Information Technology Architect Certification

Accreditation Requirements

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Information Technology Architect Certification: Accreditation Requirements

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Comments relating to the material contained in this document may be submitted to:

The Open Group
Thames Tower
37-45 Station Road
Reading
Berkshire, RG1 1LX
United Kingdom

or by electronic mail to:

ogspecs@opengroup.org

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1.   BACKGROUND

1.1   Introduction

The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program (the Program) is designed to validate the existence of those qualities and skills in a professional that enable the effective practice of IT architecture. The Program is skills and experience-based and goes beyond validating the mastery of any specific knowledge base.

The Program includes a framework for accreditation of third parties to establish IT Architect certification programs affiliated to The Open Group. The framework of accreditation and certification is specifically intended to standardize the process and criteria for IT Architect professional certification and establish a foundation for the required skills and experience necessary to achieve such a distinction. The Program was designed to be flexible and extensible so that the framework may be adopted by any industry, country, or organization.

The Open Group supports two different routes to IT Architect certification:

- The first route is *direct* certification by The Open Group.
- The second is *indirect*, through third-party programs accredited by The Open Group.

The Conformance Requirements for IT Architect certification apply equally to the direct and indirect routes to certification.

Beyond the Conformance Requirements for a Certified IT Architect, third parties operating Accredited Certification Programs (ACPs) may levy additional requirements on their Candidates in order to satisfy their internal skills requirements. Such additional requirements are called *extended certification requirements* or simply *extended requirements*. For example, extended certification requirements might include experience with a proprietary corporate method or appropriate industry or cultural requirements.

The Program requires ACPs' extended certification requirements to be effectively documented and communicated within the accredited program. In addition, extended certification requirements must not relax the skills, experience, or process requirements set forth by the framework established herein.

The Open Group direct certification route may, at some time in the future, also include extended requirements, but these will always be optional to ensure the baseline requirements of the framework remain common across the profession.

The Program is based upon four key documents:

1. The *Certification Policy*, which sets out the policies and processes by which an IT Architect may achieve certification
2. The *Conformance Requirements*, in which the skills and experience that a Certified IT Architect must possess are documented
3. The *Accreditation Policy,* which sets out the policies and processes by which an Organization may achieve accreditation

4. The *Accreditation Requirements*, in which the criteria that must be met by an ACP are documented (this document)

1.2　　Terminology and Definitions

This table defines terms or clarifies the meaning of words used within this document. Where an acronym is also used, it is provided in parentheses.

Accreditation Agreement	The agreement between the Organization and the Certification Authority that defines the accreditation service to be provided and contains the legal commitment by the Organization to the conditions of the accreditation program.
Accreditation Guide	The document that describes the processes for how an Organization achieves accreditation for its Candidate Certification Program. The Accreditation Guide is used in conjunction with this document. The Accreditation Guide provides detailed instructions on the steps an Organization must take to get a certification program accredited and where to obtain relevant information and documents.
Accreditation Logo	The trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use in association with Accredited Certification Programs.
Accreditation Register	The official list of all Accredited Certification Programs, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made available via the Internet.
Accreditation Requirements	A definition of the mandatory and optional behavior that must be implemented in a certification program in order for that program to be considered conformant (this document).
Accredited Certification Program (ACP)	A certification program, operated by a group of people under the leadership of Certification Program Manager, that has successfully completed the accreditation process and for which the Organization has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that accreditation has been achieved. Depending on context, the terms is also used to mean the company or organizational unit that operates an Accredited Certification Program.
Applicant	The Organization applying for accreditation
Assessment	An inspection of an Organization's processes, procedures, and staff to determine the degree to which the Organization's Candidate Certification Program is operating in accordance with the Accreditation Requirements.
Assessor	An individual who has been qualified by the Certification Authority as competent to perform Assessments.
Candidate Certification Program (CCP)	An Organization's internal IT Architect certification program that has not yet been accredited.

Certificate of Accreditation	A document issued to Organizations certifying that a Candidate Certification Program has successfully met the requirements for accreditation and thus is considered an Accredited Certification Program.
Certification Authority (CA)	The Organization that manages the day-to-day operations of the accreditation program in accordance with the policies defined in this document and the Accreditation Policy. The Open Group acts as the Certification Authority for IT Architect certification.
Certification Board	The group of subject matter experts appointed by the Certification Authority or by an Accredited Certification Program to assess applications for certification.
Certification Package	The detailed description of the skill levels attained and experience undergone that provides the Certification Authority or Accredited Certification Program with sufficient information to determine whether the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements. The Certification Package is never made public.
Certification Program Manager (CPM)	The specific individual(s) identified within an Organization as having the overall responsibility for managing the Accredited Certification Program on a day-to-day basis and ensuring that it is carried out in accordance with its documented processes and procedures.
Certification Record	The information identifying the Candidate, including contact details, and describing the way in which the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements, including which optional criteria are met. The Certification Record of a Certified IT Architect is made available by the Certification Authority at the discretion of the Certified IT Architect.
Certification System Deficiency (CSD)	An agreed error in the Certification and/or Accreditation System, which is inhibiting the accreditation process. A Certification System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Certified IT Architect	A Candidate that has successfully completed the certification process and who has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that certification has been achieved.
Conformance Statement	The Organization's documented set of claims describing precisely the way in which their Candidate Certification Program meets the Accreditation Requirements, including which optional requirements are implemented.
Direct Certification	Direct certification is achieved by applying directly to The Open Group, or to a third party operating the Program on The Open Group's behalf, and successfully completing the certification process. Direct certification is open to any Candidate, regardless of who they work for, or where in the world they live and work.

Indirect Certification	Indirect certification is achieved by applying to an Accredited Certification Program and successfully completing the certification process.
	To be eligible for certification by a particular ACP, Candidate's must work for the Organization running the Accredited Certification program.
Interpretation (INT)	Decision made by the Specification Authority that elaborates or refines the meaning of the Accreditation Requirements, or a standard or best practice referenced by the Accreditation Requirements. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Organization	An Organization that operates a certification program for IT Architects, and which is interested in applying for accreditation of their program within The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program. During the period in which an Organization is going through the accreditation process to get their program accredited, the Organization may be referred to as an Applicant.
Problem Report (PR)	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of an accreditation or certification document, or the web-based Certification System, which, if accepted by the Certification Authority, will be resolved into an Interpretation or a Certification System Deficiency.
Program Logo	The logo or other trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use within The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program in relation to Certified IT Architects.
Specification Authority (SA)	The Open Group IT Architect Certification working group, or its successor, which is responsible for developing, maintaining, and interpreting the Conformance Requirements and Accreditation Requirements of The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program.
Trademark License Agreement (TMLA)	The agreement between the Organization and The Open Group that contains the legal commitment by the Organization to the conditions for use of the Accreditation Logo.

2.   PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document defines the requirements, which must be met by an Organization to be accredited to operate The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program.

Although the applying Organization (Applicant) does not have to demonstrate conformity to each and every one of the requirements in this document to gain accreditation, any non-conformance must be identified and justified by the Applicant based upon adherence to the principles embodied in this document. All such justifications must be reviewed and accepted by the Certification Authority (CA).

Requirements that are stated as applying to Accredited Certification Programs (ACPs) apply equally to Applicants for accreditation and *vice versa*.

ACPs may certify only their own employees and contract staff that have been employed by or contracted to the ACP's parent organization or affiliate for a continuous period of 12 months or more.

3.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following parties are involved:

- The Certification Authority (CA)
- The CA's appointed Assessor
- The Applicant, and in particular the person responsible for the operation, quality, and integrity of the Accredited Certification Program (ACP) termed in this document the Certification Program Manager (CPM). If an ACP's CPM is a role that is distributed among several people, one person will be nominated as CPM for the purposes of accreditation.

4.   TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This section will define the requirements that the Applicant must meet to be eligible for certification.

Accredited Certification Programs (ACPs) must adhere to the Certification Policy and Accreditation Policy at all times.

4.1   IT Architect Assessment Criteria

The Open Group IT Architect Certification Program assessment criteria (Conformance Requirements and Certification Policy) must be instantiated within the ACP's own assessment criteria and there must be a clear delineation between base and extended certification requirements. This is required to clarify how the baseline requirements are met.

4.2   Program Documentation

The ACP's documentation should be consistent with the Program documentation, which is to say it should contain no contradictions or omissions, although it may possibly define special procedures for extended certification requirements.

There must be an explicit and complete mapping between the ACP's documentation and the Program assessment criteria.

4.3   Assessment Methods and Procedures

The ACP Organization must define processes, methods, and procedures for ensuring the repeatability, reproducibility, and objectivity of the Program. These procedures should include, but not be limited to, the following topics.

4.3.1 Roles, Duties, and Experience of the Applicant's ACP Staff

The Applicant's program documentation must define:

- Job Titles
- Description of organizational context and authority
- Duties associated with that title
- Education
- Experience
- Training

There must be one or several individuals, referred to in this document as the Certification Program Manager (CPM), responsible for the effective oversight and quality of:

- The day-to-day operation of the Program
- Constituting and populating the Certification Board(s)
- Appointing the Chair(s) of the Certification Board(s)
- Approving the certification outcome report (the signature represents that the certification process has been carried out in accordance with process and procedure)
- Determining the outcome of Problem Reports
- The appeals process
- Approving revocation (the signature represents that the revocation is based on objective evidence and that there are adequate grounds for the revocation)
- Primary interface with the CA
- The advocacy and approval of appropriate ACP procedures and manuals to assure the quality, repeatability, reproducibility, and objectivity of the certification program
- The design, maintenance, and control of the ACP program, quality and procedures manual, or its functional equivalent
- The internal audit of certification procedures and other quality-related documents it references against the requirements of the CA
- The annual internal audit of the ACP, against its documented procedures and processes

The above list of duties is non-exhaustive and other duties may be defined; however, the accredited Organization must document the names, responsibilities, and job titles of those who are responsible within the Organization for each of the duties stated above, together with the mapping between each duty and individual.

The CPM may serve on the Certification Board but must do so without conflict of interest, particularly in the context of any subsequent appeals.

4.3.2 Procedures to Evaluate Applications

The evaluation consists of an initial documentation audit followed by a Certification Board interview for those that pass the initial review.

The evaluation procedures must be defined and documented sufficiently to ensure the repeatability, reproducibility, and fairness of evaluation of Candidate IT Architects within the ACP and to enable the CA to ensure repeatability, reproducibility, and fairness of evaluations between the ACP and other ACPs.

Process Management

The documented processes must define the following:

- Maximum duration of all steps in the process
- The mechanisms by which incomplete applications by Candidates are resolved
- The checklist to be followed by the ACP staff that ensures that all steps in the evaluation are followed
- The means to communicate the outcome of the documentation audit to the Candidate
- The means to communicate the outcome of the Certification Board evaluation to the Candidate
- The means to communicate a successful outcome of the Certification Board evaluation plus the Certification Record to the CA

Documentation Audit

The ACP staff will audit the submitted application to ensure it is complete and well-formed. The Candidate will be required to correct any errors or inconsistencies before the evaluation can continue.

The documented process and acceptance criteria for auditing a Candidate's Certification Package must be complete and consistent with the CA's evaluation criteria.

Evaluation by Certification Board

The Certification Board will evaluate each application against the Conformance Requirements by following the ACP's documented Evaluation Process.

The objective of the Certification Board interview is to verify the information in the Certification Package and confirm the Candidate's professional skills and experience required for IT Architect certification.

The Certification Board will evaluate each certification application and make a written recommendation to the CPM regarding certification. At least two thirds of the members of the Certification Board must concur with the recommendation to certify.

Should an application be rejected, the Certification Board will state the reasons in writing and provide a written set of recommendations for the CPM to pass to the Candidate to facilitate future enhancement to the Candidate's compliance to the Conformance Requirements.

The documented Evaluation Process must ensure that a Candidate's Certification Package and associated documents are objectively evaluated for full conformance with the Conformance Requirements and must ensure that the results of evaluation against all the evaluation criteria are recorded.

4.3.3 Selection and Conduct of Certification Board

Certification Board members must be Certified IT Architects, certified by The Open Group.

Certification Boards will consist of a minimum of three (3) members. ACPs are strongly advised to ensure that they have a pool of potential Certification Board members that is sufficient to deal with the expected volume and geographic distribution of Applicants.

It is strongly suggested that Certification Board members should be the most senior and have the most experience within an Organization, and should have a minimum of six (6) years' experience practicing or contributing to the profession and mentoring IT Architects.

The ACP's Certification Board procedures must document the selection criteria and process, the term of appointment, and the process to be followed when Certification Board members are replaced. These procedures must also address how the ACP will deal with their expected volume of Applicants for certification.

The ACP's Certification Board documented procedures must also ensure that there is consistency in decision-making, both geographically and over time.

Role of the Chairman of the Certification Board

The Chair of the Certification Board has the following additional duties/responsibilities beyond the other Certification Board members:

- To facilitate meeting(s), making appropriate introductions and explanations to Candidate IT Architects of the process and general management of the work of the Certification Board
- To monitor the objectivity of other Certification Board members and to draw to their attention any inappropriate subjectivity or prejudice
- To draft the Certification Board report or delegate this task to a named individual and authorize the report
- To take full responsibility for the content of the report whether or not he or she drafted it
- To report to the CPM for the conduct of the Certification Board
- To act as single point of contact for the Certification Board to the CPM and the CA

4.3.4   Workflow

The Applicant must document the workflow of the certification process, either in textual description flow diagrams or both. Review and approval points must be clearly defined, together with the maximum duration of the review and approval.

4.3.5   Outcome and Notification

The Applicant must document the processes it uses to determine the overall outcome of the evaluation and how the Candidate IT Architect is informed of that outcome.

4.3.6   Renewal

The Applicant must document the procedures and processes it uses to ensure that the Certified IT Architects renew their certification.

4.3.7 Revocation

The Applicant must document the procedures and processes it uses to ensure that Certified IT Architects remain in conformity with the Conformance Requirements and the consequences of a Certified IT Architect failing to do so.

4.3.8 Interface with the Certification Authority

The interface with the CA must be documented and must meet the requirements set out in the Certification Policy and the Accreditation Policy.

4.3.9 Quality Assurance

The Applicant must define and document its quality assurance procedures. The procedures must ensure that the operations of the Applicant's program are repeatable, reproducible, and objective.

4.4 Appeals

The ACP must operate a documented appeals process that meets the requirements of the Certification Policy.

4.5 Problem Reporting

The ACP must operate a documented interpretations process to deal with perceived errors in its program documentation or the certification process itself.

The ACP must document how it reports problems encountered with the CA's documentation into the CA's problem reporting process.

4.6 Support to Applicants

ACPs are required to provide a mechanism for their Applicants to request support and clarification of certification requirements, policies, and procedures.

4.7 Extended Requirements

ACPs extended certification requirements must be effectively documented and communicated to the participants of the accredited program. In addition, extended certification requirements may not relax the skills, experience, or process requirements of the Program.