Impartiality and Independence

	Title	Signature	Date
Prepared By:	**Sahal Khaleel Ahamed**		**10.10.2026**
Reviewed By:	**Balamurugan Palanisamy**		**10.10.2026**
Approved By:	**Jaseela Thasneem**		**10.10.2026**

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1.0 Purpose

This procedure aims to ensure that all trainers / examiners of ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY are free from any commercial, financial or other pressures which might affect their judgment.

2.0 Scope

The procedure covers all personnel of ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY especially those who are conducting training and certification activities.

3.0 Responsibility

General Manager, Management Representatives and Technical Manager are responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

4.0 Description of Activity

IMPARTAILITY:

- ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY as an certification body doesn't have any commercial or financial relations with anyone of our clients and also the personnel in the company doesn't have any financial or commercial obligations that can make any kind of pressure on judgment or may compromise impartiality.
- All examiners are responsible for taking an appropriate action and acceptable behavior for the unexpected undue pressure from any sources. Records of situations where undue pressure from any source has been applied to examiner should be kept. The records should be reviewed and analyzed by the top management to eliminate and minimize those risks.

4.1 Commitment to Impartiality:

The organizational structure -including top management- and procedures of by ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY Demonstrate how the primary requirement of impartiality is fulfilled. ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY demonstrate, by means of Policies, procedures and enforceable agreements how it deals with the pressures and other factors that can compromise or can reasonably be expected to compromise objectivity and which may arise from a wide variety of activities, relationships, and other circumstances as well as from various personal qualities and characteristics of examiner and employees that may be sources of bias.

Moreover, certification is not restricted on the grounds of any undue financial or other limiting conditions such as membership of an asscociation or group. ABCON not used procedures to unfairly impede or inhibit access by the applicants.

4.2 Impartiality Committee:

ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY has an impartiality committee, impartiality committee consists of four members.

4.3 Objectives of Impartiality committee

The committee is appointed to ensure that the policies, practices and operations are in accordance with ISO 17024:2012 and all guidance issued in relation to these standards by Dubai Municipality. The impartiality committee consists of no less than 4 persons, elected by the Certification Body's top

management, of which the one person is from ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY and at least 2 other persons from other third parties. The membership is selected so as to ensure that no single interest predominates. Fourth member should be from a National Organization. Voting shall be done for any agreement, atleast 3 votes shall be considered for any agreement

The role of the impartiality committee is to:

- Assist in developing the policies relating to impartiality of its certification activities
- To counteract any tendency on the part of a certification body to allow commercial or other considerations to prevent the consistent objective provision of certification activities
- To look after matters related to Credibility and Impartiality of the Auditing and Certification process.

The committee provides advice on matters affecting confidence in certification, including openness and public perception, and conducts a review, at least once annually, of the impartiality of the audit, certification and decision-making processes of the certification body and how to manage the conflict of interests and safeguard impartiality. The Impartiality committee also has responsibility that if top management of Arbit does not respect the advice of the committee, they shall have a right to take a independent action (e.g. informing authorities, accreditation bodies, stakeholders)

4.4 General Threats to Impartiality and conflict of interest:

Threats to impartiality are sources of potential bias that may compromise, or may reasonably be expected to compromise the ability to make unbiased observations Conclusions and decisions resulting to unfair condition , because of these threats ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY identify and analyses the effects of threats that are sources of potential bias. Threats are posed by various types of activities, relationships and other Circumstances. In order to understand the nature of those threats and their Potential impact on impartiality, ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY identify the types of threats posed by Specific activities, relationships or other circumstances. The following list provides Examples of the types of threats that might create pressures and other factors that can Lead to biased behavior. Although the list is not mutually exclusive or exhaustive, it illustrates the wide variety of types of threat that ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY will consider when analyzing independence and impartiality issues:

I. Self-interest threats: Risks from a examiner or certificairon body acting in their own interest, for example financial self-interest.

II. Source of revenue: Risks from a client paying for the training work. This risk is significant when ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY has numerous contracts with the same client.

III. Self-review threats: Threats that arise from reviewing the work done by themselves or by their colleagues. A self-review threat may arise when reviewing judgements and decisions they, or others in their organisation, have made. (i.e changing result of an certification done because of opinion has been issued by any other employer).

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IV. Familiarity (or trust) threats: Risk from an employer being too familiar or trusting of another person instead of seeking certification evidence is a familiarity risk. (i.e may be any other training done by the same trainer to same candidate in the past or may be for the same equipment.)

V. Intimidation threats: Risks from a examiner or employer to give a certification in their favor without considering actual results openly or secretly.

VI. Advocacy threats: e.g. a body or its personnel acting in support of, or in Opposition to, a given organisation which is at the same time have an relation with.

VII. Competition threats: ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY or any employer may be concerned about risking the inspection, training or consultancy contract.

VIII. Relationship threats: A relationship may threaten impartiality of body on basis of ownership, governance, management, personnel or shared resources.

4.5 Risks/Threats to Impartiality and conflict of interest for examiners:

ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY uses independent examiners as it is an important indicator of the quality of an institutions examination process, requiring examination and classification to be undertaken independently and free of bias. To ensure independence of the examination process, we do not nominate the examiner if there is the potential for a conflict of interest with the candidate, trainer, client, subject matter or with another examiner. There are a range of circumstances which have the potential to introduce bias and compromise the independence of the examination. We note the conflict of interest and try to mitigate or minimize it.
There are variety of threats ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY considers as follow:

I. Integrity: An examiner may sacrifice integrity to serve client, his employer or public interest.

II. Confidentiality: An examiner may share the info or exam data with candidate due to mutual relationship, to get fame or any financial interest.

III. Justice: Examiner may not handle same matters consistently, giving more weight age to on candidate upon other.

IV. Owning Up to Mistakes: An examiner might make inadvertent errors or mistakes of judgment.

V. Conflict of interest due relations of examiners: All the examiners sign the agreement in which they under take to inform the management about any past relationship or conflict of interest with the candidate.

VI. Respect for the Autonomy of Others: Examiner may not respect the impendence for others for their views. Examiner may act indifferently which leads to a loss to a candidate.

4.6 Eliminate/ minimize the risks to Impartiality and conflict of interest :

ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY has maintained a code of conduct for empoyees where everyone sign and undertake commitment to impartiality.
ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY make sure that all of its personel know all threats that compromise impartality.
ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY does not have any relationship that threatens the impartiality on the basis of ownership, governance, relationship of personnel or shared resources.
ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY has in place safeguards that mitigate or eliminate threats to impartiality. Safeguards may include prohibitions, restrictions, disclosures, policies, procedures, practices, standards, rules and environmental conditions. And risks to impartiality are identified on going basis at least twice in 1 year, these are regularly reviewed to ensure their continuing applicability.

a. Administrative Actions:
Examples to minimize/eliminate risks that exist in the environment in which activities are performed include:

- Maintaining a culture in ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY that stresses the expectation that staff will act in the wider interest and the importance of impartiality.
- Maintaining a professional environment and culture in ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY that supports behavior of all personnel that is consistent with impartiality
- Management systems that include policies, procedures, and practices directly related to maintaining impartiality and conflict of interest.
- Personnel hiring, training, promotion, retention, and reward policies, procedures, and practices that emphasize the importance of impartiality
- Safeguards that relate to threats arising in circumstances – for example, prohibitions against certain employment relationships between the staff.
- A disciplinary mechanism to promote compliance with policies and procedures.
- Monitoring each employer by his manager.

b. Mitigation/elimination of conflicts and risks related to examiners:
Below are the provisions by ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY to mitigate the conflict of interest

I. Trainer will not be the examiner for the same candidate.
II. Examiner should not be a friend/ associate / mentor of the student.
III. Examiner should not have personal relationship of enmity with the applicant.
IV. Examiner should not be a known relative of the student.
V. Examiner should not be a colleague of candidate in any job in past.
VI. Examiner should not have business relation with the candidate.
VII. Proposed examiner should not has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the work.

VIII. Certification manager will review all the assessments made by examiner before granting the certification. Certification manager is in charge for the certification committee. Certification manager shall not be trainer/Examiner for the candidates.

IX. Examiner will make the exam questionnaire and will submit it technical manager.

X. After assessing the answer paper by examiner the final decision will be made by certification manager.

XI. For onsite examination the sealed questionnaire would be given to invigilator and would be allowed to open onsite in front of candidates only.

XII. Examiner should not served a specific candidate for training , if trained the time gap should be 2 years from the time the examiner is going to conduct the exam.

XIII. ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY undertake in its policies and company and employees agreement not to condone discrimination with regard to race, colour, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or veteran status in enrolment or examination, nor in the educational programs that it operates.

XIV. ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY shall not certify a person it employs

INDEPENDENCE:

- ABCON SAFETY CONSULTANCY has been declared as certification body that shall independent of the parties involved.
- The management and the employees ensure that they are not close to any external pressure or influence to any kind of organizations, bodies, or personnel.

5.0 References:

ISO 17024:2012, Clause No. 4.3 (4.3.1 - 4.3.8)

6.0 Related Documents:

6.1 PR-11-F01 Employer and Employees Agreement

6.2 PR-11-F02 Impartiality risks and conflict of interest identification form

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