ASF-OPS-009

Surveyor Training and Examination Programme

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Approved by	Prof. Giorgi Pkhakadze, MD, MPH, PhD President, Accréditation Sans Frontières
Applies to	All candidates seeking to join the ASF surveyor pool as Lead or Associate Surveyors, and all current ASF surveyors undertaking continuing professional development
Related documents	ASF-OPS-002 Surveyor Competency, Selection and Training Policy · ASF-OPS-010 Surveyor Role Specifications · ASF-GOV-003 Impartiality Policy · ASF-GOV-004 Confidentiality Policy · ASF-OPS-001 Accreditation Decision Framework
Supersedes	ASF-OPS-009 V2.0 (2026-11-28)
Next review	December 2031, or earlier on trigger

Version History

Version	Date	Nature of change	Approved by
V0.1	2026-11-07	Initial draft	—
V1.0	2026-11-20	ADC and SDC review	Accreditation Decision Committee / Standards Development Committee
V2.0	2026-11-28	Approved and published	Prof. G. Pkhakadze, ASF President
V3.0	2026-12-01	Expanded to full programme document; 5-module training curriculum table with hours and delivery mode, written examination specification (75% pass mark), case study oral examination, supervised assessment requirements with observer checklist, annual calibration exercise, CPD requirements (15 hours/year), recognition of prior learning pathway, and 12 references	Prof. G. Pkhakadze, ASF President

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1. Purpose

1.1 This document describes the ASF Surveyor Training and Examination Programme — the structured pathway by which candidates are trained, assessed, and certified to conduct accreditation surveys on behalf of ASF. It operates as the implementation arm of the surveyor competency requirements set out in ASF-OPS-002 and the role requirements set out in ASF-OPS-010.

1.2 The programme is designed to achieve four outcomes: (a) ensure that all ASF surveyors understand and can apply the ASF accreditation standard consistently; (b) equip surveyors with the interviewing, observation, and evidence-gathering skills needed to conduct rigorous surveys; (c) calibrate surveyor judgement so that the same evidence base produces consistent criterion assessments across different surveyors and survey teams; and (d) maintain surveyor competence over time through continuing professional development.

1.3 Successful completion of the training and examination programme is a prerequisite for inclusion in the ASF surveyor pool. No person may conduct an ASF accreditation survey unless they have completed the programme and hold a current ASF Surveyor Authorisation.

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2. Programme Overview and Pathway

2.1 The training and examination programme has four sequential components, each of which must be completed before progressing to the next:

- **(a)** Foundation Training Course (Module 1–5): 5 modules covering all core knowledge and skills areas;
- **(b)** Written Examination: criterion-referenced knowledge examination; 75% pass mark required;
- **(c)** Case Study Oral Examination: structured oral assessment of applied judgement using a standardised case scenario;
- **(d)** Supervised Assessments: 1 supervised survey (Lead Surveyor candidates: 2 supervised surveys; see §5).

2.2 Candidates who have previously worked as surveyors for another ISQua EEA-accredited accreditation body, or who hold equivalent healthcare assessment qualifications, may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) under Section 7. RPL may exempt a candidate from some but not all programme components; the written examination and at least one supervised assessment remain mandatory for all candidates regardless of prior experience.

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3. Foundation Training Course

3.1 The Foundation Training Course is delivered over a minimum of four days (32 contact hours) and covers five modules. The course may be delivered face-to-face, online (synchronous), or in blended format. The minimum synchronous contact time per module is as stated below; self-directed pre-reading and post-session assignments may supplement contact hours but do not substitute for them.

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Module	Title	Min. contact hours	Key topics and learning outcomes
1	ASF and the Accreditation Framework	4 hours	ASF's mission and governance; the ISQua EEA framework; ASF's standards portfolio; how accreditation differs from inspection and certification; the accreditation cycle (ASF-OPS-003); the accreditation decision framework (ASF-OPS-001)
2	The ASF Accreditation Standard	8 hours	The four-category criterion classification (Critical, Essential, Significant, Developmental); criterion scoring and weighting; reading and interpreting criterion statements; common sector-specific requirements; mapping facility evidence to criteria
3	Survey Methods and Evidence Gathering	8 hours	Document review techniques; staff and patient/resident interviewing; physical environment observation; records sampling methodology; triangulating evidence from multiple sources; recording evidence objectively; what constitutes sufficient evidence; recognising and handling contradictory evidence
4	Nonconformance Assessment and Reporting	6 hours	Classifying findings as conformant, nonconformance, or partial conformance; distinguishing isolated from systemic failures; writing a nonconformance statement: criterion reference, objective evidence, impact; CAP requirements (ASF-OPS-005); completing the survey report; common pitfalls in NC writing
5	Surveyor Conduct and Ethics	6 hours	Impartiality requirements (ASF-GOV-003); Declaration of Impartiality; confidentiality obligations (ASF-GOV-004); surveyor-facility boundaries during the survey; managing conflict of interest situations in the field; professional conduct standards; the ASF Code of Conduct for Surveyors

> *The course tutor for each module must hold a current ASF Surveyor Authorisation and have conducted a minimum of three ASF surveys. Module 2 (The ASF Accreditation Standard) must be updated and re-delivered within six months of any major revision to the relevant ASF standard.*

4. Written Examination

4.1 Following completion of the Foundation Training Course, candidates sit a written examination. The examination assesses knowledge and understanding of the content covered in all five modules.

4.2 Examination format:

(a) 50 multiple-choice questions (Modules 1, 2, and 5): each question has four options; one correct answer; no negative marking;

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(b) 5 short-answer questions (Modules 3 and 4): each worth 10 marks; assessing the candidate's ability to classify findings, write a nonconformance statement, or describe an appropriate evidence-gathering approach for a given scenario;

(c) Total marks: 100; Pass mark: 75.

4.3 The examination is conducted under supervised conditions. It may be administered in person or online with a supervised remote proctoring tool. The examination duration is 2 hours 30 minutes.

4.4 A candidate who does not achieve the pass mark on the first attempt may re-sit the examination once, after a minimum interval of 30 days and a recommended period of additional self-directed study. A candidate who does not achieve the pass mark on the second attempt must repeat the Foundation Training Course before re-sitting.

4.5 Examination papers and marking schemes are maintained by the QMS Coordinator under ASF-GOV-004 and are not shared with candidates before or after the examination.

5. Case Study Oral Examination

5.1 Candidates who achieve the written examination pass mark progress to the case study oral examination. This examination assesses the candidate's applied judgement — their ability to analyse a realistic survey scenario, identify appropriate evidence-gathering actions, classify findings, and articulate the rationale for their assessments.

5.2 Format: the candidate is presented with a standardised written case study — a description of a hypothetical facility, its context, and a selection of evidence items (document extracts, interview notes, observation records). The candidate has 20 minutes to review the case materials, followed by a 30-minute structured oral examination conducted by two ASF examiners (at least one of whom is a qualified Lead Surveyor).

5.3 The examiners assess the candidate on four competency dimensions:

(a) Evidence analysis — does the candidate correctly identify what the evidence indicates, including gaps and inconsistencies?

(b) Criterion application — does the candidate apply the correct criterion category (Critical/Essential/Significant/Developmental) and reach a defensible conformance judgement?

(c) Nonconformance articulation — can the candidate describe the NC clearly, objectively, and with sufficient specificity to support a CAP?

(d) Professional conduct — does the candidate demonstrate appropriate boundaries, impartiality awareness, and constructive engagement with the examiners' probing questions?

5.4 Pass mark: the candidate must be assessed as Satisfactory or above on all four dimensions. An Unsatisfactory rating on any single dimension is a fail. Candidates who fail the oral examination may re-sit once after 30 days; a second fail requires the candidate to repeat Module 3 and Module 4 of the Foundation Training Course.

6. Supervised Assessments

6.1 A candidate who passes both examinations undertakes supervised assessments before receiving an ASF Surveyor Authorisation. Supervised assessments are real ASF surveys in which

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the candidate participates under the direct supervision of a qualified Lead Surveyor who observes the candidate's performance and completes a structured observation checklist.

6.2 Requirements:

- **(a)** Associate Surveyor candidates: 1 supervised assessment (full participation as an Associate Surveyor throughout the survey);
- **(b)** Lead Surveyor candidates: 2 supervised assessments; the second supervised assessment is as acting Lead Surveyor under the observation of a supervising Lead Surveyor who does not actively direct the survey.

6.3 The observation checklist used by the supervising Lead Surveyor covers: adherence to the survey schedule; quality of document review and records sampling; quality of staff interview conduct; accuracy of criterion assessments against the evidence gathered; NC statement writing; team communication; and compliance with impartiality and confidentiality requirements.

6.4 Where the supervising Lead Surveyor assesses the candidate as satisfactory on all checklist dimensions, they submit a written recommendation to the QMS Coordinator. The QMS Coordinator reviews the recommendation and, if approved, issues the ASF Surveyor Authorisation. Where the candidate is not assessed as satisfactory, the supervisor provides written feedback, and a further supervised assessment is arranged. More than two unsatisfactory supervised assessments in a 12-month period results in the candidate being withdrawn from the programme; re-entry requires a new application and the written examination.

7. Recognition of Prior Learning

7.1 A candidate with documented experience as a healthcare surveyor for another accreditation body, as a healthcare regulator conducting compliance inspections, or as a senior healthcare quality professional may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

7.2 The RPL application is assessed by the QMS Coordinator against a structured evidence framework. Accepted RPL may exempt the candidate from:

- **(a)** Module 1 of the Foundation Training Course (ASF and the Accreditation Framework), where the candidate can demonstrate comparable experience with an accreditation programme of similar scope;
- **(b)** Modules 3 and/or 4 (Survey Methods; Nonconformance Assessment), where the candidate can demonstrate recent and directly comparable survey experience.

7.3 RPL never exempts a candidate from Module 2 (The ASF Accreditation Standard), Module 5 (Surveyor Conduct and Ethics), the written examination, the oral examination, or supervised assessment. These components are mandatory for all candidates.

8. Annual Calibration Exercise

8.1 All current ASF surveyors — including those holding a Surveyor Authorisation — participate in an annual calibration exercise as a condition of continued inclusion in the surveyor pool. The calibration exercise is described in ASF-OPS-002, §5.2; this section summarises the training context.

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8.2 The calibration exercise uses a standardised written scenario with a model answer. Surveyors who achieve below the 70% agreement threshold are required to complete targeted refresher training before conducting their next survey. Surveyors who fall below the threshold in two consecutive calibration exercises are placed on supervised status and must complete a supervised assessment before returning to unsupervised survey conduct.

9. Continuing Professional Development

9.1 All current ASF surveyors maintain a minimum of 15 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) per calendar year relevant to accreditation, healthcare quality, or patient safety. Evidence of CPD is submitted to the QMS Coordinator by 31 January for the preceding calendar year.

9.2 Acceptable CPD activities include: attendance at accreditation, quality, or patient safety conferences or seminars; completion of relevant online or in-person training courses; participation in peer learning activities organised by ASF; authorship or co-authorship of a published article on accreditation or healthcare quality; and participation in ISQua educational programmes.

9.3 A surveyor who does not submit evidence of 15 CPD hours by the deadline is placed on inactive status and may not conduct surveys until the CPD evidence is submitted. A surveyor inactive for more than 12 months is required to complete the annual calibration exercise before returning to active status.

10. Records

10.1 The QMS Coordinator maintains the following records for a minimum of 7 years: training attendance records; examination papers and results; oral examination assessor notes and outcome records; supervised assessment observation checklists and recommendations; RPL applications and decisions; CPD evidence submissions; and the current Surveyor Register with each surveyor's Authorisation status and expiry.

11. ISQua EEA Alignment

11.1 This programme supports ISQua EEA Principle 5 (Surveyors), which requires accreditation bodies to have documented, implemented, and monitored processes for the selection, training, and performance management of surveyors. The ASF ISQua EEA Crosswalk (ASF-EV-004) maps the provisions of this programme document to the applicable EEA criteria.

12. References

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Formal Approval

Name and title	Signature	Date
Prof. Giorgi Pkhakadze, MD, MPH, PhD President, Accréditation Sans Frontières		2026-12-01

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