annex is the text of the same annex of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Bibliography

(The references listed under this section are the same as those listed in ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.)

Confidentiality

HKAS Executive will keep confidential all information provided by an organisation in relation to preliminary enquiries or to an application for accreditation and all information obtained in connection with an assessment of an organisation, such that only personnel who require the information for the assessment will have access to such information. Such personnel will include HKAS Executive and staff, assessors involved in the assessment and members of AAB (except where a conflict of interest arises). Without written consent of the organisation, HKAS Executive will not disclose confidential information of an applicant or accredited organisation outside HKAS Executive except as allowed in HKAS 002 Regulations for HKAS Accreditation. However, an organisation shall note that it may be necessary to pass the HKAS's files, including any information in relation to it to persons responsible for evaluating the performance of HKAS under a mutual recognition arrangement/agreement which HKAS has concluded or intended to conclude with other accreditation bodies. HKAS will notify those persons the confidential nature of the information. Where the law requires any information to be disclosed to a third party, HKAS will, where possible and permitted by the law, inform the organisation concerned. Furthermore, HKAS will comply with the provisions under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) and the rules under the Code on Access to Information of the Government.

Annex AA
(informative)
Variations to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 for HKCAS 003:2015

This Annex lists out all variations of this booklet to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 as followings:

Clause	Modifications
Foreword	Replaced by 'HKAS Introduction' and i, ii and iii under 'HKAS Introduction'
5 General requirements	Add 5.1.C 'HKCAS Policy on Legal Contract Matters'
7 Resource requirements	Add 7.5.C 'HKCAS Policy on Outsourcing'
9 Process requirements	Add 9.9.C 'HKCAS Policy on Records of applicants and clients'
--	Add Annex AA 'Variations to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 for HKCAS 003:2015'

Explanation:

- HKCAS policies added serve as additional explanation of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 and shall be regarded as mandatory under the Hong Kong Certification Body Accreditation Scheme (HKCAS).

- Annex AA is an informative annex listing out all variations of this booklet to ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015.