

Policy and Rules for Impartiality

VLAC-VR108: 2024

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Voluntary EMC Laboratory Accreditation Center
NOA Building 7th floor, 3-5 Azabudai 2-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106-0041

1. Objective and Scope

This document applies to the policy and procedures to maintain fair operation of the laboratory accreditation business of VLAC and to identify and minimize potential risks that might impair that impartiality.

2. Policy for Impartiality

Under any circumstances, VLAC is non-discriminatory in making accreditation decisions, including those on granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending, and withdrawing accreditation. VLAC performs accreditation operations impartially so that participation in the accreditation system will not be conditional on the size of the applicant laboratory, membership of any association or group, or financial restriction.

Under any circumstances, VLAC impartially makes accreditation decisions, including those on granting, maintaining, extending, reducing, suspending, and withdrawing accreditation.

2.1 VLAC is responsible for the impartiality of services that are provided to all the applicants requesting accreditation. VLAC shall not be subject to pressure in regard to commercial, financial, or any other outside influences that might compromise impartiality.

2.2 The personnel of VLAC shall not be subject to pressure that can compromise impartiality in compliance with the working regulations. Each assessor makes a written pledge with the Accreditation Operations Department of VLAC to ensure that the assessor has no past or current interest invested in the laboratory to be assessed. Each committee member can perform accreditation activities only after signing a contract that covers confidentiality rules.

2.3 VLAC General Manager is responsible for the impartiality of accreditation activities. VLAC defines its impartiality policy as follows:

- (a) VLAC General Manager has a duty to make decisions on accreditation, and, therefore, cannot perform any assessment operation in regard to accreditation processes.
- (b) VLAC neither proposes nor provides any service that might affect the impartiality of its operation.
- (c) VLAC does not provide consultancy concerning the conformity assessment service or accreditation. In addition, VLAC neither suggests nor implies that using specific personnel or consultancy simplifies, facilitates, hastens, or cost-cuts accreditation.

2.4 VLAC's personnel, assessors, and committee members who might affect the accreditation process must act objectively, and pledge, according to working regulations or by a contract, that they are free from any undue commercial, financial, and other pressures that can compromise impartiality.

Before starting activities related to accreditation processes, VLAC's personnel, assessors, and committee members must make a written pledge to disclose any interests they have with the laboratory subject to their accreditation activities.

3. Evaluation of impartiality

(a) VLAC sends a survey sheet once a year to the following interested parties to evaluate impartiality:

- VLAC accredited laboratories
- Accreditation Committee members
- Assessors
- Parent company (VCCI Council)

A questionnaire for impartiality survey will be sent to all accredited testing laboratories and a request evaluation of impartiality.

VLAC will encourage the collection of the questionnaires to avoid going unanswered for two consecutive years.

(b) VLAC receives opinions and feedback from interested parties.

To safeguard impartiality and establish and maintain principles and main policy for the operation of the accreditation system, VLAC enables interested parties to post their opinions via the website of VLAC.

The Business Administration Department manager collects posted opinions for the use of materials to be discussed in the management review.

(c) To ensure impartiality of interested parties in the organizational structure, VLAC accepts persons from the business community (manufacturers and testing companies), public bodies (testing bodies, accreditation bodies, and laboratories), and academic society as board members, personnel, assessors, and committee members. VLAC provides various opportunities for deliberation with interested parties as follows:

- Shareholders' meeting and board meeting
- Training of assessors and skill session
- Skill session with laboratories

4. Actions against risks of compromising impartiality

4.1 If risks of compromising impartiality are identified, VLAC documents and demonstrates how to eliminate or minimize the risks, and then documents any residual risks.

Potential risks and the risks arising from accreditation activities are as follows:

- (a) Potential risks inside of VLAC, such as prejudices, discrimination, misunderstandings and so on.
- (b) Relationship between VLAC and parent company ~~corporation~~ (VCCI Council)
- (c) Relationship between VLAC and laboratory or regulatory authority
- (d) Relationship between VLAC and other organizations (committees or academic society)
- (e) Relationship between VLAC and outsources (committee members or assessors)
- (f) Others

4.2 VLAC director reviews risks in the management review. Each risk is reviewed continuously until it is mitigated to an acceptable level.

4.3 If an unacceptable risk of compromising impartiality is identified, VLAC will suspend accreditation activities until the risk is mitigated to an acceptable level.

4.4. VLAC neither proposes nor provides any service that affects impartiality. Such services include the following:

- (a) Implementation of testing subject to accreditation activities, conformity determination, and calibration of the testing machines and measuring instruments to be used for the testing
- (b) Consultancy for applicant laboratory that affects accreditation processes and decision on accreditation
- (c) Provision of proficiency testing and presentation of comparison among laboratories
- (d) Others

4.5. At laboratory assessment, VLAC and VLAC's assessors do not provide specific solutions to items that are determined to be Nonconformity or Observation items. Neither VLAC nor VLAC's assessors provide consultancy that is related to a laboratory's process.

(Examples)

- Giving specific instructions on testing or measuring methods or operation support
- Recommending specific subcontractors, testing machines, or measuring instruments
- Participating in the establishment or revision of the laboratory's documents, e.g., procedure manual

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Revision history

Summary of revision VR108:2024

Partially revised clause 1 and corrected stakeholders on clause 3 a)

Summary of revision VR108:2022

2022.08.09 words and description was corrected on clauses 4.1 and 4.3

VR108:2018

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