



## **APLAC EVALUATORS – QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING AND MONITORING OF PERFORMANCE**

## **PURPOSE**

This document details the terms of reference of the APLAC MRA Council's Working Group on Evaluator Performance, and sets out the procedures to be followed to meet those terms of reference, and sets out the typical elements of an evaluator training course.

## **AUTHORSHIP**

This publication has been written by the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Council's Working Group on Evaluator Performance.

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## **1. Introduction**

To implement the APLAC MRA effectively, the APLAC MRA Council needs the services of a panel of experienced evaluators who are fully familiar with accreditation criteria (ISO/IEC 17011; ISO/IEC 17025; ISO/IEC 17020; ISO 15189, ISO Guide 34), and with the APLAC Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual Recognition Arrangements amongst Accreditation Bodies (APLAC MR 001).

The Council needs to be confident that its evaluators are competent to perform MRA evaluations and that any of their recommendations arising from such evaluations can be accepted with confidence. Reassurance is also needed that evaluators can conduct evaluations in an objective, impartial manner and are able to communicate effectively with the bodies under evaluation and through the reports they prepare for both the accreditation bodies and the APLAC MRA Council.

The membership of the Working Group comprises the APLAC Chair, the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council and the Immediate Past Chair of APLAC. The Working Group is convened by the Immediate Past Chair, unless otherwise endorsed from time to time by the APLAC MRA Council.

## **2. Terms of Reference**

The MRA Council's Working Group on Evaluator Performance has the following terms of reference:

- Develop and maintain the system for monitoring the performance of evaluators;
- Review the summary CV forms and supporting statements for nominated evaluators to ensure that the nominees meet the criteria detailed in appendix 1;
- Review evaluator feedback forms and team leader evaluator feedback forms;
- Review evaluation reports to ensure they meet the format requirements of APLAC MR 001, and that they clearly state findings against the relevant clauses of ISO/IEC 17011, APLAC MR 001 and other applicable criteria documents;
- Arrange for the provision of suitable feedback to evaluators with regard to their performance with the goal of improving performance;
- In consultation with the APLAC Training Committee, identify and plan training opportunities for evaluators;
- Make recommendations to the MRA Council for the appointment and re-appointment of lead evaluators;
- Handle complaints about alleged unacceptable performance of evaluators in a discreet, tactful manner so as not to publicly embarrass either party to such a complaint.

### **3. Qualifications of Evaluators**

There are three grades of evaluator: lead evaluators, evaluators and provisional evaluators. Only lead evaluators are qualified to lead evaluation teams while all grades of evaluator are eligible to be members of an evaluation team. The qualification requirements for lead evaluators, evaluators and provisional evaluators are specified in Appendix 1 below.

Each person nominated as a potential evaluator shall undertake an appropriate evaluator training course prior to appointment as a provisional evaluator, unless they have attended an acceptable course prior to the nomination. The names of the nominees shall be placed on a separate list to be invited to attend the next planned APLAC evaluator training course.

A provisional evaluator is introduced into a team that comprises experienced evaluators. Attendance as an observer in an evaluation team is another mechanism to develop provisional evaluators. A provisional evaluator shall also participate satisfactorily in at least one evaluation as a team member before being confirmed as an evaluator.

APLAC member accreditation bodies, irrespective of whether they are signatories to the APLAC MRA, may nominate in writing potential evaluators to the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council. The nomination shall include a description of the relevant experience and the scopes of activity of each proposed evaluator, and a statement that the nominee has the attributes required of an evaluator, as detailed in section 3 of Appendix 1, including sufficient English language skills. The nomination shall be accompanied by a completed evaluator form (see Appendix 2), and include email contact address, relevant professional qualifications, professional experience, and details of the area(s) of evaluation expertise (e.g. calibration (specify calibration areas), chemical testing, ISO 15189, inspection, CRMs, proficiency testing), and details of any relevant training courses.

The Chair of the APLAC MRA Council shall ask the Evaluator Performance Working Group to assess if the nominee meets the criteria. Once a nominee is assessed as meeting the criteria, the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council shall advise the APLAC Secretary who shall update the evaluator list accordingly.

The team leader shall provide a report on the performance of a provisional evaluator, including a recommendation on whether or not appointment as an evaluator is recommended. If appointment as an evaluator is recommended, the convenor of the Evaluator Performance Working Group shall consult with the other members of the Working Group and then advise the Secretary to change the status from provisional evaluator to evaluator in the evaluator listing.

### **4. Appointment and Reappointment of Lead Evaluators**

The APLAC MRA Council shall maintain a list of all evaluators and oversee their performance in accordance with the criteria in Appendix 1 below.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council to consult with lead evaluators who have worked with the nominee before a prospective lead evaluator is added to the list. Such consultation should include with the convenor of the Working

Group on Evaluator Performance, who may have information available on the past evaluation performance of the proposed lead evaluator.

A procedure for monitoring performance of lead evaluators and other evaluators is detailed below. To ensure that lead evaluators continue to maintain the necessary expertise, the Working Group on Evaluator Performance shall:

- a) Review the list of APLAC lead evaluators annually to ensure that listed lead evaluators continue to be actively involved in accreditation activities and have conducted a sufficient number of evaluations to maintain expertise;
- b) Review the ongoing re-appointment of any lead evaluator who has been the subject of a poor rating from the evaluator monitoring process, or who has been the subject of any complaint which, after investigation, is found to be justified. This also applies to any other evaluation team members.

Each lead evaluator is appointed for a 3 year term that can be renewed.

The procedure for appointment of the team leader and team members for a specific evaluation is given in section 8.1 of APLAC MR 001.

## **5. Monitoring the Performance of Evaluators**

Team leaders are responsible for the effective conduct of all APLAC MRA evaluations. They are also responsible for monitoring the performance of each of the members of their evaluation team.

Each team leader shall complete a brief Evaluator Performance Log (see Appendix 3) and return the completed form to the convenor of the Evaluator Performance Working Group within one month of the completion of the on-site evaluation. This Evaluator Performance Log is also to be used for provisional evaluators.

Team members may also submit any comments on the team leader to the convenor of the Evaluator Performance Working Group. They should use the form in Appendix 4 for this purpose.

Should the performance of any team member be considered to be unsatisfactory, or there are training or development needs proposed for an evaluator, the convenor of the Working Group shall discreetly consult with the other members of this Working Group and with the relevant evaluator on the areas of performance that may require improvement. In extreme cases, or where an evaluator is unwilling to accept proposals for improvement, the Evaluator Working Group may recommend removal of the evaluator from the MRA Council's list of evaluators.

To monitor the performance of team leaders, each MRA signatory or applicant shall be asked to reply to a letter (see Appendix 5 for a typical example) from the convenor of the Working Group asking for comment on the performance of the evaluation team, and particularly of the team leader. This letter shall be sent out to the accreditation body once the evaluation team has finalised its report and sent it to the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council with a letter of recommendation.

In addition, the Working Group shall review the format (rather than specific comments or recommendations) of each evaluation report to determine whether the reporting requirements of APLAC MR 009 are met. Any perceived deficiencies in a report shall be advised to the MRA Council Chair, who shall consider all comments on an individual lead evaluator and, in consultation with the other members of the Working Group, take any necessary action to advise the person of areas for improvement. Once again, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to remove the person from the MRA Council's list of lead evaluators.

## **6. Complaints and Appeals in Relation to Evaluator Performance**

In most cases the convenor of the Working Group on Evaluator Performance shall personally undertake any investigation of such complaints and make recommendations to the APLAC MRA Council Chair for possible action. If the convenor's involvement may lead to a conflict of interest another member of the Working Group shall review the complaint and advise the MRA Council Chair of the outcome. After such investigation and consideration by the MRA Council Chair, the convenor of the Working Group will advise the complainant of the outcome of the complaint.

An evaluator may appeal against any recommendation of the Working Group on Evaluator Performance. In the first instance an appeal shall be submitted to the APLAC MRA Council Chair. The APLAC Board of Management shall be the Appeals Committee. Any member of the Board of Management whose involvement in the appeal may lead to a conflict of interest shall not participate in the review of the appeal.

## **7. Training and Development**

Appendix 6 gives an outline of typical elements of an evaluator training course, designed to develop the skills and knowledge of evaluators. All nominated potential evaluators shall undertake appropriate training by APLAC or an equivalent regional cooperation prior to listing as a provisional evaluator, unless they have attended an acceptable training course prior to the nomination.

Every two years the Working Group on Evaluator Performance shall report to the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council on any issues of evaluator performance arising from its review of feedback forms and evaluation reports, that could affect the content of APLAC training courses for evaluators.

APLAC evaluator training courses shall be provided on an "as needs" basis, as deemed necessary by the APLAC MRA Council.

At each meeting the APLAC MRA Council shall consider the need to provide training courses in the next twelve months. Matters to consider include:

- nomination of potential evaluators who have not done a training course
- changes to relevant standards
- changes to APLAC MRA documents and procedures

The Council shall decide on the timing and venue of the training courses and shall apply to the APLAC General Assembly for appropriate funding. In general funding should be sought to cover the following:

- economy class airfare for each course presenter
- 4 nights accommodation for each course presenter
- hire of venue and equipment; lunches and refreshments
- subsidy to cover part of costs for each trainee

The amount of the subsidy, and whether or not the amount varies depending upon the distance to be travelled by the trainees, shall be decided when the budget for the course is set.

The convenor of the APLAC Evaluator Training Working Group shall, in consultation with the Chair of the APLAC MRA Council, appoint appropriate course facilitators (usually 3).

Class size shall be restricted to 20 – 25.

APLAC shall provide a three day training course for new evaluators, and, normally, a two day “refresher” course/workshop for lead evaluators.

A certificate of attendance, signed by the APLAC Chair, shall be provided to each participant who completes the course.

Participants in each course shall be asked to complete a course feedback form (an example is given in Appendix 7). The comments in the completed forms shall be analysed and used to modify the content of future training courses, as necessary.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF EVALUATORS**

### **1. APLAC Lead Evaluators**

- 1.1 An APLAC lead evaluator shall be able:
  - 1.1.1 to lead the evaluation in an efficient and effective way, and be able to distribute the evaluation tasks equitably amongst team members;
  - 1.1.2 to evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s), and its accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s);
  - 1.1.3 to organize an evaluation team with an appropriate composition (maximum coverage of scope of the accreditation body and minimum number of members);
  - 1.1.4 to decide from the submitted documentation any areas requiring special examination during the evaluation;
  - 1.1.5 to report clearly and succinctly the findings of all team members, in compliance with this document;
  - 1.1.6 to determine the criticality of the non-conformities, concerns and comments;
  - 1.1.7 to evaluate whether the corrective actions, undertaken by the accreditation body are effective;
  - 1.1.8 to adapt quickly and easily to different accreditation cultures.
- 1.2 In order to meet these criteria, an APLAC lead evaluator shall:
  - 1.2.1 be an experienced person, working in an accreditation body or similar organisation, who has relevant accreditation work experience and has an appropriate technical background and experience in assessment activities (at least 3 years);
  - 1.2.2 have participated as a team member in at least two APLAC (or equivalent) evaluations of accreditation bodies;
  - 1.2.3 have a sound knowledge of the application of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standards and relevant APLAC MRA documents;
  - 1.2.4 be able to understand and to express him/herself clearly in English, in speaking and writing, to the APLAC MRA Council;
  - 1.2.5 have experience in chairing meetings and in reaching consensus on matters of contention;

1.2.6 have good interpersonal skills.

1.3 The APLAC MRA Council shall arrange periodic meetings for lead evaluators in order to improve and maintain the harmonization of the evaluations.

## **2. APLAC Evaluators and Provisional Evaluators**

2.1 An APLAC evaluator or provisional evaluator shall be able:

2.1.1 to evaluate whether an accreditation body complies with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s) and its accredited organisations comply with the requirements of the appropriate ISO(/IEC) standard(s) and other APLAC application documents;

2.1.2 to report findings clearly and succinctly;

2.1.3 to determine the criticality of the findings.

2.2 An APLAC provisional evaluator shall:

2.2.1 be an experienced person or assessor, within his/her accreditation body or similar organisation, who has relevant working experience in accreditation and the appropriate technical background in the assigned areas of the evaluation (at least 3 years);

2.2.2 have successfully completed a relevant training course(s);

2.2.3 have a sound knowledge of the application of appropriate ISO(/IEC) standards, and relevant MRA supplementary requirements;

2.2.4 have good interpersonal skills;

2.2.5 be able to be understood and to express him/herself clearly in English.

2.2.6 follow the instructions given by the team leader.

2.3 In addition to meeting the requirements of clause 2.2 above, an APLAC evaluator shall have participated as a team member for at least one evaluation, and have received a satisfactory report on performance from the team leader.

## **3 Evaluator Attributes (based on ISO 19011: 2002)**

3.1 Evaluators should:

3.1.1 be open minded and mature;

3.1.2 possess sound judgement, analytical skills, and tenacity;

3.1.3 have the ability to perceive situations in a realistic way, to understand complex operations from a broad perspective, and to understand the role of individual units within an organisation;

- 3.2 Evaluators should be able to apply the attributes of A3.1 in order to:
- 3.2.1 obtain and assess objective evidence fairly;
  - 3.2.2 remain true to the purpose of the evaluation without fear or favour;
  - 3.2.3 evaluate constantly the effects of evaluation observations and personal interactions during an evaluation;
  - 3.2.4 treat concerned personnel in a way that will best achieve the evaluation objective;
  - 3.2.5 react with sensitivity to the local conventions of the area in which the evaluation is performed;
  - 3.2.6 perform the evaluation process without deviating due to distractions;
  - 3.2.7 commit full attention and support to the evaluation process;
  - 3.2.8 react effectively in stressful situations;
  - 3.2.9 arrive at generally acceptable conclusions based on evaluation observations;
  - 3.2.10 remain true to a conclusion despite pressure to change that is not based on evidence.

Appendix 2

**APLAC Evaluator Summary Biography**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Family Name:  |  |
| Given Name:   | Mr/Ms/Dr (please indicate)                   |
| Organisation:   |  |
| Position within Organisation:   |  |
| Economy:  |  |
| Email Address:  |  |
| Post-Secondary Educational Qualifications; <i>including technical areas of qualification:</i>               |  |
|   |  |
| Accreditation Body Experience; <i>including dates/time periods, description:</i>                            |  |
|   |  |
| Lead Assessor and/or Evaluator Training Courses, <i>including dates, length of course, course provider:</i> |  |
|   |  |
| Evaluation Competencies: <i>(please answer “yes” or “no” to each category)</i>                              |  |
| Yes/No  | Testing (ISO/IEC 17025) Specify areas: ..... |
|   | .....  |
| Yes/No  | Testing (ISO 15189)                          |
| Yes/No  | Calibration. Specify areas: .....            |
|   | .....  |
| Yes/No  | Inspection                                   |
| Yes/No  | RMP  |
| Yes/No  | PT <sup>1</sup>                              |

<sup>1</sup> Competency in PT is not related to the accreditation of PT Providers, but rather to the ability to critically evaluate how PT programs are operated (generally in accordance with ISO Guide 43 expectations) and critically evaluate PT performance.

Other Relevant Professional Experience (prior to joining accreditation body):

Other Relevant Experience (e.g. standards body membership; experience as a trainer in the area of accreditation):

***In accordance with MR 004, Section 3 (para. 4), please attach a statement from the applicant's accreditation body, MRA Council Delegate or Alternate that the applicant possesses the attributes required of an APLAC Evaluator.***

## APLAC MRA EVALUATOR - PERFORMANCE LOG

### Confidential

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name APLAC Member

Evaluated Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation Team Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Mark one or more of the following performance categories:

- (a) Evaluator's performance satisfactory in all areas
- (b) Evaluator techniques need to be improved (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)
- (c) Evaluator misunderstands APLAC MR 001, ISO/IEC 17011, or ISO/IEC 17025 (or ISO/IEC 17020 or ISO 15189 or ISO Guide 34) requirements (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)
- (d) Evaluator's preparation for visits needs improvement (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)
- (e) Evaluator's written and/or spoken communication needs improvement (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)
- (f) If the evaluator is a provisional evaluator, do you recommend appointment as an evaluator?
- (g) Any other comments (see below)

Commentary: (Please relate comments to each relevant category marked above; attach extra pages if needed)

Date: ..... Signature of Team Leader: .....

Appendix 4

**APLAC MRA EVALUATOR - PERFORMANCE LOG FOR TEAM LEADER**

**Confidential**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Team Leader: _____<br>Name  | Employer: _____<br>APLAC Member  |
| Evaluated Organisation : _____  |  |
| Dates of Evaluation : _____ / Evaluator Completing this Log: _____<br>Name                                |  |
| Mark one or more of the following performance categories:   |  |
| (a)   | Team Leader's performance satisfactory in all areas  |
| (b)   | Evaluator techniques need to be improved (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)  |
| (c)   | Team Leader misunderstands APLAC MR 001, ISO/IEC 17011, or ISO/IEC 17025 (or ISO/IEC 17020 or ISO 15189 or ISO Guide 34) requirements (detail specifics in "Commentary" below) |
| (d)   | Team Leader's preparation for visits needs improvement (detail specific in "Commentary" below)   |
| (e)   | Team Leader's written and/or spoken communication needs improvement (detail specifics in "Commentary" below)   |
| (f)   | Any other comments (see below)   |
| Commentary: (Please relate comments to each relevant category marked above; attach extra pages if needed) |  |

Date: ..... Signature of Evaluator: .....

## Appendix 5

Evaluated Organisation Address

Dear (APLAC contact)

### **Performance of APLAC MRA Evaluation Team**

The APLAC MRA Council's Working Group on Evaluator Performance is responsible for monitoring the performance of APLAC MRA evaluation teams to ensure they are as effective and consistent as possible. Part of that monitoring involves the performance of the Team Leaders for APLAC MRA evaluations.

As your organisation has recently been evaluated by an APLAC MRA evaluation team, I am writing as convener of the Working Group on Evaluator Performance to seek your comments on the performance of the team which conducted the evaluation of your accreditation body.

While I would welcome any comments of a general nature such as "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory", etc, I would invite you to consider the following aspects of the evaluation and, to comment on them:

- a) Was your organisation adequately briefed before the visit on the evaluation team's preparation needs (supply of documents, arrangement of visit schedule, etc)?
- b) Did the team conduct the evaluation in a comprehensive and objective manner?
- c) Were the questions and comments from the team communicated clearly?
- d) Was the exit meeting conducted effectively with appropriate opportunities for your comments on the team's findings?
- e) Was the report on the evaluation, in your view, accurate and clearly presented?
- f) Are there any other aspects of the evaluation on which you would wish to comment?

Naturally, we hope that your experiences were positive but if there are any issues of concern raised by you, these will be carefully considered by the Working Group to ensure any necessary improvements are made to our evaluation processes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Convener, APLAC MRA Council Working Group on Evaluator Performance

## Appendix 6

### TYPICAL ELEMENTS OF AN EVALUATOR TRAINING COURSE

#### Typical topic areas

- concepts of accreditation and conformity assessment
- proficiency testing in the context of ISO/IEC 17011
- review of ISO/IEC 10711 – key elements; possible “contentious” clauses
- ILAC/IAF A2, ILAC P1, APLAC MR 001, APLAC MR 002, ILAC/IAF A3, APLAC MR 009
- planning an evaluation, including construction of a suitable team and assignment of tasks
- evidence gathering, linkage to clauses of ISO/IEC 17011 and other requirements documents (needs to emphasise that findings must be linked to relevant clause of document; findings cannot be written against ILAC/IAF A3)
- report preparation and report writing

#### Possible group exercises

- evidence needed to evaluate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011
- planning an evaluation, based on an accreditation body scenario
- reporting of findings, classification of findings, linkage to ISO/IEC 10711 clauses and clauses of other requirements documents

#### Information provided to course participants in advance

- agenda
- PowerPoint presentation from each of the course facilitators

#### Course participants to bring

- copy of ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020, ISO 15189, ISO Guide 34
- copy of ISO/IEC 17011
- copy of ILAC/IAF A2, A3; ILAC P1, P8, P9, P10; APLAC MR 001, MR 002,, MR 007, MR 009



## APLAC Evaluator Training Course : Course Evaluation

Your feedback is important to us, and will help us to improve our course.

### 1. Course Objectives

Are you confident you can:

|   | Yes                      | Probably,<br>with<br>practice | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Plan and conduct an APLAC MRA evaluation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Effectively evaluate an AB's compliance with ISO/IEC 17011                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Distinguish between non-conformities, concerns and comments when preparing your report | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Prepare a report on an AB that addresses all the elements of ILAC/IAF A3               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### 2. Course Delivery

|  | Yes                      | Partly                   | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Was there enough practical application in the course? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Did the activities improve your grasp of the topic?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Were the course notes useful?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Do you think you will use the course notes in future? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Suggestions for improvements .....

.....

.....

**3. Course Presenters**

- |   | Yes                      | Partly                   | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Did the presenters have adequate knowledge of the content? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Did the presenters make the course interesting?            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Was the course well organised?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments .....

.....

.....

**4. Course venue**

- |   | Yes                      | Partly                   | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Was the venue in a good location?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Was the training room a suitable learning environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Were the refreshments adequate?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments .....

.....

.....

**5. Overall impression**

- |  | Yes                      | Partly                   | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Do you think you will be able to implement the techniques presented in this course in an APLAC MRA evaluation team? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Were your expectations for the course met?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**6. Further suggestions (eg. content, delivery)**

Comments .....

.....

.....

**THANK YOU**

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Course date: \_\_\_\_\_