

Welcome to IPC Newsletter



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IPC Chairman 2025 address

Dr Tommy Lo



At the beginning of 2025, I extend my warmest wishes to you and preparing for another remarkable year.

This year, the global certification industry faces significant challenges, particularly in ESG and advancements in green technology and certification. Certification activities are becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Audits play a vital role in ensuring the quality, impartiality, and validity of ESG reporting.

The demand for impartial services from Auditors, Quality Managers, and Verifiers continues to grow substantially.

IPC is an international PCB organization association, dedicated to developing certification schemes for professionals and addressing society's need for professional competence. IPC also serves as the "Scheme Owner" for the QMS Auditors Certification Scheme, based on the IAF-endorsed Level 5 Normative Document. Furthermore, our IPC VVB Verifier/Validator Personal Certification Scheme has expanded to include services such as greenhouse gas verification/validation and ESG reporting.

IPC remains actively engaged in collaborating with various organizations and participating in global activities. Last year, I had the honor of representing IPC at the 2024 World Accreditation Day cum China Certification & Accreditation Conference in Xiong An, Peking, alongside Hong Kong officials, including Lau Man Wai Assistant Commissioner for Innovation and Technology (Quality Services), Ms. Jenny Yeung, Dep Head of GEO (Planning & Testing) of Civil Engineering and Development, and Mr. Wilson Shum, Executive Administrator of Hong Kong Accreditation Services. On October 4, 2024, IPC also participated in the IAF-ILAC working group Persons Certification meeting ISO17024 in Berlin, which followed the IPC AGM held in the same city.

As we look to the year ahead, let us continue to embrace our profession, striving to create meaningful connections and explore new possibilities. May 2025 bring happiness, prosperity, and fulfillment to you and your loved ones.



From Left: IPC Chairman Lo, Mr. Lau Man Wai, Ms. Jenny Yeung, and Mr. Wilson Shum



IPC Strengthens Global Collaboration at IAF/ILAC Annual Meeting in Berlin

IPC continues to enhance its collaboration with the global accreditation community and industry experts. This year, IPC's delegation actively participated in the International Accreditation Forum (#IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (#ILAC) Joint Annual Meetings, held from October 1 to 10, 2024, in Berlin, Germany. IPC representatives made significant contributions to various, personnel certification related, committees and working groups, reinforcing IPC's commitment to advancing international accreditation practices in personnel certification arena.



IAF-ILAC
2024 JOINT ANNUAL MEETINGS
1-10 OCTOBER, 2024 - BERLIN, GERMANY

The IPC delegation was led by its President Dr. Tommy Lo, and included Dr. George Anastasopoulos, IPC General Secretary and Mrs. Vicky Karvela, IPC Secretariat.

>>> IAF and ILAC merge to establish Global Accreditation Cooperation announced in Berlin



Following their merger decision, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) are set to continue their activities under the Global Accreditation Cooperation framework. The establishment process was a key agenda item during the IAF-ILAC annual meetings held in Berlin on October 9, 2024.

The Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated was officially registered as a legal entity, an incorporated society in New Zealand, on December 6th, 2024. This milestone marks a pivotal step in the journey toward a single international organization for accreditation, one that will unify the work of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). The merger of IAF and ILAC to form Global Accreditation Cooperation, a single international body overseeing both laboratory and certification activities, is scheduled to be fully operational by January 1, 2026. Until that time, the existing agreements of IAF (MLA) and ILAC (MRA) will remain valid. Cooperation membership during this transition while retaining their current statuses. The official documents for Global Accreditation Cooperation will be finalized by the end of 2025. Members will sign transition agreements during this period to join Global Accreditation Cooperation. Financial arrangements will ensure that membership fees do not exceed IAF and ILAC levels, with a review planned by the end of the 2025 fiscal year.

>>> UPDATE: Revision of ISO 9001

- Revised project timeline and new publication date.

According to the new revised project timeline, from ISO/TC 176/SC 2/WG 29, the standard development track has been extended to 36 months to include the second Committee Draft stage. The publication of the revised ISO 9001 is now planned for September 2026.



>>> Competence vs. Qualification

- Application note

In today's competitive world, the terms competence and qualification are often used interchangeably, but they hold distinct meanings and implications. While qualifications provide formal proof of education or training, competence reflects an individual's ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively in real-world situations. Understanding the difference between these two concepts is crucial, especially in contexts like hiring, professional growth, and performance evaluation.

The terms "competence" and "qualification" are related but distinct, particularly when discussing skills, education, and professional performance. Here's a breakdown:

Competence

Definition: *The ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results (ISO/IEC 17024).*

Focus: Capability and performance.

Components:

- Practical skills.
- Knowledge application.
- Problem-solving and decision-making.
- Behavior and attitude.

Assessment: Measured through actions, achievements, or performance in real-life scenarios.

Example: A nurse demonstrating competence by effectively caring for a patient, regardless of formal credentials.

Qualification

Definition: *A formal recognition (certificate, degree, or credential) that attests to a person's knowledge or training in a particular field or subject.*

Focus: Credentials and certifications.

Components:

- Training Certificates.
- Academic degrees.
- Licenses or certifications.
- Compliance with legal or regulatory requirements.

Assessment: Based on education, training, or passing formal tests or exams.

Example: A nurse having a degree in nursing and a license to practice.

While qualifications are essential for establishing a foundation and meeting formal requirements, competence ultimately determines success in real-world scenarios. The ideal balance lies in combining the two—leveraging qualifications to open doors and relying on competence to excel. In both personal and professional settings, recognizing the distinction and interdependence between these concepts is key to fostering growth, performance, and achievement.

Key Differences

Aspect	Competence	Qualification
Nature	Practical and performance-oriented.	Theoretical and recognition-based.
Measurement	Through actions and effectiveness.	Through documents and credentials.
Importance	Demonstrates the ability to perform.	Proves formal training or eligibility.
Dependency	Can exist without formal qualification (e.g., self-taught skills).	Does not guarantee actual competence.





A Vision Realized: SHI's Journey to IPC Associate Membership

By Jasmin Dhakaan,
Founder and Global Director,
Standardization Hub International Ltd.

Five years ago, I had a simple yet transformative thought: to bridge the significant gaps in knowledge, skills, and experience within the field of ISO standards. Today, it fills me with immense pride to share that this vision has led Standardization Hub International Ltd. (SHI) to be adopted as an associate member of IPC. This milestone is not just a recognition of SHI's efforts but a testament to the impact of collaboration, innovation, and determination in standardization.

Simplifying Complexity

ISO standards often carry an aura of complexity, which can be daunting for many. However, complexity does not have to equate to complication. A mentor once told me, "You become a true trainer when you can explain a complex subject to a six-year-old." This wisdom has shaped SHI's approach to ISO education. We believe in breaking down intricate concepts into accessible and practical knowledge, empowering individuals and organizations to embrace standardization confidently.

Addressing Gaps with the Three Pillars of SHI

Through our journey, we identified critical gaps in skills, knowledge, and experience that hinder the effective implementation of ISO standards across industries. To address these, SHI operates on three foundational pillars—the 3 Cs:

1. Competence: Providing in-depth knowledge and simplifying ISO standards for diverse industries, making them accessible and actionable.
2. Confidence: Building individual and organizational assurance through skill development and hands-on learning.
3. Community: Creating a dynamic support network that fosters continuous growth, knowledge sharing, and collaboration.

These pillars form the bedrock of SHI's mission to drive excellence and foster a culture of innovation and sustainability in the ISO landscape.

The Path to Mastery: A Five-Step Framework
We believe that anyone can master ISO standards with the right guidance and structured approach. SHI's training philosophy is built on these five critical steps:

1. Study the Standard: Familiarize yourself with the terminology, definitions, and requirements.
2. Awareness Training: Gain clarity from expert trainers who simplify the standard's requirements for practical understanding.
3. Implementation Training: Engage in workshops that offer step-by-step guidance for real-world implementation.
4. Internal Audit Skills: Develop the ability to conduct effective internal audits, a crucial step in mastering standards.
5. Lead Auditor Development: Build on internal auditing experience to become a lead auditor, advancing your career and contributing to organizational excellence.

This structured learning journey, combined with our commitment to staying at the forefront of technology and innovation, ensures that individuals and organizations are well-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of ISO standards.

A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

At SHI, we believe in continuous improvement—not just for those we train but also for ourselves. Our programs integrate the latest technology, certification assessments, and community-driven support to create a comprehensive ecosystem for learning and growth. This ensures that SHI remains a trusted partner in standardization, adapting to industry needs and empowering professionals to excel.

A Future of Shared Success

Being adopted as an associate member of IPC is a monumental step for SHI. It reaffirms our mission and energizes our commitment to simplifying ISO standards, fostering competence, and creating a global community of standardization leaders. This journey would not have been possible without the trust and collaboration of our partners, trainers, and community members.

As we celebrate this achievement, we remain steadfast in our belief that with the right tools, guidance, and determination, anyone can master the complexities of ISO standards. Together, we will continue to drive innovation, build confidence, and create lasting impact in the world of standardization.

Here's to shaping the future of ISO education, one step at a time.



The Top 10 "Secrets" of an "Intelligent" Management Systems Auditor

by Dr. George Anastopoulos

General Secretary IPC

Technical Manager PJLA Accreditation (ganast@pjlab.com)

Working for more than 25 years in Conformity Assessment auditing arena, I have finally mastered to assemble my top 10 list of the "Secrets" of a successful (read: "Intelligent") Management Systems Auditor! And I am sharing it with you:

1. Mastery of Standards

Maintain an in-depth understanding of relevant standards. Stay updated with changes in standards and industry regulations and try to find ways to "sneak-in" Technical Committees that develop or update the standards of your interest.

2. Exercise Analytical & Critical Thinking

Analyze organizational data trends to achieve meaningful understanding. Don't stick in the ugly routine of premade checklists. Use process approach to understand workflows identifying easily control points and inefficiencies.

3. Effective Communication

Work closely with auditees to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and learning. Speak their language. Communicate clearly, avoiding technical jargon when addressing non-technical stakeholders.

4. Ethical and Objective

Ensure impartiality, independence and objectivity, avoiding conflicts of interest. Maintain strict confidentiality regarding the organization's operations and findings. Retain objectivity to ensure findings are based on facts and evidence, not personal biases or external pressures.

5. Empathy and Understanding

Understand the organization's unique challenges, industry, and culture. Listen patiently and actively engaging with staff at all levels to get a holistic view of the management system.

6. Strategic Perspective

Align audit objectives with the organization's strategic goals and priorities. Understand the context of the operation of the organization and how it is impacting their management system.

7. Adaptability and Flexibility

Be prepared to adjust audit scope and methods based on audit progress. Develop skills for conducting remote audits as they become more and more popular. Conducting remote audits is much more demanding than performing on-site audits. Learn to utilize AI, machine learning and audit management software to streamline processes, identify anomalies, and manage documentation.

8. Reporting and Findings

Maintain accurate and comprehensive records of audit activities, findings, and evidence. Produce reports that highlight issues based only on facts. Your personal opinion doesn't matter. Else, become a consultant!

9. Interdisciplinary Knowledge

Exercise your cross-functional understanding. Have a working knowledge of various functions within the organization to better assess how different processes interact and impact the system. Never stop investing in improving your competence. Participate in audit communities or networks to share knowledge, best practices and learn from others' experiences.

10. Focus on Continuous Improvement

Encourage organizations to go beyond mere compliance and strive for excellence. Provide actionable insights that lead to measurable improvements. Also, apply this "secret" to yourself!





IPC members view on **“Unlocking Potential: How AI is Changing Personnel Certification”**



Dr. Faton Aliu,
President at PECB

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming traditional personnel certification through increased efficiency, objectivity, and access in certification processes. Traditionally, conventional certification processes depend on normative tests and handwritten assessments, tending to yield cumbersome processes with high susceptibility to bias. AI technology is transforming this field through automation, performance analysis, and creation of individualized learning routes.

The greatest impact of AI is experienced in adaptive testing, in which difficulty level varies in relation to a candidate's answer, providing a truer reflection of a candidate's competencies and capabilities. Simultaneously, AI-facilitated proctoring strengthens examination security through real-time tracking of aberrancies, effectively minimizing fraud potential.

Apart from testing, AI enables tracking of workers' development and future skill gaps determination. AI algorithms, through analysis of certification information, can make specific recommendations for programs in upskilling, allowing professionals to respond to a changing work environment.

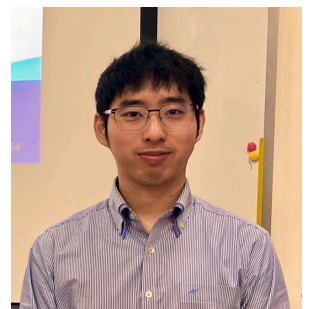
AI strengthens trust in certification through simulation and performance testing, acting as a tool for competency demonstration. Instead of having to depend exclusively on conventional pen-paper tests for competency assurance, candidates can present competencies through real-life experiences in actual environments.

The ongoing development of AI technology will make personnel certification an increasingly sophisticated and information-intensive system that mirrors a variety of industries' disparate requirements. By infusing AI in certification processes, companies can maximize workers' full capabilities and maintain high standards and pertinency in a changing work environment.

Artificial intelligence will accelerate the personnel certification process and improve accuracy through automation and data analysis, while also reducing the risk of fraud. For instance, AI-powered biometric identification and behavioral analysis can quickly verify an applicant's identity and lessen the likelihood of impersonation.

Meanwhile, AI can continuously monitor dynamic data to detect abnormal behaviors, issuing real-time alerts when problems arise or withholding scores after examinations for organizers to review.

However, the use of AI also raises concerns about personal data privacy and algorithmic bias, necessitating stricter regulations and ethical guidelines to ensure fairness and information security. Furthermore, it is possible that one day, more advanced AI may circumvent our monitoring systems to forge identities or exam results, which is something we must be especially vigilant about.



Mr. Jau-Jhong Yu,
Top-ISO International Limited

>>> IPC members view on “Unlocking Potential: How AI is Changing Personnel Certification”



Mr S.Elango,
Course Director BMQR Certifications Pvt Ltd

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, AI is significantly transforming the ISO/IEC 17024 personnel certification industry. AI-driven tools enhance certification processes by automating key functions such as exam proctoring, credential verification, document review, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) tracking. AI-powered online proctoring systems utilize facial recognition and behavioral analytics to ensure fair assessments, reducing cheating and logistical challenges associated with remote exams.

Furthermore, AI-based question generation allows for the creation of scenario-based questions that accurately assess candidates' competencies while providing personalized learning experiences.

For credential verification, AI tools automate identity and qualification checks, enhancing the reliability of the certification process and decreasing fraudulent applications. Skill validation is also streamlined with AI-driven assessments that monitor practical competencies through simulations and real-time performance tracking.

Moreover, AI-powered compliance checkers ensure that documents meet ISO/IEC 17024 requirements, reducing manual workloads and improving accuracy in verification processes. AI aids CPD tracking by monitoring professionals' training activities and providing reminders for certification renewals, ensuring ongoing compliance.

Additionally, AI-driven tools support GHG emission verification for sustainability professionals, automating environmental audits and bolstering the integrity of certification programs related to environmental impacts. Overall, AI innovations optimize certification procedures and uphold the highest standards in personnel certification.

>>> PJLA announces launch stage of new Training Providers and/or Curriculum Developers Program.

PJLA, the US based, third party Accreditation Body, headquartered at Troy-Detroit, Michigan, announced the release of a new program for the accreditation of Training Providers and/or Curriculum Developers (TPCD) in accordance to the ASTM E2659 “Standard Practice for Certificate Programs” and IPC-SC-11-002 - “Specification on Recognition of Training Courses and Training Providers”.

The PJLA TPCD accreditation program provides a framework to ensure that certificate programs meet stringent quality requirements, promote consistent learning outcomes, and enhance the credibility of professional development efforts.

PJLA, a global accreditation body with more than 2100 accreditations in 32 countries, offers a streamlined and professional process to help Training Providers and/or Curriculum Developers to align their programs with the ASTM E2659 standard and IPC-SC-11-002 Specification.

PJLA is inviting interested parties that wish to participate and be accredited under TPCD program to contact ganast@pjlabs.com.



Internships >>>

IPC's remote internships are designed for students who are unable to travel but still want to boost their career prospects with overseas work experience and professional coaching tailored to specific career goals. IPC remote internships are unpaid positions providing volunteers with practical experience in English.

The internship period should be at least 2 months, and at most 12 months. The exact dates will be agreed between IPC and the intern. The topic of Internship is to Support IPC in social media, Newsletter, and electronic brand building projects.

Knowledge of desktop publishing software and familiarity with social media applications will be appreciated but it is not required.

To apply, the candidates must submit an email at secretary@ipcaweb.org explaining the reasons they wish to be accepted as IPC interns attaching their detailed CV.



For further questions, please contact IPC secretariat at: secretary@ipcaweb.org

Editor's note:

Please, feel free to forward this newsletter to your colleagues, business associates and any other party that might be interested. If they are wishing to join our mailing list, and for any additional questions please don't hesitate to contact us at:

secretary@ipcaweb.org.

This newsletter was prepared by IPC 2025 interns' team consisted by:

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