



PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION - TRANSITION UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2005

Accredited Personnel Certification - Transition Information

RABQSA International's mission is to improve the performance of organizations by providing recognition to individuals who, having demonstrated competence to RABQSA's approved certification schemes, can offer a positive contribution to the improvement of an organization's business outcomes.

The underlying objective of the recently introduced ISO/IEC 17024:2003 accredited personnel certification schemes is to satisfy industry's requirements in terms of the performance and competence of personnel – this will have a significant and positive impact on business performance.

The Transition

The formation of RABQSA International on January 1, 2005 and the release of the International Standard ISO/IEC 17024:2003 for bodies operating personnel certification schemes, has initiated positive and dynamic changes in the certification of management system auditors in the United States and the Asia Pacific Region.

The change involves the transition from prescriptive, qualification-based to competency-based certification criteria. The transition plan is outlined in RABQSA News Release #4 and is listed on the RABQSA web site www.rabqsa.com

With the first large-scale implementation of competency-based certification criteria, where industry in cooperation with RABQSA has defined the auditor's competency profile, there were bound to be challenges. The immediate challenge for RABQSA is to ensure that our certified auditors remain informed.

Auditors have contacted RABQSA requesting additional information on the procedure required to transition to the new certification schemes.

Requirements for Transition to an Accredited Certification Scheme

Currently RABQSA has established four accredited certification schemes; QMS, EMS, OH&S and Food Safety.

For auditors currently certified by RABQSA the requirements for transition to one or more of the above schemes are listed below:

- *Knowledge:*

A *Certificate of Attainment* from an RABQSA Certified Training Provider certified to the RABQSA Training Provider and Examiner Certification Scheme (TPECS) for the appropriate competency units. In most cases, these are RABQSA-AU (Auditing), RABQSA-TL (Leading Audit Teams) and a Scheme Specific unit, such as RABQSA-QM (Quality Management Systems),

or;

A *Certificate of Successful Completion* issued by a RABQSA, or IATCA certified Training Provider, plus successful completion of the relevant RABQSA 'Gap' examination due for release early June on the RABQSA web site.

Consult your Training Provider.

- ***Skill***

Successful completion of the RABQSA Management System Auditor Skill Examination. RABQSA will provide Skill Examiner options to reduce the risk of providing you with an Examiner who has a conflict of interest in conducting your examination. The Skill Examiner will examine the demonstration of your skill competency during an audit on site.

- ***Personal Attributes***

Successful completion of the RABQSA Personal Attribute Assessment System (PAAS Master®). PAAS Master® is an online examination tool, based on the assessment of personal attributes, as defined by Industry and RABQSA for the scheme and scope of certification. On application you will receive a password and login information, and will access the examination via the RABQSA web site.

Why Transition?

The Accredited Personnel Certification Schemes have been accredited to ISO/IEC 17024:2003 by the Accreditation Body JAS-ANZ. Certification to an accredited scheme provides increased confidence and assurance of your competence to Industry, your employer and your customers. The new e-based certification process has been streamlined to focus on providing evidence of competence, rather than evaluating the prescriptive requirements, such as audit logs, number of audit days, continuing professional development activities etc.

The majority of the processing time for applications has been obtaining verifications of your experience and qualifications through auditees, lead auditors and sponsors, all of whom may not have your certification as the highest priority on their agenda or the necessary competence to evaluate your performance. Seeking objective evidence of your competency through examination means that the requirement for verification has been minimized, and the process is expedited.

What Has Changed?

What's In

- Evaluation of competence, not qualifications and reference checking.
- Your certification period extends from 3 to 4 years.
- There is a requirement for completion of a skill examination and examination of the required personnel attributes (PAAS Master®) upon application, and at re-certification.

- There is a surveillance requirement (ensuring that you remain competent!) after 2 years of certification and re-certification. Surveillance is conducted via an e-based knowledge examination, which will be available on the RABQSA web site and at no cost.
- Providing evidence of competence to conduct and manage an audit, specific to your scheme and scope of certification, e.g. work experience, formal education and training.

What's Out

- Prescriptive evaluation.
- Audit Logs.
- Continuing Professional Development Logs.
- Verifications with auditees, lead auditors and sponsors.
- Delays in processing your application

How to Apply for Transition to an Accredited Scheme

Auditors currently certified by RABQSA seeking to transition to an accredited scheme can do so by completing the Application Form (Accredited Scheme) available on the RABQSA web site.

Certified auditors will not be required to re-submit their qualifications (work experience, tertiary education or training) and will be awarded their currently certified scopes in the accredited scheme if deemed competent in the knowledge, skill and personal attribute requirements. If expanding certification scopes upon transition, you will be required to complete the Expansion Application Form and provide the necessary qualifications for the additional scopes.

When do I need to transition?

RABQSA is accepting new applications to the non-accredited schemes until 31st December 2006. To apply for certification or recertification after this date, you will be required to transition to an accredited scheme.

RABQSA is recommending that certified persons transition to the accredited scheme at their next annual fee payment date.

Finally, your most accurate source of information is the RABQSA web site www.rabqsa.com. Access the web site and stay abreast of further developments in the new era of accredited certification. A number of new schemes; hydrogen safety inspector, heavy vehicle accreditation inspector, food safety auditor (risk based) and airport safety inspector, are currently under development with Industry.

For further information regarding the transition to accredited certification, please contact Ms. Toni Wood on twood@rabqsa.com or +61 2 4728 4600, or Ms. Monique Inman on minman@rabqsa.com or +1 888 722 2440

RABQSA International, a non-profit (not-for-profit) organization, is one of the world's leading certification organizations for the provision of accredited personnel and training certification, and related professional development services worldwide. A wide variety of organizations employ our certified persons for the purposes of improving business performance.