

What are Certification Consultants?

A **consultant** can be defined as “someone with specialist knowledge, skill or experience who advises other people on a particular subject” or “A person who provides professional or expert advice relating to a particular field of practice or operations to either an organisation or individual”.

A **consultancy** is an organisation providing that support through its individual consultants.

A **certification consultant** can be defined as “a consultant that is retained, or commissioned, by an organisation seeking certification by Bild ACT, for the purposes of achieving that certification’.

There are 3 typical ‘**types**’ of support provided by certification consultants:

- Type 1: Provide Pre-prepared Resources. Examples include policies, procedures, forms, presentation slides, handouts, and videos. May be sold to, or licensed by, the applicant.
- Type 2: Develop Bespoke Resources for The Client. Examples include policies, procedures, forms, presentation slides, handouts, videos, and risk assessments. Are typically owned wholly by the applicant.
- Type 3: Provide a Service to Applicants. Such services can include the screening of potential trainers, the training of trainers, the quality assurance of trainers and training delivery, the review and approval of materials or resources produced by the commissioning organisation or other third party, the representation of the applicant at panel or the facilitate annual reviews.

The Expectations of Applications Involving Certification Consultants

In the event an application involves input from a certification consultant the following must be confirmed:

- A. Applicants must declare any certification consultants involved in any applications. An opportunity to do this will be included in the eligibility form, or once the application has been formally made. It may also become a focus for panel enquiries. Such declarations/notifications must be supported by appropriate evidence.
- B. Applicants must outline the precise nature of the support provided i.e., the ‘**type**’ of support, and the scope of that support.
- C. Certification consultants must provide applicants with an agreements/contracts outlining the consultancy service*
- D. Certification consultants themselves must provide information that provides reassurance that they have the necessary competency to provide the consultancy as outlined in the scope of the agreement/contract. This would be uploaded along with other evidence.
- E. The certification consultant must confirm they have the rights to share/license any materials and make clear any limitations on the use of the materials supplied.
- F. Where the certification consultant works under a contract of employment with an organisation other than the one, they are providing consultancy to, their main employer must have assented to any full-time, part-time, or competing career role as a consultant.
- G. Certification consultants have a positive duty to inform Bild ACT in the event any licensed use of materials lapses as this may leave the organisation using them in a state of non-conformity.
- H. Certification consultants involved in supporting applications must attend familiarisation.
- I. Certification consultants involved in supporting applications may attend panel.

The Commissioning of Certification Contracts: Contract/Agreement Requirements*

- It must be made clear to the client that the mere supply or development of resources is not sufficient to ensure ongoing conformity to the RRN Training Standards, applicants must use the resources as specified. NOTE. It would be good practice to include a simple guidance document that provides and easy to follow overview of how resources are used.
- It must be made clear that any resources provided, which are found to meet the evidence requirements of the standards, must thereafter be used as supplied. and not amended without the assent of the certification consultant and the approval of Bild ACT

The Use of Certification Consultants

- Where quality assurance checks are part of the service provided the scope of these, as well as the outcome of them must be specified, and the implications of non-conformity made clear.
- If the certification consultant, through routine monitoring, or because of information received, becomes aware of any minor/unintentional non-conformities they have a positive duty to notify the applicant and encourage their resolution.
- If the certification consultant, through routine monitoring, or because of information received, becomes aware of any major/intentional non-conformities they have a positive duty to notify Bild ACT as this may impact on the competency of staff being trained, or the safety of individuals they are supporting. This can be considered akin to raising a safeguarding concern or 'whistleblowing'.

Consultant Non-Conformities

As a result of the scrutiny an applicant is placed under, non-conformities may be identified. The responsibility to discharge these will be the responsibility of the applicant. They may or may not use the certification consultant to resolve non-conformities.

There are however a range of non-conformities that will be retained by the certification consultant. These include:

- Any misrepresentation of professional status or qualification made by the certification consultant.
- Any intellectual property breach relating to the resources provided by the certification consultant i.e., resources or materials that they do not have the rights to share/sell.
- Any substantial concerns or complaints that are upheld following investigation by Bild ACT or clients of the certification consultant.

Until these non-conformities are resolved the certification consultant may be removed from an application

In some instances, non-conformities raised against specific certification consultants may have implications for organisations they are concurrently providing support to.

In some instances, non-conformities raised against specific certification consultants may have implications for organisations they have previously provided support to.

The Certification Director reserves the right to take one or more of the following actions:

- The suspension of organisations currently being supported by the named certification consultant.
- The suspension of organisations previously supported by the named certification consultant.
- The termination of applications currently being supported by the named certification consultant.
- The termination of certification achieved as a result support previously provided by the named certification consultant.
- That a named certification will no longer be recognised or accepted in future applications