



ACCREDITATION SANS FRONTIÈRES

ASF Master Glossary

Every defined term across ASF's full document portfolio, in one place

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Glossary (A–W)

Foreword

Thirty-five ASF documents now exist. Many define a term precisely within their own pages — sentinel event, priority practice, standard-type, fiduciary duty — and every other document that uses that same term simply assumes the reader already knows it, or has the right document open. This glossary exists so that assumption is no longer necessary. Every term here is defined exactly as its home document defines it — this glossary does not introduce a new, competing definition of anything; it collects and cross-references what already exists.

This second edition adds the terminology introduced during ASF's own quality and evidence expansion pass across its full document portfolio — including terms from the Leadership Succession Policy, the Code of Conduct's evidence-grounded provisions, and the IT & Data Security Policy's regulatory grounding — none of which existed in this glossary's first edition.

Built deliberately last among each generation of ASF documents, so it can actually capture what already exists — including, this time, the very quality-improvement pass that produced this second edition.

Glossary

A

Accredited Organization

An organization that currently holds a valid ASF accreditation against one or more of ASF's seven organizational standards.

Defined in: ASF Accreditation Process Guide

Adverse Event

A patient safety event that results in harm to the patient, of any severity — a broader category than a sentinel event.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 1.3

C

Close Call (Near Miss)

A patient safety event that does not reach the patient.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 1.3

Conflict of Interest

A financial, professional, or personal interest that could reasonably affect — or reasonably appear to affect — an individual's objectivity in an ASF matter.

Defined in: ASF Code of Conduct, Principle 3; Section 10 of How ASF Develops and Revises Standards

Corrective Action

An action addressing the root cause of a nonconformity, distinct from the immediate correction of its visible symptom.

Defined in: ASF Internal Nonconformity & Corrective Action Procedure

Crosswalk (ASF-to-ISO 9001)

A documented mapping of specific ASF organizational standard criteria to specific ISO 9001 clauses, required before ASF makes any public 'ISO-ready' claim.

Defined in: ASF Management Systems Certification Feasibility Roadmap, Section 3

D

Data Classification (Public / Confidential / Restricted)

The three-tier system governing what ASF data is disclosed, and to whom. Restricted is the highest-sensitivity subset of confidential data, including whistleblower reports.

Defined in: ASF IT & Data Security Policy, Section 3

Departure Succession

The succession timeline addressing an announced, planned leadership transition, handled through the ordinary successor-selection process rather than emergency provisions.

Defined in: ASF Leadership Succession Policy, Section 4.3

Duality of Interest

A non-financial relationship or role — such as a close personal relationship — that could compromise independent judgment, managed on the same terms as a financial conflict of interest.

Defined in: ASF Code of Conduct, Principle 3

Duty of Care

The fiduciary obligation requiring ASF's Council to ensure organizational sustainability, including genuine oversight of leadership continuity.

Defined in: ASF Leadership Succession Policy, Section 6

E

Emergency Succession

The succession timeline addressing an immediate, unplanned leadership departure — sudden incapacity, death, or unexpected resignation.

Defined in: ASF Leadership Succession Policy, Section 4.1

G

GDPR 72-Hour Notification

The General Data Protection Regulation's requirement that a personal data breach be reported to the competent supervisory authority within seventy-two hours of an organization becoming aware of it.

Defined in: ASF IT & Data Security Policy, Section 6

Good Faith

The standard applied to a self-report or whistleblower report: honesty of the report, not its ultimate correctness, is what determines whether it is protected.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy; ASF Internal Whistleblower Protection Policy

H

Hazardous Condition

A circumstance that increases the probability of an adverse event, even where no event has yet occurred.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 1.3

The Human Factor

The finding that a substantial majority of data security incidents trace to human error rather than external attack, and the resulting requirement that security competence be treated as a personnel issue, not only a technical one.

Defined in: ASF IT & Data Security Policy, Section 7

N

No-Harm Event

A patient safety event that reaches the patient but does not result in harm.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 1.3

Nonconformity (Internal)

An instance where ASF's own operations did not meet a requirement ASF has set for itself — distinct from a patient safety event at an accredited organization.

Defined in: ASF Internal Nonconformity & Corrective Action Procedure, Section 1

O

Ongoing Impartiality Risk Assessment

The continuous identify-analyse-evaluate-treat-monitor cycle ASF applies to its own impartiality risk, consistent with ISO/IEC 17011's 2017 strengthening of this requirement.

Defined in: ASF Independence & Non-Influence Statement, Section 4

P

Priority Practice

A critical, cross-cutting safety practice already required within one or more ASF organizational standards, elevated for annual review and checked in every survey regardless of facility type.

Defined in: ASF Priority Practices, Section 1

Public Disclosure Notice

A formal notice ASF posts to its public registry within one business day of a final adverse accreditation decision, including the organization's own response where provided.

Defined in: ASF Public Accreditation Registry Policy, Section 4.3

R

Restricted Data

See Data Classification.

Defined in: ASF IT & Data Security Policy, Section 3

Root Cause Analysis

A structured investigation into the cultural, latent, and active factors contributing to an event or nonconformity, not only its immediate, proximate cause.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 4.1; ASF Internal Nonconformity & Corrective Action Procedure, Section 3

S

Sentinel Event

A patient safety event — not primarily related to the natural course of a patient's illness — that reaches a patient and results in death, permanent harm, or severe temporary harm.

Defined in: ASF Sentinel Event Policy, Section 1.2

Standard-Type

One of the three areas of ASF accreditation activity: organizational standards, surveyor training standards, and training and education standards.

Defined in: How ASF Develops and Revises Standards, Section 1.4

Strategic Succession

The succession timeline addressing long-range leadership development on an eighteen-to-thirty-six month horizon, well before any specific departure is anticipated.

Defined in: ASF Leadership Succession Policy, Section 4.2

Surveyor

An individual certified under the ASF Surveyor Training Standard to conduct an ASF accreditation assessment.

Defined in: ASF Surveyor Training Standard

T

Two-Tier Positive Certification

A possible future refinement, under evaluation, distinguishing a confirmed baseline accreditation outcome from a higher recognition tier for exceptional compliance, following the real model used by France's Haute Autorité de Santé.

Defined in: ASF Strategic Plan, Section 3 (Phase 2)

W

Whistleblower

An individual acting on ASF's behalf — Council member, Revision Panel member, surveyor, or ASF staff — who reports a genuine concern about ASF's own conduct or operations.

Defined in: ASF Internal Whistleblower Protection Policy, Section 1

Index — Terms by Source Document

While the Glossary above is organized alphabetically by term, this Index provides the complementary view: every defined term grouped by the ASF document it comes from, so a reader working from one specific ASF document can quickly find every term this glossary defines on that document's behalf.

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ASF Code of Conduct

Conflict of Interest

Duality of Interest

ASF IT & Data Security Policy

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Surveyor

How ASF Develops and Revises Standards

Standard-Type

References — The Foundational Standards Behind ASF's Terminology

References — The Foundational Standards Behind ASF's Terminology

This glossary's terms are drawn from ASF's own documents, each of which grounds its own specific terminology in real, external international standards and evidence. Rather than repeat each home document's full reference list, the foundational sources appear once, here, as the shared vocabulary's actual origin:

- [1] World Health Organization. Patient Safety [fact sheet]. Geneva: WHO; 2023.
- [2] International Organization for Standardization. ISO 9001:2015, Quality Management Systems — Requirements. Geneva: ISO; 2015.
- [3] International Organization for Standardization. ISO/IEC 17011:2017, Conformity Assessment — Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies. Geneva: ISO; 2017.
- [4] International Organization for Standardization. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Conformity Assessment — Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems. Geneva: ISO; 2015.
- [5] International Organization for Standardization. ISO 37002:2021, Whistleblowing Management Systems — Guidelines. Geneva: ISO; 2021.
- [6] International Organization for Standardization. ISO/IEC 27001:2022, Information Security Management Systems — Requirements. Geneva: ISO; 2022.
- [7] European Union. General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679. 2016.
- [8] Joint Commission. Code of Conduct; and Quality Check. Oakbrook Terrace (IL): The Joint Commission; 2026.
- [9] BoardSource. Leading with Intent: BoardSource Index of Nonprofit Board Practices. Washington, DC: BoardSource; 2021.

Thirty-five documents, one shared vocabulary, grounded in a handful of real international standards that recur throughout. A term means the same thing wherever in ASF's portfolio it appears — that is what this glossary exists to guarantee, not merely to describe.