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## QUALITY POLICY | PO-COR-04



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Policy

**QUALITY | PO-COR-04**

Version No.: 01 | Date: 01/02/2025

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### **1. Purpose of the Policy**

**Quality is at the heart of everything we do.**

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The quality of our services is essential to building trust, which generates consumer loyalty and a strong brand image. Quality is a fundamental element of our success and the vitality of ASCEND.

This Policy aims to ensure that all conformity assessment activities performed by ASCEND are carried out in accordance with the highest industry service standards and in accordance with the guiding principles on which we base our activities and commitment to continuous improvement.

ASCEND's mission is to provide the highest quality conformity assessment services, focused on ensuring technical competence, the reliability of its declarations and attestations, and customer satisfaction.

At its core, quality is first and foremost about trust in our products, services, and our brands. But quality is also more than that. It's about delivering on our promises in everything we do. Each and every one of us has the power to influence quality and trust through our leadership, dedication, passion, and pride in what we do.

## **2. Scope and applicability**

This Policy applies without exception to all individuals and entities that are part of or act on behalf of ASCEND. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Members of corporate governance bodies, such as owners, board members, senior management, members of steering committees and functional management;
- Permanent and temporary collaborators, regardless of their role, contractual type or geographical location;
- Members of advisory, technical or impartiality committees, as well as any other formal support, decision-making or control body;
- Business partners and related third parties that carry out activities on behalf of or representing ASCEND.

Business partners shall be understood to include, but are not limited to, affiliates, subsidiaries, franchisees, licensees, representatives, suppliers, agents, independent evaluators, independent technical decision-makers, and other external parties with which ASCEND maintains contractual or collaborative relationships for the provision of its services.

Likewise, this policy will be mandatory for all internal bodies, committees, or commissions, including those with executive, technical, evaluation, review, decision-making, or supervisory functions, that are part of ASCEND's organizational or functional structure, whether permanent or ad hoc.

## **3. Commitments**

### **Commitment to Quality and Operational Excellence**

**At ASCEND, Quality is in our DNA, which is why we are committed to:**

- To be known and recognized for our dedication to service, superior technical competence, reliability, precision, and consistency.

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- Develop, maintain, and improve an effective quality management system that ensures consistency and quality in the delivery of our services.
- Promote ongoing training for our staff to ensure technical competence and up-to-date knowledge of regulatory and technological developments.
- Maintain a focus on technical competence, ensuring that our staff and resources are always aligned with the highest international standards of quality and competence.
- Establish and maintain constructive relationships with our clients, always seeking to improve the quality of service and offer added value through our evaluations.
- Conduct periodic internal audits and reviews of the quality management system to identify opportunities for improvement.
- To offer a value-added service, understanding our customers' specific needs and always seeking to exceed them by improving the quality, efficiency, and innovation of our services.
- Continuously improve the performance of our processes, fostering a culture of quality and excellence at all levels of our organization.
- Risk-based approach: We proactively manage risks to mitigate potential deviations and ensure the reliability and quality of our services.
- Strictly comply with applicable legal, regulatory, and policy requirements, as well as with contractual agreements established with customers and other stakeholders.
- Protect ASCEND's intellectual property and technical know-how.
- Incorporate the ASCEND brand, its independence and impartiality, into everything we do.

#### **4. Customer Service**

**We standardize excellence, we personalize the experience.**

ASCEND's priority is to provide services that generate real value for its clients, which is achieved through:

- The quality and accuracy of our evaluation results, ensuring they meet established specifications and requirements.
- Effective communication with clients, ensuring they are informed and satisfied with the progress and results of the services provided.
- The personalized approach, understanding the specific needs of each client and always seeking to add value through specific and efficient solutions.

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- Continuous feedback from our customers helps us constantly improve our processes and tailor our services to their expectations.
- We prioritize providing our clients with the highest level of international recognition in line with best practices in conformity assessment, by continuously working on accreditations, affiliations, and developing our conformity marks.
- We are committed to providing services with quality guarantees combined with added value and adherence to deadlines. We respond accordingly and hold ourselves accountable.
- At ASCEND we take our customers' complaints and claims seriously.
- ASCEND does not file complaints against any of its clients publicly unless required to do so by a court of law.
- ASCEND is committed to making information about the certification status of each of its clients publicly accessible through the Certified Client Directory, Certipedia.
- We emphasize objectively preparing our offers consistent with actual costs, providing information on the scope of our services, their applicability, and the levels of recognition that support our compliance and related brands.
- We do not discriminate against our customers or potential customers. We provide equal and consistent treatment throughout the network.
- We support all our brand customers in their market access processes and communication with second and third parties.

Through its conformity assessment activities, ASCEND supports the competitiveness of companies and institutions by developing this voluntary activity.

#### **5. Responsibility to society and consumers**

- We are committed to providing accurate information to the public and consumers about the conformity assessment activities we carry out and the associated implications.
- We respond without undue delay to all inquiries, complaints, claims, and reports from society and consumers regarding the activities of organizations that use and/or reference ASCEND's compliance marks.
- Build genuine collaborative and cooperative relationships with our customers, community, and stakeholders to advance our shared goals.
- In the competition for customers and market share, we behave fairly with other participants and treat our competitors with respect.
- We do not hesitate to uncover flaws if they jeopardize the transparency and fairness of the competition.

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#### **6. Regulators, accreditors, scheme owners and other stakeholders:**

- ASCEND supports the development of the economic fabric and society in general, building trust among economic stakeholders based on knowledge, values, and competitiveness. It is a responsible partner for the societies in which it operates, applying best practices in all areas of its activity.
- We actively promote international quality infrastructure, making systematic efforts to contribute to its development.
- We integrate all operational control mechanisms and performance indicators into our management system to ensure the requirements and expectations of all stakeholders are met.
- In addition to its more comprehensive assessment services, ASCEND is constantly innovating, creating solutions that respond to the evolving needs of its clients and society as a whole.
- Ensure that all conformity assessment services are performed in accordance with international standards ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17029, ISO/IEC 17024, ISO/IEC 17020, as well as all requirements of accreditation bodies and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).
- Adopt a strict approach to compliance with legal and regulatory standards
- We ensure that the integrity of the management system is maintained when planning and implementing changes to the management system.

#### **7. Technical Competence and Training**

##### **We are distinguished by our attitudes and values**

ASCEND ensures that all its staff members are competent to carry out their responsibilities by:

- Rigorous selection of personnel based on the technical requirements and skills required for each type of conformity assessment.
- Continuing education programs to maintain and improve the technical competencies, skills, and knowledge of our auditors, evaluators, and key personnel.
- Regular performance evaluation to ensure that all staff maintain established standards of quality and competence.

#### **8. Continuous Improvement**

ASCEND is committed to carrying out continuous improvement actions, based on:

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- Regular review of the performance of our products, services, processes, and management system, using quality and customer satisfaction indicators.
- Systematic analysis of the results of internal and external audits to identify areas for improvement and corrective actions.
- Promoting innovation, both in technology and in evaluation processes, in order to stay ahead and continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our products and services for the benefit of customers and stakeholders.

## **9. Responsibilities and Commitment of Senior Management**

ASCEND's Senior Management is responsible for:

- Define, communicate, and ensure the systematic implementation and application of this policy at all levels of the organization.
- Allocate resources in a timely manner to implement, maintain, and improve the quality management system and technical competence, ensuring that quality objectives are achieved.
- Promote a culture of quality, excellence, and innovation within the organization through the leadership of all its members and the development of all talents.

We will ensure that all employees and stakeholders are aware of this Policy, receive appropriate training, and are able to provide feedback to improve our performance, including a commitment to staff consultation and engagement on these matters.

## **10. Review, Update and Continuous Improvement of the Policy**

This Policy is reviewed at least once a year as part of the Management Review, in order to ensure that:

- Stay up-to-date and relevant with respect to the requirements established in the international reference standards applicable to conformity assessment activities (such as ISO/IEC 17021-1, 17065, 17024, 17029, among others);
- Respond appropriately to changes in ASCEND's operational, regulatory, policy, or strategic context;
- Reflect the needs, expectations and observations of relevant stakeholders;
- Incorporate lessons learned from operational experience, managed incidents, internal and external audits, or from reporting and ethics consultation channels.

## **11. Acceptance and Compliance**

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Acceptance, understanding, and full compliance with this Policy are fundamental and mandatory requirements for all ASCEND personnel, as well as for any person, business partner, or organization involved in conformity assessment processes, including auditors, technical evaluators, reviewers, decision-makers, committee members, administrative staff, and business partners.

Anyone participating on behalf of ASCEND in activities related to evaluation, review, or decision-making must fully adhere to the principles of impartiality, objectivity, independence, and transparency set forth in this policy and act at all times with professional and ethical integrity.

ASCEND reserves the right, and assumes the obligation, to take immediate and proportionate action if any breach or violation of this policy is identified.

### 12. References

- ISO/IEC 17021
- ISO/IEC 17065
- ISO/IEC 17029
- ISO/IEC 17024

### 13. Change control

The current version of this document is only available through the ESGInnova platform's document management system.

Changes since the last version can be found underlined above the document.

Revision	Date	Summary of changes
01	01/02/2025	Not applicable because it is the first version

*Ignacio  
Guarnieri*

CEO ASCEND



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