IAF Mandatory Document

Generic Competence for AB Assessors: Application to ISO/IEC 17011

Issue 1

(IAF MD 20:2016)
The International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) facilitates trade and supports regulators by operating a worldwide mutual recognition arrangement among Accreditation Bodies (ABs) in order that the results issued by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) accredited by IAF Accreditation Body Members are accepted globally.

Accreditation reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring that accredited CABs are competent to carry out the work they undertake within their scope of accreditation. ABs that are members of IAF and the CABs they accredit are required to comply with appropriate international standards and the applicable IAF application documents for the consistent application of those standards.

ABs that are signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are evaluated regularly by an appointed team of peers to provide confidence in the operation of their accreditation schemes. The structure and scope of the IAF MLA is detailed in IAF PR 4 - Structure of IAF MLA and Endorsed Normative Documents.

The IAF MLA is structured in five levels: Level 1 specifies mandatory criteria that apply to all ABs, ISO/IEC 17011. The combination of Level 2 activity(ies) and the corresponding Level 3 normative document(s) is called the main scope of the MLA, and the combination of Level 4 (if applicable) and Level 5 relevant normative documents is called a sub-scope of the MLA.

- The main scope of the MLA includes activities e.g. product certification and associated mandatory documents e.g. ISO/IEC 17065. The attestations made by CABs at the main scope level are considered to be equally reliable.

- The sub scope of the MLA includes conformity assessment requirements e.g. ISO 9001 and scheme specific requirements, where applicable, e.g. ISO TS 22003. The attestations made by CABs at the sub scope level are considered to be equivalent.

The IAF MLA delivers the confidence needed for market acceptance of conformity assessment outcomes. An attestation issued, within the scope of the IAF MLA, by a body that is accredited by an IAF MLA signatory AB can be recognized worldwide, thereby facilitating international trade.
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Introduction to IAF Mandatory Documents

The term "should" is used in this document to indicate recognised means of meeting the requirements of the standards. These requirements can be met in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated. The term "shall" is used in this document to indicate those provisions which, reflecting the requirements of the relevant standard, are mandatory.
IAF Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17011

This document shall be read in conjunction with ISO/IEC 17011. All clauses of ISO/IEC 17011 continue to apply and this document provides supporting criteria to that standard.

1. INTRODUCTION

ISO/IEC 17011 is an International Standard that sets out the requirements for bodies operating accreditation systems for Conformity Assessment Bodies.

The objective of this document is to ensure the consistent and harmonized application of ISO/IEC 17011 for defining the generic competence for assessors. The 2012 Accreditation Body Assessor Job Task Analysis was created to achieve this objective.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2009, the IAF Assessor Competency Task Force undertook a Job/Task Analysis (JTA) to identify the tasks, knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) required of Accreditation Body (AB) Assessors. A Job Task Analyses (JTA) study in 2010 was conducted followed by a survey validation study of the results of the JTA conducted in 2010 through 2011. The JTA for AB Assessors was presented at the IAF Technical Committee during the IAF mid-year meetings 2012 in Frankfurt, Germany.

The JTA study methodology followed industry standard practices. This included the following activities:

i) Selecting the JTA participants
ii) Conducting the JTA meeting
iii) Conducting a JTA validation survey
iv) Reviewing the results of the study

3. SCOPE

This document defines the generic competencies for assessors involved in the accreditation of Certification Bodies/Conformity Assessment Bodies. The objective of
this document is to enable Accreditation Bodies to harmonize their application of ISO/IEC 17011 for the accreditation of Certification Bodies/Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).

Annex 1 contains the competency profile for Accreditation Body assessors. When an assessor does not perform one or more of the tasks as delineated in this document, the AB can consider the exclusion of application of the respective competencies shown in Annex 1.

Annex 2 contains additional information to assist in understanding the competency profile. While these competencies and associated knowledge and skills should be considered by the AB when evaluating assessors or the assessment team, the AB does not have to have documented evidence of its assessors (or assessment team) meeting every individual competence or all of the knowledge listed.

However if the competencies are considered by the AB, then the AB may consolidate the evidence of conformance (e.g. summary results of an onsite evaluation). Typically these competencies can be demonstrated in a variety of ways; but most commonly during interviews, personal interaction and/or during onsite evaluations.

4. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

ISO/IEC 17011 Conformity Assessment – general requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

5. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Assessor: person assigned by an accreditation body to perform, alone or as part of an assessment team, an assessment of a conformity assessment body.

The use of the term “assessor” in this document does not require that all of the activities must be conducted by each individual assessor; however, the same competence would be required for the specific task whether it is being performed by the assessor or other AB personnel.

Accreditation Body Assessor is an individual who performs an assessment of a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) for an Accreditation Body (AB) against an
accreditation standard or normative document by reviewing documents and conducting onsite visits and/or observing Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) activities.

**Competence**: ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve the intended results.

**Job Task Analysis**: a documented process for analyzing the tasks performed by individuals in an occupation, as well as the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required to perform those tasks. Abilities can include physical capabilities such as vision, hearing and mobility.

### 6. ACCREDITATION BODY ASSESSOR COMPETENCE PROCESS

6.1 The AB shall have assessors or other personnel (e.g. lead assessors, technical officers, programme managers) with competence to perform tasks assigned by the AB in accordance with Annex 1, Section B, Generic Assessment Competencies (1-5).

Where any assessment is conducted by a team, the level of competence required should be held within the team as a whole and not by each individual member of the team.

6.2 The AB shall establish and document procedures for selecting, training and formally approving assessors (or assessment team) and in so doing should consider the competency profile outlined in Annex 1, Section B, Generic Assessment Competencies (1-5).

6.3 The AB shall maintain evaluation records to demonstrate that any assessor competencies identified by the AB have been achieved consistent with the competency profile in Annex 1, Section B, Generic Assessment Competencies (1-5).

Annex 2 (informative) contains personal behaviours to be considered during the selection and training process as well as when monitoring the assessor activity. These are characteristics that affect an individual's ability to perform specific functions. Therefore, knowledge about the behaviours of individuals enables an AB to take advantage of their strengths and to minimize the impact of their weaknesses. Desired personal behaviours that are important for personnel involved in accreditation activities are described in Section D, Foundational Competencies of Annex 2.
6.4 When evaluating/monitoring the competence of assessors (or the assessment team) the competency profile in Annex 1, Section B, Generic Assessment Competencies (1-5) shall be considered.

Annex 1 – Competency Profile

Annex 1 contains the competency profile for Accreditation Body assessors based on the generic competencies identified in the job/task analysis. When an assessor does not perform one or more of the tasks as delineated in this document, the AB can consider the exclusion of application of the respective competencies shown in Annex 1. A.1 through A.4 below are not included within the scope of this MD and relate to specific standards (products, persons, management systems, etc.) associated with Level 3 of the MLA.
### B. GENERIC ASSESSMENT COMPETENCIES (REQUISITE OF SOMEONE ON THE ASSESSMENT TEAM)

#### B.1. Accreditation

**Knowledge, skills and competencies associated with accreditation**
- Different types of onsite assessments
- Different types of organizational structures for CABs
- Legal entity structures and the types of documents that confirm the legal status of CABs
- Different management structures
- Accreditation standards, guidance and mandatory documents / Requirements of accreditation
- Typical management systems
- Technical terms associated with scopes assessor is assessing
- Common understanding of accreditation terms and definitions (Non-conformity [NC], Opportunity for Improvement [OFI], key activity, etc.)

#### B.2. Planning and Scheduling

**Knowledge, skills and competencies associated with planning and scheduling an assessment**
- Typical assessment team compositions
- Typical resources required during an assessment
- Prioritizing assessments by risk areas
- Creating sampling plans
- Preparing assessment plans
- Providing input into the selection of the assessment team
- Assigning roles and responsibilities for the assessment team

#### B.3. Document Review

**Knowledge, skills and competencies associated with conducting a document review**
- Reviewing applications for accreditation and identifying appropriate documentation of legal status
- Determining the documents that will be needed for the assessment
- Checking the documents for completeness
- Determining if the documents meet the requirements
- Establishing investigative lines for the onsite assessment
- Communicating to the CAB the results of the document review
- Confirming the CAB’s readiness for an onsite assessment
- Determining if sufficient evidence exists to document conformity
### B.4. Onsite Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge, skills and competencies associated with assessment (including onsite assessment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieving consensus of the team on findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting assessment plans based on circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing assessment findings (including identifying and reviewing findings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing management systems and controls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing technical requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing the CAB against accreditation requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating preliminary findings to CAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence in coaching the trainee assessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting closing meetings</td>
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<td>Conducting interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting opening meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducting pre-assessment meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting witness assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming assessment plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming completion of the assessment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming the methods of reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming the objectives of the assessment were met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirming the scope of accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create records to document objective evidence gathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating working papers, notes and completing checklists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describing the final assessment conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining if requirements have been met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the official channels of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining that the assessment is a sampling process (not everything was reviewed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the next steps (appeal procedures, post-assessment processes, final decision schedule/timeline, potential follow-up assessments, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending sampling in case of NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading findings (if required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## How to confirm confidentiality of the process

## How to determine if an assessment should be aborted

## How to thank the participants

## Identifying criteria that will be used for the assessment

## Identifying technical areas and when additional expertise is needed

## Judging the effectiveness of corrective actions (when required)

## Managing and solving conflicts in the team

## Observing CAB processes

## Obtaining written acknowledgement of the NC

## Prepare reports

## Presenting an explanation of the assessment methodology

## Presenting and reviewing findings (NCs and/or OFIs)

## Presenting the assessment team/CAB personnel

## Reviewing and finalizing the NCs

## Reviewing team member roles and responsibilities for closing meeting

## Reviewing the CAB files and records

## Sampling CAB processes and records (protocols and AB criteria)

## Techniques for providing positive feedback

## When to ask for escorts (safety issues, etc.)

## Writing CAB NCs and OFIs

### B.5. Reporting Activities

**Knowledge, skills and competencies associated with reporting activities**

- Evaluating assessment team members
- Demonstrating knowledge of personnel evaluation methods
- Producing a clear and concise report that reflects the assessment and the findings
- Creating a report on the performance (and conformance) of the CAB with reference to the accreditation criteria
- Reporting conclusions and recommendations of the assessment that reflect the overall assessment and report content
Annex 2 - (Informative)

Annex 2 contains additional information to assist in understanding the competency profile. While these competencies and associated knowledge and skills should be considered by the AB when evaluating assessors or the assessment team, the AB does not have to have documented evidence of its assessors (or assessment team) meeting each individual competence or knowledge listed.

However if the competencies are considered by the AB then the AB may consolidate evidence of conformance (e.g. summary results of an onsite evaluation). Typically these competencies can be demonstrated in a variety of ways; but most commonly during interviews, personal interaction and/or during onsite evaluations.

### C. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.1. Leadership Competencies (required of someone at the AB)</th>
<th>These are knowledge, skills and competencies associated with leading a team or others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting management – ability to manage meetings including creating the agenda (if required), facilitating the meeting and adhering to the time schedules to achieve the assessment process objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader/leadership – displays the ability to guide a team or others and has the ability to mentor others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to identify the competencies required of an assessment team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to provide input into the selection of an assessment team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to assign roles and responsibilities to the assessment team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to coach team members during an assessment process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to achieve consensus from an assessment team regarding assessment findings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining control – ability to manage situations to ensure that the objectives of the assessment process are accomplished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.2. Organizational Competencies (required of someone at the AB)</th>
<th>These are knowledge, skills and competencies associated with organizing and managing an assessment process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to reason/good judgment – ability to assess situations or circumstances and formulate sound conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Accurate
- Draws the correct conclusion when interpreting the facts as related to a standard, rule or model. Produces results that are correct and based on fact.

### Adaptable/flexible
- Displays an ability to adjust oneself to novel or different conditions throughout the assessment process.

### Analytical
- Ability to synthesize and interpret data to formulate a conclusion.

### Confidential
- Ability to identify information that should not be revealed. Maintains confidentiality by not disclosing confidential information.

### Critical thinking
- The process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information to reach a valid conclusion.

### Customer focused/oriented
- Displays an ability to view the process from the CAB’s perspective and to take into consideration the CAB’s perspectives during an assessment.

### Focused
- Demonstrates full attention to tasks and the assessment process. Not distracted by other external matters.

### Safety conscious
- Displays an awareness of safety hazards and takes steps to prevent accidents.

### Stress management
- Ability to reduce or control stress during stressful situations in order to make objective decisions.

### Team player/cooperative
- Works collectively with members of a team or group to accomplish the tasks. Displays the ability to subordinate personal preference when working in a group for the good of the assessment process.

### Work within one’s expertise
- Can identify when technical expertise is needed.

### Conflict resolution
- Practice of recognizing and dealing with differing opinions in a rational, balanced and effective way.

### Formulating questions/questioning techniques
- Ability to ask purposeful questions to elicit relevant information.

### Ability to deliver a negative message that facilitates a positive action

### C.3. Behavioral/Personal Competencies

#### These are the “soft” skills and other competencies associated with a person or a person’s behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to focus/concentration</th>
<th>Does not appear distracted during an assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refrains from disagreeing with other assessment team members in front of the CAB</td>
<td>Confident/self-confident/self esteem/conviction – Having self assuredness in one’s personal judgment, ability and power. Does not delay or hesitate to make decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**C.3. Behavioral/Personal Competencies (required of all assessors)**

- Accurate
- Adaptable/flexible
- Analytical
- Confidential
- Critical thinking
- Customer focused/oriented
- Focused
- Safety conscious
- Stress management
- Team player/cooperative
- Work within one’s expertise
- Conflict resolution
- Formulating questions/questioning techniques
- Ability to deliver a negative message that facilitates a positive action

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>Demonstrates thoroughness, care and vigilance in the conduct of an assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintains a professional level of skepticism appropriate for assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courteous</td>
<td>Interacts in a polite and respectful manner to the members of the CAB and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive/convincing others</td>
<td>Demonstrates an ability to convince others that decisions are accurate and valid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally sensitive/sensitive to</td>
<td>Demonstrates a knowledge, awareness and acceptance of other cultures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>the thoughts of others</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical/honest/integrity/trustworthy</td>
<td>Follows a code of conduct. Makes the correct decision when presented with a situation. Avoids acceptance of favors or gifts (acceptable value to be determined by individual ABs). Does not accept assignments outside of one's area of expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good memory</td>
<td>Ability to retain information (facts, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial/independent/neutral/lack</td>
<td>Declares known or potential conflict of interest. Demonstrates objectivity (actual or perceived).</td>
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<tr>
<td>of prejudice or bias/fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remains neutral and does not take</td>
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<tr>
<td>sides during disagreements among</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>assessment participants</td>
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<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Demonstrates a willingness to fulfill responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Avoids opinions and personal biases and makes decisions based on fact (can support conclusions with objective evidence). Does not direct the CAB to a particular corrective action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Does not display irritation, loss of temper or the like, and has the ability to suppress restlessness or annoyance when confronted with delay or interruption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptive</td>
<td>Demonstrates the ability to notice details and pick up cues to corroborate evidence during an assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance/diligence/persistence</td>
<td>Demonstrates the ability to remain focused on the goals of an assessment and to complete the assessment process despite resistance, difficulties, failure or opposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NCAA persistence/conviction/assertive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Does not conduct personal business (phone calls, etc.) during an assessment. Does not make negative comments about the CAB’s personnel. Refrains from negative comments about the AB. Does not recommend consultants (friends, co-workers, etc.). Refrains from selling one’s own consulting services during an assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Displays respect for others (does not make disparaging or demeaning comments, takes into account the expert opinions of other assessors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Commits the time and resources necessary to complete the assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self control/self discipline – does not lose temper and remains calm during assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerant – displays fairness and objectivity towards others whose opinions and practices differ from one’s own</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open minded - ability to evaluate alternative solutions and a willingness to consider alternative ideas or points of view to achieve the same results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to learn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works well with other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participates in professional skill development (professional education, assessor harmonization meetings, and the development of AB policies and procedures)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resists undue influence from others (demonstrates one is not intimidated by someone to make an incorrect or inaccurate decision)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of typical human behavior characteristics (ability to read the audience)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptability – ability to adapt assessment plans based on circumstances</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**D. FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES (FOR ALL ASSESSORS)**

**D.1. Basic Math Skills**

- Perform simple math operations relevant to calculation of audit days/time and assessment days/time, multi-site sampling and creating sampling plans
- Collect information to solve a problem
- Compare numbers
- Basic understanding of finances
- Make rough estimates
- Perform simple math operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Ability to use a calculator

**D.2. Communication Skills**

- Written communication skills (concise writing skills, comprehensive writing and reporting skills)
- Verbal communication skills (communicating effectively regardless of language barriers, ability to explain information)
- Nonverbal communication skills/knowledge of body language
| D.3. Basic Computer Skills | Observation techniques  
|                           | Questioning techniques  
|                           | Listening techniques  
|                           | Interpersonal communication skills  
|                           | Reading comprehension skills  
|                           | Ability to analyze and synthesize information  
| D.4. Administrative Skills | Basic computer literacy  
|                           | Keyboarding skills  
| D.5. Physical Capabilities* | Note-taking  
|                           | Organized  
|                           | Detail oriented/attention to detail  
|                           | Time management  
|                           | Timeliness/prompt/punctual  
|                           | Feel size, shape and temperature or texture of objects with hands (if applicable)  
|                           | Write or type at a fast speed  
|                           | Talk or communicate in some manner  
|                           | Hear speech  
|                           | Personal hygiene/appropriate dress/dresses appropriately for the assessment (consistent with the staff of the CAB)  
|                           | Physical stamina  
|                           | Can work inside and outside  
|                           | Can work in confined spaces (if applicable)  

* It is noted that some physical capabilities outlined in Annex 2, D5 may be achieved through other mechanisms as determined by the AB (e.g. an assessor who cannot hear speech may make alternative arrangements with the AB to fulfil the assessment objectives).
Further Information:

For further Information on this document or other IAF documents, contact any member of IAF or the IAF Secretariat.

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