

The Open Group Certified IT Specialist (Open CITS) Program

Certification Policy

July 2011
Version 2.0.1

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The Open Group Certified IT Specialist (Open CITS) Program: Certification Policy

Document Number: X073

Published by The Open Group, July 2011.

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Acknowledgements

The contributions to this document by the following individuals and working groups are gratefully acknowledged:

- Gerard Coes, Capgemini SA
- Brian Mitsuki, IBM Corporation
- Co Siebes, Capgemini SA
- Phil Stauskas, IBM Corporation
- Sheila Thorne, IBM Corporation
- Ron Tolido, Capgemini SA
- Mo Voyer, EDS
- Elly de Wert, Capgemini SA
- The Open Group Customer Council
- The Open Group Supplier Council

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The Open Group Certified IT Specialist (Open CITS) program (the Program) is designed to validate the existence of those qualities and skills in a professional that enable the effective development, implementation, and operation of IT solutions. 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 Specialist certification programs affiliated to The Open Group. The framework of accreditation and certification is specifically intended to standardize the process and criteria for IT Specialist professional certification and establish a foundation for the required skills and experience necessary to achieve such a distinction. The Program has been 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 Specialist 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 Open CITS Conformance Requirements for IT Specialist certification apply equally to the direct and indirect routes to certification.

Beyond the Open CITS Conformance Requirements for a Certified IT Specialist, 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 proprietary corporate tools or products, 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 Program is based upon a set of key documents:

1. The *Certification Policy* (this document), which sets out the policies and processes by which an IT Specialist may achieve certification.
2. The *Conformance Requirements*, which documents the skills and experience that a Certified IT Specialist must possess.
3. The *Accreditation Policy*, which sets out the policies and processes by which an Organization may achieve accreditation.
4. The *Accreditation Requirements*, which documents the criteria that must be met by an Accredited Certification Program.

1.2 Levels of Certification

The Program recognizes three levels of certification:

- Level 1: Certified IT Specialist (able to perform with assistance/supervision with a wide range of appropriate skills as a contributing IT Specialist)
- Level 2: Master IT Specialist (able to perform independently and take responsibility for delivery of systems and solutions as lead IT Specialist)
- Level 3 Distinguished IT Specialist (has significant breadth and depth of impact on the business through the application of IT)

The Open CITS Conformance Requirements document defines the conformance levels that are available in the Program at any particular time. Candidates may apply for certification at Level 1 or Level 2 without any prior certification in the Program.

Candidates applying for certification at Level 3 are required either to be certified at Level 2, or to have met the Level 2 Conformance Requirements at some time in the past.

Certification at Level 3, without previously being certified at Level 2, requires a Candidate to submit a Level 2 package in addition to the Level 3 package. In the Level 2 package the time constraints imposed by the Level 2 Conformance Requirements are removed to allow Level 3 certification for people who may have met the Level 2 Conformance Requirements at some time in the past.

1.3 Program Logo

IT Specialists certified within the Program are able to use an Open Group logo on their business cards, etc. In accordance with the Trademark License Agreement and Trademark Usage Guide, the logos that may be used include a label (tag line).

The labels for the three levels are as follows:

Level	Label
3	Distinguished IT Specialist
2	Master IT Specialist, or the applicable Stream-specific label identified in the Conformance Requirements
1	Certified IT Specialist, or the applicable Stream-specific label identified in the Conformance Requirements

1.4 Fees

The Certification Authority charges fees for certification in the Program. The fees are published by the Certification Authority on the Certification Authority's web site.

1.5 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.

Accredited Certification Program (ACP)	An IT Specialist certification program, operated by a third party, that has successfully completed the accreditation process and which is listed in the Accreditation Register on the Certification Authority's web site.
Certification Authority (CA)	The organization that manages the day-to-day operations of the Program in accordance with the policies defined in this document. The Open Group acts as the Certification Authority for IT Specialist 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. The Certification Package is created by the Candidate by filling in the Certification Package Template. All candidate Open CITS Certification Packages must be completed in English for Direct Certification.
Certification Package Template	The template document provided to Candidates by the Certification Authority to enable them to create Certification Packages.
Certification Record	The information identifying the Candidate, including contact details, and describing the way in which the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements, including the Candidate's selection of Client Focus, Technical Focus and Stream. The Certification Record of a Certified IT Specialist is made available by the Certification Authority at the discretion of the Certified IT Specialist.
Certification System Deficiency (CSD)	An agreed error in the Certification System, which is inhibiting the certification process. A Certification System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Certified IT Specialist	A Candidate that has successfully completed the certification process, who has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that the certification requirements have been met, and who has accepted the TMLA.
Direct Certification	Direct certification is achieved by applying directly to The Open Group, or to a third party operating the Program on behalf of The Open Group, 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.
Directory of Certified IT Specialists	The official list of all Certified IT Specialists, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made publicly available on the Certification Authority's web site.

Evaluation Process Deficiency (EPD)	An agreed error in the Evaluation Process that is inhibiting the certification process. An Evaluation Process Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
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 Accredited Certification Program, Candidates 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 Conformance Requirements, Certification Policy, Accreditation Requirements, Accreditation Policy, or a standard or best practice referenced therein. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Problem Report (PR)	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of an accreditation or certification document, or the web-based Certification System.
Program Logo	The logo or other trademarks as designated from time to time by The Open Group for use within the Program in relation to Certified Specialists.
Specification Authority (SA)	The Open Group IT Specialist Certification working group, or its successor, which is responsible for developing, maintaining, and interpreting the Certification Policy, Conformance Requirements, Accreditation Policy and Accreditation Requirements of the Program.
Trademark License Agreement (TMLA)	The agreement between the Certified IT Specialist and The Open Group that contains the legal commitment by the Candidate to the conditions for use of the Program Logo.

1.6 Migration and Change History

This section details changes made to the Open CITS Certification Policy (Doc. No. X073).

Version No.	Date	Change
1.0	December 2007	First publication. Covers Level 1 and Level 2 certification.
2.0	February 2010	Supersedes Version 1.0. Includes coverage of certification to Level 3. Two Interpretations have also been addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> INT.ITSC.0003 (ACPs using panels rather than serial interviews) INT.ITSC.0007 (ACPs using two interviews (plus a tie-break if needed) at Level 1) These changes do not impose any additional restrictions on the way in which ACPs operate compared to Version 1.0, but instead allow options in the evaluation process that were not permitted in Version 1.0 of the Certification Policy.
2.0.1	July 2011	Supersedes Version 2.0. Contains cosmetic changes to Version 2.0 only for the change in program name.

2. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

This section defines the process a Candidate must follow to achieve certification.

The Program allows for either *direct* certification by The Open Group, or *indirect* certification by an Accredited Certification Program (ACP).

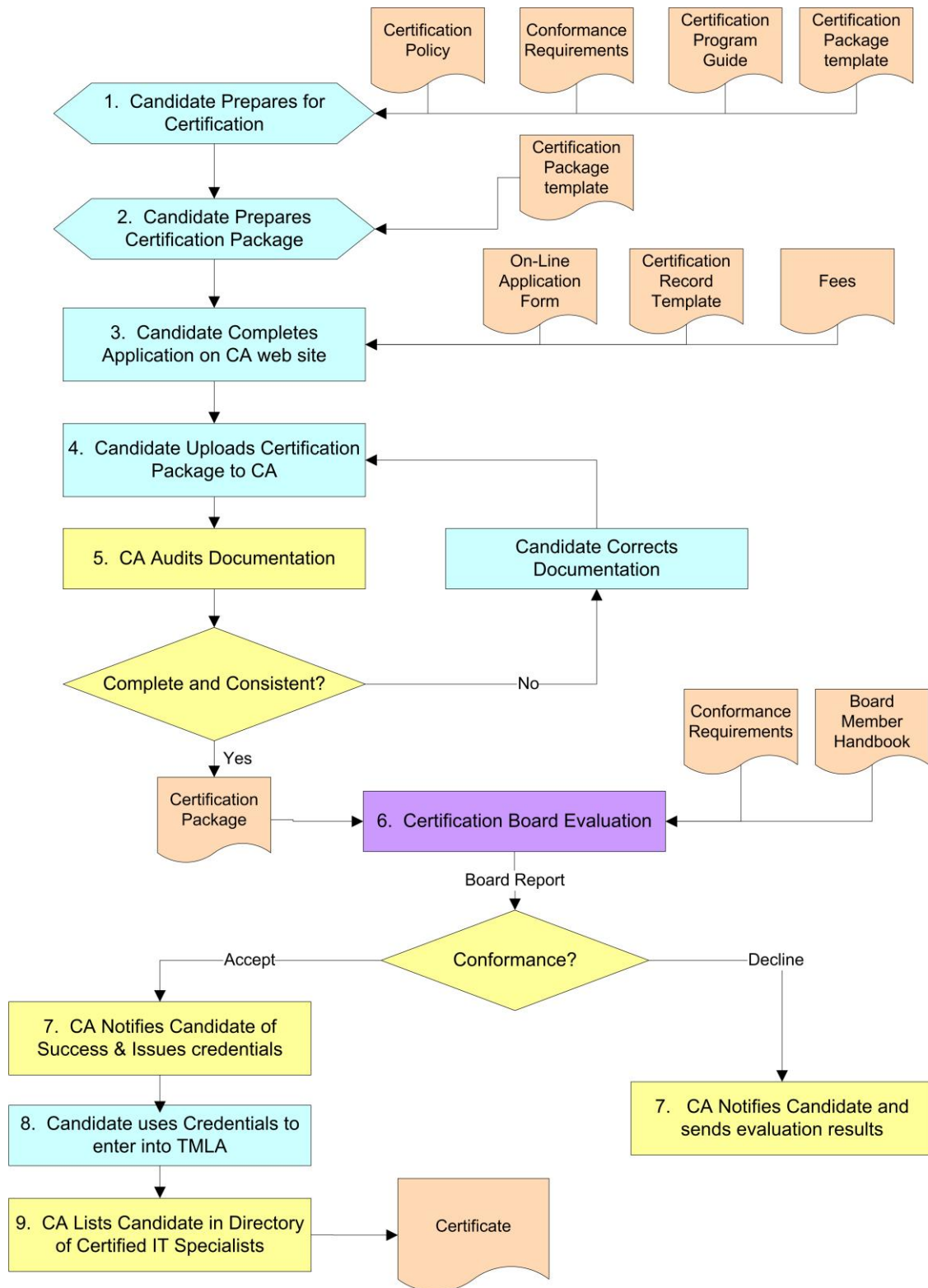
It is an essential feature of the Program that the Open CITS Conformance Requirements that Candidates must meet in direct certification must also be met by Candidates for indirect certification

The two processes are described separately in the following sections.

2.1 Direct Certification

The parties involved in the direct certification process are:

- The Candidate
- The Certification Authority
- The Certification Board
- The Specification Authority



1. Candidate Prepares for Certification

Prior to applying for certification, the Candidate should become familiar with the Program and ensure that all the applicable requirements are met.

To accomplish this, the Candidate should review this Open CITS Certification Policy document, the Open CITS Certification Package Template, the agreements that are part of the Program, and other related information such as the Certification Program Guide and FAQ. All information and documents related to the Program are available on the Certification Authority's web site.

Because of the number of Focus Areas and Streams in the Open CITS Conformance Requirements, Candidates must take great care to ensure that they obtain the correct Open CITS Certification Package Template from the Certification Authority's web site.

2. Candidate Prepares Certification Package

The Candidate must prepare a Certification Package by completing the Open CITS Certification Package Template provided by the Certification Authority. The Certification Package is a description of the skill levels attained and experience undergone by the Candidate that provides the Certification Authority with sufficient information to determine whether the Candidate meets the Open CITS Conformance Requirements.

3. Candidate Completes Application on Certification Authority Web Site

The Candidate must complete an Application Form, which includes the terms under which the Certification Authority provides the certification service and must also provide the information to be included in the Certification Record by completing the form provided on the Certification Authority web site. The Certification Record identifies the Candidate, provides a summary of how the Candidate meets the Open CITS Conformance Requirements, and identifies the chosen Client Focus Area, Technical Focus Area, and Stream.

The certification fees must be paid at this stage.

4. Candidate Uploads Certification Package to Certification Authority

When ready to do so, the Candidate may upload the completed Certification Package to the Certification Authority web site.

The Candidate's Certification Package will not be made public (see Section 12).

5. Certification Authority Audits Documentation

The Certification Authority 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 certification process can continue, and will be allowed a single opportunity to do so.

Once the submission is validated as complete and well formed, the Candidate's Certification Package and Certification Record will be passed to the Certification Board for evaluation.

The Certification Authority will perform the audit of the submitted information within ten (10) business days of receiving a complete submission.

If the Certification Authority audit shows that a re-submitted application is not complete or well formed the second time, the application will be rejected and the Candidate will have to re-apply at a time of the Candidate's choosing. No fees will be refunded.

6. Certification Board Evaluation

The Certification Board will evaluate each application for compliance to the Open CITS Conformance Requirements by following the evaluation process documented in the Open CITS Board Member Handbook.

The Evaluation Process consists of a Certification Board interview for those applications that have no conformance roadblocks noticed in the initial Certification Authority review.

Three (3) members of the Certification Board will be assigned to interview the individual in separate interviews. Certification Board interviews will take place either face-to-face during a conference hosted by The Open Group or by telephone interview. Certification Boards may also convene at other times as determined by the Certification Authority.

The objective of the Certification Board interview is to verify the information in the Candidate's Certification Package and validate the Candidate's professional skills and experience.

Candidates who are found to have willingly misrepresented their skills or experience may, subject to the appeal process, be censured by the Certification Board and banned from partaking in future certification reviews for a minimum period of one (1) year. The Certification Authority may, at any time, rescind a certification for similar reasons.

The Certification Board will evaluate each certification application and make a written recommendation to the Certification Authority regarding certification. At least two (2) of the three members of the Certification Board assigned to an application must concur with the recommendation to certify. Should an application be assessed as non-conforming, the Certification Board will state the reasons in writing and provide a written description of the deficiencies for the Certification Authority to pass to the Candidate to facilitate future enhancement to the Candidate's compliance to the Open CITS Conformance Requirements.

The Certification Board reports its findings to the Certification Authority in writing using the Certification Authority's web site.

7. Certification Authority Notifies Candidate

The Certification Authority will notify the Candidate in writing of the decision of the Certification Board.

If the decision is to accept the application for certification, the Certification Authority will issue credentials to the successful Candidate that will enable the Candidate to access the Certification Authority's web site to accept the terms of, and enter into, a Trademark License Agreement (TMLA) with the Certification Authority.

If the Certification Board decision is that the Open CITS Conformance Requirements have not been met, the Certification Authority will reject the application for certification and report the discrepancies with the Open CITS Conformance Requirements to the Candidate. The Candidate may undertake corrective action and re-apply after three (3) months, including payment of the applicable certification fees.

8. Candidate Uses Credentials to Enter into TMLA

The Candidate then uses the credentials to access the Certification Authority's web site to enter into a TMLA with the Certification Authority, and to obtain the artwork of the applicable Program Logo.

9. Certification Authority Lists Candidate in Directory of Certified IT Specialists

The Certification Authority will then make a Certificate available to the Candidate in electronic form and enter the Candidate's Certification Record into the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.

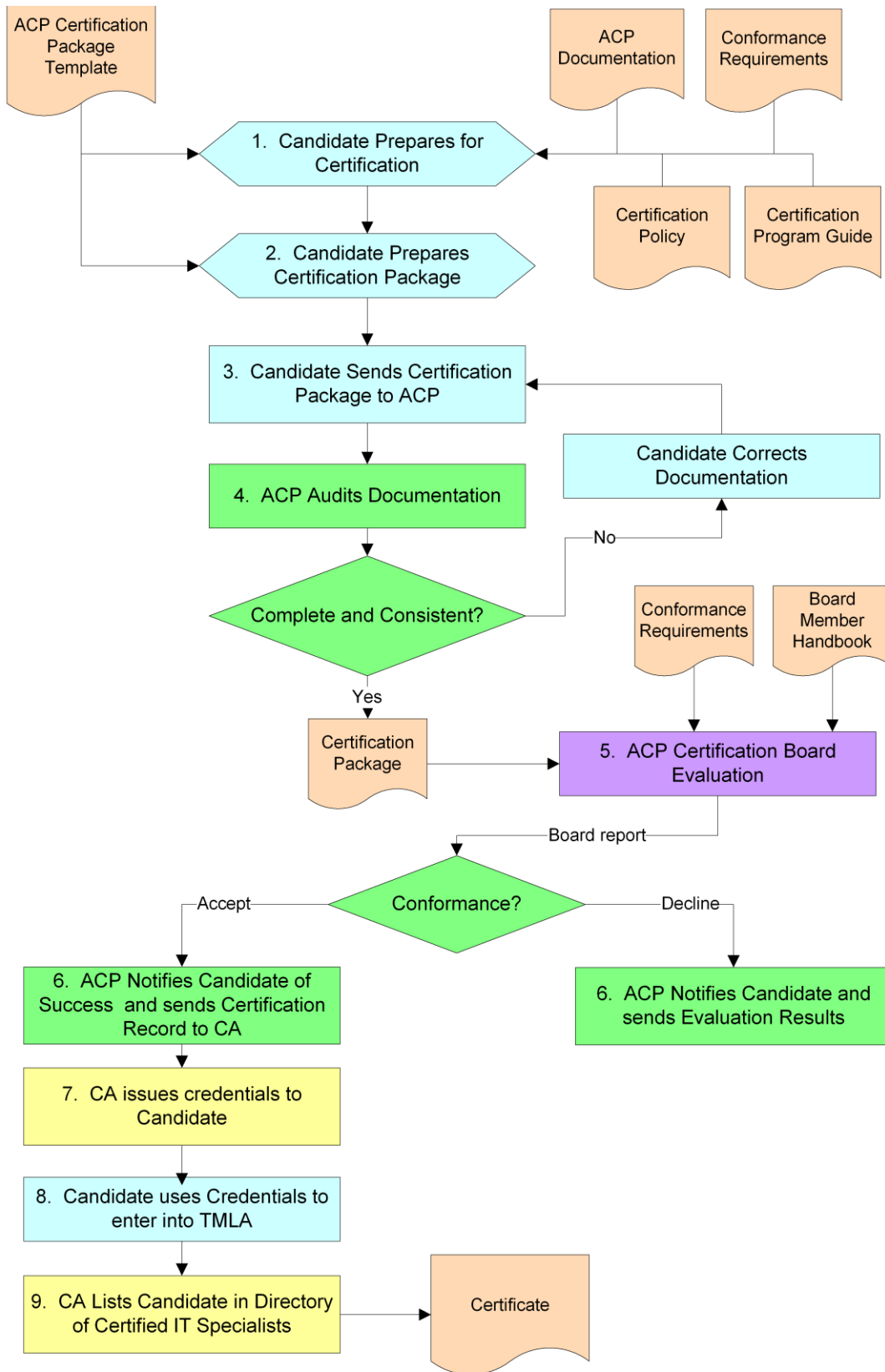
The credentials will also allow the Certified IT Specialist to control to whom the Certification Record is disclosed and to update contact and employer information in the Certification Record.

2.2 Indirect Evaluation

The indirect evaluation process delegates most of the activity of the Certification Authority and the Certification Board to an ACP.

The parties involved in the indirect certification process are:

- The Candidate
- The Accredited Certification Program (ACP)
- The Certification Authority
- The Specification Authority



1. Candidate Prepares for Certification

Prior to applying for certification, the Candidate should become familiar with the Program and ensure that all applicable requirements are met.

All information and documents related to the Program are available from the administrator of the ACP.

In order to achieve certification by The Open Group, the Candidate needs only to satisfy the requirements of the ACP, as the requirements for indirect certification will never be less stringent than the requirements for direct certification.

2. Candidate Prepares Certification Package

Part of the Candidate's set of documentation provided to the ACP administrator will be a Certification Record, created by completing a template made available by the ACP administrator.

The Certification Record identifies the Candidate, provides a summary of how the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements, and identifies the chosen Client Focus Area, Technical Focus Area, and Stream.

The Candidate must also prepare a Certification Package by completing the Certification Package Template provided by the ACP administrator. The Candidate's Certification Package is a description of the skill levels attained and experience undergone by the Candidate that provides sufficient information to determine whether the Candidate meets the Open CITS Conformance Requirements.

The Candidate's Certification Package will not be made public and will not be sent to the Certification Authority except if so requested by the Certification Authority for audit purposes.

3. Candidate Sends Certification Package to ACP

The Candidate submits the completed Application Form, Certification Record, and Certification Package to the ACP administrator.

4. ACP Audits Documentation

The ACP will review all of the information submitted by the Candidate to ensure it is complete and well formed. If errors or inconsistencies are found, the Candidate will be required to correct the problems before the certification process can continue.

Once the submission is validated as complete and well formed, it will be passed to the ACP's Certification Board for evaluation.

5. ACP Certification Board Evaluation

The Candidate's Certification Package will be evaluated for consistency and compliance to the Open CITS Conformance Requirements according to the ACP's procedures, which will include evaluation by the ACP's Certification Board members in separate interviews according to the process documented in the Open CITS Board Member Handbook. The evaluation will include interviews, either face-to-face or by video or telephone. Should an application be assessed as non-conforming, the Certification Board will state the reasons in writing and provide a written description of the deficiencies for the ACP to pass to the Candidate to facilitate future enhancement to the Candidate's compliance to the Open CITS Conformance Requirements.

6. ACP Notifies Candidate

The ACP will notify the Candidate of their acceptance or rejection. If the Candidate is accepted, the ACP administrator will also submit the Candidate's Certification Record to the Certification Authority.

7. Certification Authority Issues Credentials to Candidate

The Certification Authority will issue a credential to the successful Candidate that will enable the Candidate to access the Certification Authority's web site to accept the terms of and enter into a TMLA with the Certification Authority.

8. Candidate Uses Credentials to enter into TMLA with Certification Authority

The Candidate then uses the credentials to access the Certification Authority's web site to enter into a TMLA with the Certification Authority, and to obtain the artwork of the applicable Program Logo.

Payment arrangements must be complete before the TMLA can be entered into.

9. Certification Authority Lists Candidate in Directory of Certified IT Specialists

After acceptance of the TMLA by the Candidate, the Certification Authority will make a Certificate available to the Candidate in electronic form and enter the Candidate's Certification Record into the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.

The credentials already issued will allow the Certified IT Specialist to control to whom the Certification Record is disclosed and to update contact and employer information in the Certification Record. Update to employer information is subject to validation by the Certification Authority for Certified IT Specialists employed by organizations with an ACP.

3. CONFORMANCE

3.1 Conformance Requirements

It is an explicit condition of the Program that Certified IT Specialists warrant and represent that the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements are met at the time of certification and subsequently.

For indirect certification, it is an explicit condition of the Program that each Organization operating an Accredited Certification Program (ACP) warrants and represents that the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements are met by all IT Specialists certified through their program at the time of their certification and subsequently.

3.2 Certification Record

A Certification Record is the Certified IT Specialist's documented set of claims describing the way in which the Open CITS Conformance Requirements are met, including any optional requirements. The Candidate produces the Certification Record by completing the relevant Certification Record Questionnaire.

Certification Records are submitted to the Certification Authority as part of the application process for certification. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to ensure that the information supplied in the Certification Record is correct and complete. The Certification Record will be included in the Candidate's entry in the Directory of Certified IT Specialists once certification is complete.

Certified IT Specialists must ensure that their Certification Record is kept accurate and up-to-date and they will be required to confirm the correctness of the Certification Record annually at the request of the Certification Authority. Failure to confirm the Certification Record within 90 days of the request will mean certification will be terminated. If a Certified IT Specialist wishes to change administrative details – such as contact names, addresses, etc. – they will be able to do so directly on the Certification Authority's web site.

The Certification Record will contain the following information:

Field alterable by Certification Authority on receipt of proof of change of name:

1. Full Name

Fields editable by Certified IT Specialists:

2. If applicable, employer/business name and address
3. Phone number
4. Optionally: Alternate phone number
5. Email address
6. Postal address

Fields not editable by Certified IT Specialists:

7. Direct or indirect certification (if indirect, the name of the Organization operating the ACP with a link to the entry in the Accreditation Register)
8. Certification expiry date
9. Certification state: one of *current* or *lapsed*
10. Conformance Requirements met (name and version/date, level of certification, Technical Focus Area, Client Focus Area, and Stream)
11. History of past certifications (date of first certification, any certification at a new level, and dates of any re-certifications)

All Certification Records are in English.

Fields 3, 4, 5, and 6 are termed the *contact details*.

The Certification Authority will send email confirmation to Certified IT Specialists whenever there is a change to the contents of their Certification Record.

4. USE OF THE PROGRAM LOGO

4.1 Use by Certified IT Specialists

All Certified IT Specialists will be licensed to use the Program Logo, with the applicable tag line, in relation to the services they offer and in descriptions of themselves and their skills and experience; for example, in proposals and in marketing materials.

4.1.1 Licensing the Program Logo

At the completion of both the *direct* and *indirect* certification processes, the successful Candidates enter into a Trademark License Agreement (TMLA) for the Program Logo with The Open Group. The Open Group then issues the artwork for the Program Logo that includes a tag line or label that identifies the level of certification that has been achieved. The TMLA is the legal contract governing how the Program Logo may be used and defines the rights and obligations of the Certified IT Specialist.

Award of the Program Logo is not an endorsement of any product or service by The Open Group.

4.1.2 Use of the Program Logo

Certified IT Specialists are required to ensure that they continue to meet the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements at all times.

The Certification Authority has the right at any time to audit Certified IT Specialists' claims of conformance and adherence to the requirements of this policy and to the TMLA.

Customers and prospective customers of Certified IT Specialists who discover a non-conformance may report such non-conformance to the Certification Authority.

Use of the Program Logo with a tag line or label for a level higher than the one to which the IT Specialist is certified is not permitted. If a Certified IT Specialist is found to be doing so, then the Certification Authority may remove the IT Specialist from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists, in which case the IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist and may no longer use the Program Logo.

The Certification Authority may, at any time, request Certified IT Specialists to provide the Certification Authority with any information reasonably related to their conformance with the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements. If a Certified IT Specialist fails to provide such information within 45 days of the request, then the Certification Authority may remove the IT Specialist from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists, in which case the IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist and may no longer use the Program Logo.

If a Certified IT Specialist is found by any means to no longer meet the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements, the Certification Authority will notify the Certified IT Specialist who shall:

1. Within 90 days rectify the non-conformity and satisfy the Certification Authority of the efficacy of the rectification; or
2. Within 90 days satisfy the Certification Authority that they are conformant; or

3. Within 90 days cease all use of the Program Logo, in which case the IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist; or
4. Within 45 days invoke the appeals process as described in Section 11.

If option (4) is selected, the Certified IT Specialist will have 45 days from the completion of the appeals process to implement the decision or cease all use of the Program Logo.

If the IT Specialist fails to take one of the above actions within the timescales described above, the IT Specialist will cease to be a Certified IT Specialist.

4.1.3 Removal of the Program Logo

If an IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist, any and all rights they have to use the Program Logo cease immediately. The IT Specialist at their own expense shall remove the Program Logo from all sales literature, proposals, web sites, and other materials. The Certification Authority may inspect any such sales literature, or other materials, to ensure adequate removal of the Program Logo.

Once the rights to the Program Logo have been removed, any future use of the Program Logo will require re-certification.

Failure to adhere to these provisions will be a breach of the TMLA and shall result in its termination.

4.2 Use of the Program Logo by ACPs

4.2.1 Award of the Program Logo

Organizations operating an Accredited Certification Program (ACP) will be licensed to use the Program Logo, with applicable tag lines, in relation to the Certified IT Specialists they employ; for example, in proposals and in marketing materials.

The Program Logo with the applicable tag lines may be used by an ACP in relation to Certified IT Specialists once the Certification Authority has entered that Certified IT Specialist into the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.

The Program Logo may only be used on or in relation to Certified IT Specialists. It may not be used in relation to other employees that have not been certified, or that have been withdrawn from the certification process.

Award of the Program Logo is not an endorsement of any product or service by The Open Group.

4.2.2 Licensing the Program Logo

In order to use the Program Logo, the ACP will be required to enter into a TMLA with the Certification Authority. The TMLA is the legal contract governing how the Program Logo may be used and defines the rights and obligations of the ACP in respect of the Program Logo.

The TMLA requires the ACP to publicly “warrant and represent” that each of their Certified IT Specialists meets the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements, as well as to agree to the

policies expressed in this Open CITS Certification Policy document, the Open CITS Accreditation Policy, and the Open CITS Accreditation Requirements.

4.2.3 Use of the Program Logo

The ACP is required to ensure that their Certified IT Specialists continue to conform to the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements at all times.

The Certification Authority has the right to audit the ACP's claims of conformance and adherence to the requirements of this Open CITS Certification Policy and the TMLA.

Customers and prospective customers of an ACP's Certified IT Specialists who discover a non-conformance may report such non-conformance to the ACP in the first instance. If such complainants are not satisfied with the response from the ACP, they may report the matter to the Certification Authority via the Certification Authority's web site.

Use by the ACP of the Program Logo in relation to a Certified IT Specialist with a tag line or label other than the one to which the IT Specialist is certified is not permitted. If an ACP is found to be doing so, then the Certification Authority may remove the IT Specialist in question from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists, in which case the IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist and may no longer use the Program Logo.

The Certification Authority may, at any time, request an ACP to provide the Certification Authority with any information reasonably related to their Certified IT Specialists' conformance with the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements. If the ACP fails to provide such information within 45 days of the request, then the Certification Authority may remove the Certified IT Specialist(s) in question from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists, in which case the IT Specialist(s) in question cease to be Certified IT Specialist(s) and the Program Logo may no longer be used in relation to them.

If a Certified IT Specialist is found by any means to no longer meet the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements, the Certification Authority will notify the ACP who shall:

1. Within 90 days rectify the non-conformity and satisfy the Certification Authority of the efficacy of the rectification; or
2. Within 90 days satisfy the Certification Authority that the Certified IT Specialist is conformant; or
3. Within 90 days cease use of the Program Logo in relation to the Certified IT Specialist, in which case the IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist; or
4. Within 45 days invoke the appeals process as described in Section 11.

If option (4) is selected, the ACP will have 45 days from the completion of the appeals process to implement the decision or cease use of the Program Logo in relation to the Certified IT Specialist.

If the ACP fails to take one of the above actions within the timescales described above, the IT Specialist will cease to be a Certified IT Specialist.

4.2.4 Removal of the Program Logo

If an IT Specialist ceases to be a Certified IT Specialist, any and all rights the ACP has to use the Program Logo in relation to that IT Specialist cease immediately. The ACP at its expense shall remove the

Program Logo from all sales literature, web pages, and other materials related to that IT Specialist. The Certification Authority may inspect any such sales literature, web pages, or other materials to ensure adequate removal of the Program Logo.

Once the rights to the Program Logo have been removed, any future use of the Program Logo in relation to that IT Specialist will require re-certification.

Failure to adhere to these provisions will be a breach of the TMLA and shall result in its termination, the consequence of which is the removal of all of the ACP's Certified IT Specialists from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.

5. DIRECTORY OF CERTIFIED IT SPECIALISTS

5.1 Inclusion in the Directory

The Directory of Certified IT Specialists is a web-accessible record of all Certified IT Specialists and is maintained by the Certification Authority. The Directory contains the name of the IT Specialist, contact details, the name of the Accredited Certification Program (ACP) through which certification was achieved if applicable, and the IT Specialist's Certification Record.

For *direct* certification, once the Certification Authority is satisfied that the Candidate meets the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements and all other requirements for certification have been met, the Certification Authority will issue written notice to the Candidate that they have met the Conformance Requirements of the Program.

For *indirect* certification, once the ACP management is satisfied that the Candidate meets the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements and all other requirements for certification have been met, the ACP will issue written notice to the Candidate that they have met the Conformance Requirements of the Program and will send their Certification Record to the Certification Authority.

In either direct or indirect certification, the Certification Authority will then contact the Candidate requesting them to enter into the TMLA in order for the certification process to be completed and for their Certification Record to be entered into the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.

5.2 Visibility

By default, entries in the Directory of Certified IT Specialists are held confidential by the Certification Authority, and the Certification Authority will not disclose any information about Certified IT Specialists without permission. But customers and prospective customers of IT Specialists or their employers must be able to verify that an IT Specialist they have been sent or offered is indeed certified.

Therefore, the Certification Authority will make the Certification Record of a Certified IT Specialist available at the discretion of the Certified IT Specialist (see Section 12). At the time of certification, the Certification Authority will issue credentials to Certified IT Specialists that they may pass to their customers and prospective customers to allow queries on the web-based Directory of Certified IT Specialists. In response to a query, the Directory will return the complete corresponding Certification Record.

ACPs may elect to have their Certified IT Specialists listed publicly in the Directory of Certified IT Specialists by name only and may also elect to have the full Certification Records publicly accessible with or without contact details (see Section 3.2). ACPs may also elect to prevent the Certified IT Specialists they employ altering the visibility of their Certification Records.

IT Specialists certified *directly* by the Certification Authority may elect to be listed publicly in the Directory of Certified IT Specialists by name only and may also elect to have their full Certification Records publicly accessible with or without contact details (see Section 3.2).

Candidates' Certification Packages will never be made public by the Certification Authority or by an ACP.

5.3 Removal from the Directory

All past and present Certified IT Specialists are included in the Directory of Certified IT Specialists. If an IT Specialist ceases to be certified, the Certification Authority will change their certification status in the Directory to indicate the date at which certification was terminated.

An IT Specialist shall cease to be certified if:

- The IT Specialist or ACP requests that the Certification Authority withdraw them from the Directory of Certified IT Specialists.
- The IT Specialist ceases to meet the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements.
- The IT Specialist fails to meet the re-certification requirements or declines to re-certify.

Individuals found to have achieved certification under false pretences will be removed from the Directory.

6. EVALUATION

6.1 Board Member Selection Criteria

For Level 3 Certification Boards, all Certification Board members must be Level 3 Certified.

For Level 2 Certification Boards, all Certification Board members must be Level 2 Certified in the Client Focus Area and Stream of the Candidate, or be Level 3 Certified with their Level 2 Certification in the Client Focus Area and Stream of the Candidate.

For Level 1 Certification Boards, all Certification Board members must be Level 1 or Level 2 Certified in the Client Focus Area and Stream of the Candidate, or be Level 3 Certified with their Level 2 Certification in the Client Focus Area and Stream of the Candidate.

Certification Board Members must have been certified unanimously by their Certification Boards, and their Certification Boards must have unanimously recommended that they be invited to serve on Certification Boards.

6.2 Direct Evaluation Procedures

The process for evaluating conformance starts with a review of the Candidate's Certification Package by the Certification Authority.

This is followed by interview(s), as shown in the following table:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Initial Certification	Separate telephone interviews by each of the three members of the Certification Board	Separate face-to-face interviews by each of the three members of the Certification Board	Separate face-to-face interviews by each of the three members of the Certification Board
Re-certification	As defined in Section 9.2	As defined in Section 9.2	As defined in Section 9.2

The Open CITS Board Member Handbook defines the procedures to be followed when The Open Group directly assesses Candidates for their compliance with the Conformance Requirements.

The Open CITS Board Member Handbook is maintained by the Certification Authority and may be updated from time to time, subject to approval by the Specification Authority.

6.3 Indirect Evaluation Procedures

Accredited Certification Programs (ACPs) develop and maintain their own evaluation procedures. One of the principle Conformance Requirements of the ACPs is that they use procedures that are functionally equivalent to the Certification Authority's *direct* evaluation procedures and use evaluation criteria that are no less stringent than those used by the Certification Authority.

Evaluation by two Certification Board members is an equivalent process if both Certification Board members agree to accept the Candidate. An additional interview must take place to resolve any disagreement.

ACPs may employ evaluation procedures and criteria that are more stringent or wider in scope than those used by the Certification Authority.

An ACP is permitted to use interview panels rather than serial interviews. Such panels must have at least three (3) Certification Board members and may use more stringent voting rules than are required by the Program; for example, a requirement for unanimous rather than majority decisions.

An ACP using panels should be required to change the composition of the panel at least once every 12 months.

ACPs are required to update their evaluation procedures and criteria whenever this Open CITS Certification Policy or the Open CITS Board Member Handbook is updated in a way that materially affects the ACP's evaluation procedures.

For major changes and new requirements, ACPs must use the updated versions no later than six (6) months after publication of the new version by the Certification Authority.

For bug-fixes and minor changes, ACPs must use the updated versions no later than three (3) months after publication of the new version by the Certification Authority.

Categorization of changes into major, minor, or bug-fix is performed by the Specification Authority.

7. CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

If a Certified IT Specialist leaves the employment of the company listed as the employer in the Certification Record, the Certified IT Specialist must notify the Certification Authority within 30 days.

The Certified IT Specialist must update the Certification Record on the Certification Authority's web site using the Certified IT Specialist's credentials.

If a Certified IT Specialist moves to an employer that operates an Accredited Certification Program (ACP), the ACP must accept the change to the Certified IT Specialist's Certification Record using the ACP's credentials.

If a Certified IT Specialist moves to an employer that does not operate an ACP, certification continues as normal until re-certification. Re-certification will take place directly with the Certification Authority.

Change of employment does not affect the term of certification.

8. MULTIPLE CERTIFICATIONS

Certified IT Specialists may hold multiple certifications at a time. It is possible to be certified at different levels in different Client Focus Areas and/or Streams at the same time.

A Certified IT Specialist may seek certification in a new Client Focus Area and/or Stream at any time by making a new application for certification. Each certification is treated separately by the Program, and has its own certification and re-certification dates.

Certified IT Specialists are required at all times to avoid misrepresenting the Level, Stream, and Client Focus Area of their certification(s).

9. RE-CERTIFICATION

9.1 Duration of Certification

Certification is valid for three (3) years, after which re-certification is required. The last day of this three-year period is called the *re-certification due date*.

The objective of re-certification is to ensure that Certified IT Specialists continue to hone their skills and maintain their status as practitioners of the profession, as well as to ensure that the Directory of Certified IT Specialists is kept up-to-date.

The Certification Authority will send reminders by email to Certified IT Specialists four (4) months and two (2) months prior to the end of their three (3)-year certification term.

Re-certification may take place at any time between four months before and four months after the re-certification due date.

9.2 Direct Re-Certification

A Re-Certification Package must be submitted to the Certification Authority along with an updated Certification Record. The Certification Authority will audit the submitted documentation and validate that it is complete and well formed.

If complete and well formed, the documentation will be passed to the Certification Board for review against the then applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements.

The Certification Board process for re-certification at Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 is as follows:

- One Board member will review the Re-Certification Package.
- Normally the Board member will not interview the IT Specialist, but may do so to resolve questions of clarification.
- If the Board member considers that the Re-Certification Package meets the Open CITS Conformance Requirements, then the outcome of re-certification is to accept the re-certification.
- If the Board member recommends that the re-certification be declined, a second Board member will review the Re-Certification Package. If the second Board member also recommends that the re-certification be declined, then the re-certification outcome is to decline. If the second Board member recommends accepting the re-certification, then a third Board member will be asked to review the Re-Certification Package and decide the outcome. The second and third Board members may interview the IT Specialist by telephone or video.

If Certified IT Specialists wish to upgrade their certification to a higher level, they must apply for certification at that higher level.

After completion of the Certification Board review, notification, etc. will be carried out in the same way as for the initial certification.

Regardless of when re-certification takes place, the new three-year certification period starts at the end of the previous certification period.

If a Certified IT Specialist fails to re-certify within four (4) months after the re-certification due date, their certification will lapse. IT Specialists whose certification has lapsed may regain their certification by re-certifying at any time up until one (1) year after their re-certification due date. In such cases the new three-year certification period also starts at the re-certification due date.

9.3 Indirect Re-Certification

Accredited Certification Programs (ACPs) will operate an equivalent re-certification process, but may impose more stringent requirements.

10. PROBLEM REPORTING AND INTERPRETATIONS

10.1 Overview

During the certification process or during the preparation phase, a Candidate may encounter a problem that inhibits or will inhibit their certification submission or evaluation. The Candidate may file a Problem Report via the Certification Authority's web site to obtain resolution to the issue. The Certification Authority is the sole interface with the Candidate for problem reporting, though other parties may be involved in determining the resolution.

The types of problems that may be found include:

- Errors or ambiguities in the Open CITS Conformance Requirements against which certification is based
- Errors in the Evaluation Process (evaluation procedures and criteria)
- Errors in the Certification System itself, specifically related to the registration process, agreements, and completion of Certification Records

The Problem Report is used specifically for the types of errors listed above which are inhibiting the certification effort. For general questions on the certification process, or other problems not covered above, the Certification Authority can provide assistance on obtaining further information.

10.2 Problem Report Resolution

The Specification Authority is responsible for reviewing and providing a resolution to all Problem Reports. The key element of the review process is a deterministic timeline for a formal resolution to the Problem Report.

The Specification Authority will provide a resolution via the Certification Authority to the Candidate within 25 business days of the Problem Report submission.

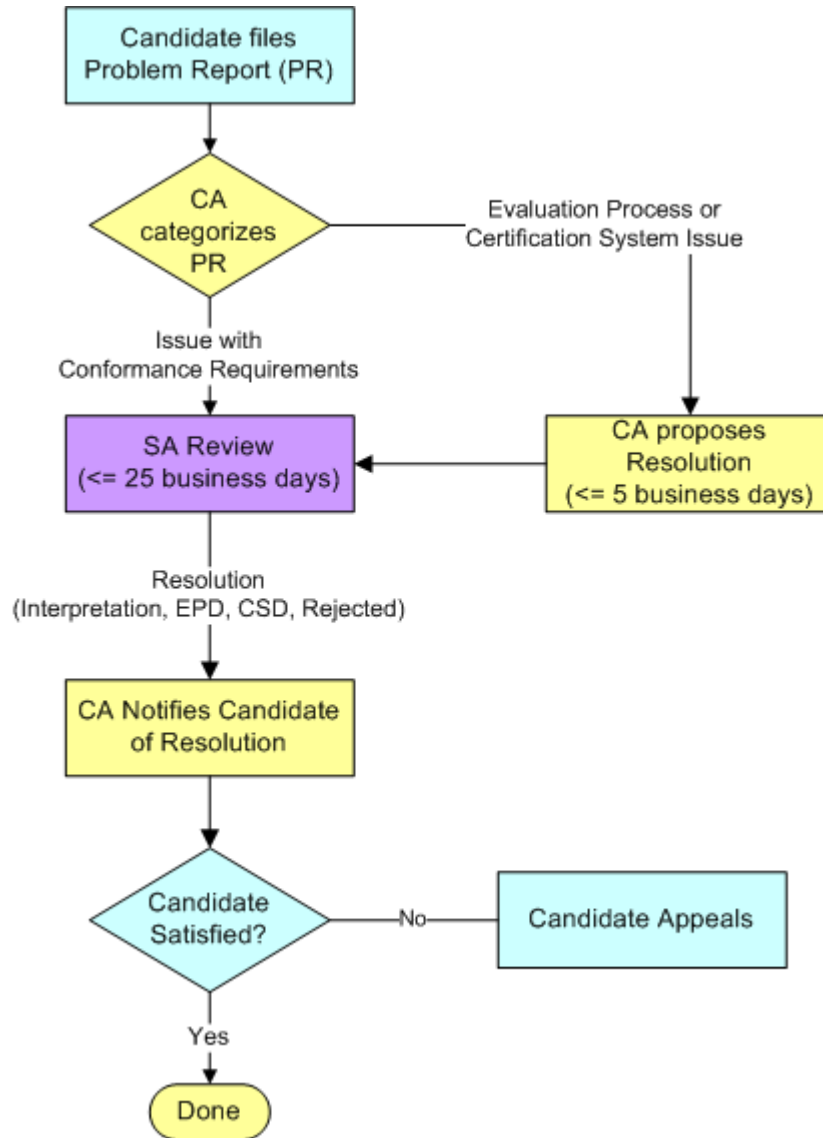
In most cases, 25 business days is sufficient to provide a final Problem Report resolution. However, in exceptional circumstances, final resolution may take longer. If possible, the Problem Report will be addressed sufficiently within the 25 business days to allow the certification process to proceed pending final resolution. The Certification Authority will notify the Candidate by the 25th day of the delay and any preliminary resolution, if available.

If the Candidate is not satisfied with the final resolution, the Candidate may invoke the appeals process.

The Problem Report resolution process will allow the Candidate to remain anonymous, so pre-certification activity is kept entirely confidential. The anonymous review process requires that requests be filtered automatically prior to distribution to the review group. Filtering will remove the section of the Problem Report intended to identify the Candidate, so these are the only sections that should contain company names, product names, or other confidential information. Please note that if Candidate-specific information is included in the sections reserved for the technical descriptions, filtering will not result in an anonymous request.

In order for the Specification Authority to resolve Problem Reports for issues related to the Evaluation Process, an opinion from the Certification Authority is required. Likewise, for Problem Reports related to the Certification System, the Specification Authority will require an opinion from the Certification Authority. These opinions must be provided within five (5) business days, in order for the Specification Authority to provide its response on time.

The process is outlined in the following diagram.



10.3 Resolution of Problem Reports

The possible outcomes for Problem Report resolution are:

- Accepted as an error or ambiguity in the Open CITS Conformance Requirements (an Interpretation)
- Accepted as an error in the Evaluation Process (Evaluation Process Deficiency (EPD))

- Accepted as an error in the Certification System (Certification System Deficiency (CSD))
- Rejected

The issuance of Interpretations, EPDs, and CSDs will not cause previously Certified IT Specialists to be “un-certified”. Interpretations, EPDs, and CSDs evolve the definition of conformance over time and Certified IT Specialists are always required to conform to the current definition of conformance. At the time of certification renewal, the Certified IT Specialist will be required to confirm that they conform to the applicable Open CITS Conformance Requirements, including all Interpretations that have been granted since the previous certification.

10.3.1 Interpretations

An Interpretation elaborates or refines the meaning of a set of Conformance Requirements, by clarifying an error or ambiguity in the Open CITS Conformance Requirements document or a document referenced therein. Interpretations apply to a specific version of a Open CITS Conformance Requirements document and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until the Open CITS Conformance Requirements document is updated, at which time, the elaboration or refined meaning should be incorporated into the updated version.

The Specification Authority is responsible for deciding the meaning of conformance, in the IT Specialist context, to third-party specifications or other documents that form the Open CITS Conformance Requirements or which are referenced therein. Problem Reports regarding such underlying or referenced specifications in the context of IT Specialist certification will be processed as normal. Problem Reports regarding underlying or referenced specifications in any other context will be rejected.

10.3.2 Evaluation Process Deficiency

An Evaluation Process Deficiency (EPD) is an agreed error in the evaluation procedures or criteria that form the Evaluation Process. EPDs apply to a specific version of the Evaluation Process and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until the Evaluation Process is updated, at which time the error should be fixed.

10.3.3 Certification System Deficiency

A Certification System Deficiency (CSD) is an agreed error in the Certification System. The Certification System includes the workflow and information systems provided to implement the certification process. CSDs apply to the version of the Certification System in which they are found. If the problem is blocking the certification effort, a patch will be made to the Certification System to enable certification to proceed. Otherwise, the problem will be fixed in a future update of the Certification System and the CSD will remain in force until such update.

10.4 Problem Report Repository

The Certification Authority will maintain a web-accessible repository of all submitted Problem Reports. This repository will be publicly accessible. The publicly accessible information will contain the technical details – such as the nature of the problem and its current status of resolution – but will not contain sections reserved for Candidate details, thus maintaining the confidentiality of the Candidate.

A Candidate may cite an Interpretation, EPD, or CSD to resolve discrepancies in their application for certification, or to support their application for certification in any other way, irrespective of the origin of the Problem Report.

11. APPEALS PROCESS

Candidates may appeal decisions made by the Specification Authority or Certification Authority. The occasions that may give rise to an appeal include, but are not limited to:

- The Candidate disagrees with the resolution of a Problem Report.
- The Candidate disagrees with the Certification Authority's grounds for denying the award of certification.
- The Candidate disagrees with a formal notification of the need to rectify a non-conformance.

Appeal requests should be made to the Certification Authority. The Certification Program Guide describes the process for raising an appeal.

There are two levels of appeal:

- A Technical Review
- A Board Review

At each level of appeal, the Candidate has the right to representation at the review meeting to make their case, though is not required to do so. The appeals process will be anonymous if the Candidate does not wish to be represented at the review meetings. In such case, the Certification Authority will remove the details of the Candidate from all information provided for the Technical and/or Board Reviews.

A Candidate wishing to dispute a decision may request a Technical Review. Technical Review requires the Specification Authority to consider the matter and produce a response with a recorded vote according to normal voting rules of The Open Group, within 30 calendar days of the request. The Specification Authority may commission reports from independent experts, and may seek input from other committees within The Open Group as it sees fit.

If the Candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the Technical Review, the Candidate may request an appeal to The Open Group Board of Directors within 14 calendar days of being notified in writing by the Certification Authority of the results of the Technical Review. The Open Group Board of Directors may ask for technical reports from the relevant working groups and may also ask for reports from independent experts. The Board Review will be completed within 90 calendar days of the Candidate's written request for a Board Review. The results of a Board Review are final and cannot be further appealed.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

12.1 Confidentiality

All information relating to a Candidate will be held confidential to the Accredited Certification Program (ACP), the Certification Authority, and Certification Board during the certification process; that is, prior to the award of certification. This includes information related to the Application Form, Certification Record, Certification Package, and any Problem Reports.

Candidates' Certification Packages will always be considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed in any publicly available document or to any third party by the ACP, the Certification Authority, or the Certification Board.

In addition, the Certification Authority will always hold confidential all information regarding unsuccessful applications for certification.

12.2 Disclosure of Information

Any claims of conformance or information related to the certification process may only be made public after the Certification Authority has notified the Candidate in writing that they have successfully completed the certification process.

Certified IT Specialists must provide sight of their Certificates and access to their Certification Records to actual and prospective customers at the customer's request.

The Certification Authority will make certification information available as described in Section 3.2 and Section 5.2.