

# **International Ergonomics Association Professional Standards and Education Committee**

## **Suggested Procedure for the Development of Certification System**

(Version 2, February 2017)

### **1. Orientation**

Only national societies that are federated members of the IEA, or organisations that they have established for the purpose, can be endorsed by the IEA as certifying bodies for ergonomists. Generally only one body will be recognised for each member society, but several societies may combine to share a certifying system on a regional level. If you are establishing a certification system for ergonomists the IEA strongly advises that you aim to meet the IEA endorsement requirements as much as possible.

The member society (or societies) should begin by getting information about the requirements and recommendations of the IEA. This can be obtained from the IEA (website). The most important documents at this stage are those related to the Core Competencies for ergonomists as these guide you in setting the minimum standards of knowledge and practical experience that you will accept as sufficient for your certification. You should also think about a Code of Conduct for the ergonomists that you will certify and a set of rules (statutes) for the certification system.

#### Results:

- Agreement from the national society (or societies) for starting a certification system.
- The IEA requirements are understood and example documents have been obtained from IEA endorsed certification boards: requirements for certification, code of conduct, application forms and sets of rules for the processing of applications.
- Contact IEA Certification Sub-Committee chair, who will assist as needed.

### **2. Formation of a Certification Board and agreement on minimum requirements for certification**

There are no requirements for formation of a national Certification Board but the IEA recommends at least three well-respected ergonomists to start the process. These will be the first people who become certified and will be the ones who process the first applications by other ergonomists. The IEA recommends that the assistance of an IEA endorsed society is obtained to independently assess the qualifications of the proposed first Certification Board members.

These people, in collaboration with the national society, must produce a document describing the necessary criteria for becoming certified. The IEA does not prescribe a minimal standard for certified ergonomists but all of the endorsed certification systems require university level education in ergonomics and some years of experience, some also require an examination. There may be different criteria for different people, e.g. very experienced people who trained long ago, may be exempted from examination or from needing a Degree in Ergonomics.

If you are considering starting your certification system with a low level of education such as a few months of training, the IEA recommends having multiple levels of certification, with at least one level requiring one year of university level training in ergonomics as part of, or additional to, a Bachelor Degree. Even if only a few people have this level of education, experience has shown that it is best to have this as an original goal, rather than try to add it in later.

#### Results:

- Certification Board is established.
- Minimum requirements for certification are defined.

### **3. Develop application form and test it**

It is necessary to produce an application form to people who want to get certified. This is based on the agreed requirements at national level (step 2 above). It can be in your national language but it should

include a Code of Conduct that the applicant signs. You can get examples of application forms from the IEA Subcommittee or other certification boards.

It is good practice to test how well your application form provides the necessary information. The members of the Certification Board should each complete the application form and put together their supporting documents. The applications of the Certification Board members can then be checked by the other members of the Certification Board to ensure that all of the agreed requirements are met and the form is well understood. As an alternative, other eminent ergonomists could be requested to apply as trial candidates.

Sometimes this step is difficult at a national level, as testing and appraising your close colleagues can be difficult. The IEA can help by arranging an independent assessment both of the first candidates and of the application form.

Results:

- Certification Board members are assessed
- Application form is developed and tested.

#### **4. Building the national process of evaluating applications and an appeal process.**

You need to set up a process for people to submit applications to you. Where do they obtain the application forms? Who do they submit the application to? If you wish to include an examination in the assessment criteria, you should agree on the content and procedure for doing the exams. Where and by whom will this be conducted?

The IEA strongly recommends that certification is granted for a limited period e.g. five years. After that the applicant applies again, although it is not necessary to supply the same information again. Limiting the time gives you the opportunity to promote continual professional development.

The Statutes/Rules of your certification board need to be written down and agreed. These should state who is on the Certification Board, how long they can serve, what duties they have, the costs for certification, etc. These rules should be agreed with the national ergonomics society.

The certification process should include an appeals procedure for cases of dispute between applicants and the Certification Board. A review panel should therefore be established. This panel can consist of one or more people deemed acceptable by the national society. They do not have to be certified ergonomists but should be people generally recognised as unbiased and eminent in the field of ergonomics or a field closely related at the national level.

Result

- Documented application process.
- Rules of certification board are documented
- A review panel and procedure is defined for dealing with disputes

#### **4. First applications are processed.**

Once all the necessary documents have been developed you can invite other esteemed ergonomists to apply for certification. Certificates can be given at special ceremonies. You can consider putting the names of these people on your website or giving them other special privileges, apart from issuing a certificate. As the applications are processed you can improve your documents and processes.

Result:

- First applications are received and processed
- Any necessary changes to the documents and system are made