



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING

The World Organisation for NDT

ICNDT Operating Procedure OP19: ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement

Executive Summary

Representatives of the members of the International Committee for Non-Destructive Testing (ICNDT) have recognised the need for a global Multilateral Agreement on Recognition of NDT Personnel Certification. The work of developing the ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MRA), which is based upon compliance with ISO 9712, was entrusted to the ICNDT Working Group on Qualification and Certification (WG1). The implementation and operation of the ICNDT MRA is the responsibility of the ICNDT Certification Executive Committee (ICEC).

This document is a strategic level Operating Procedure as defined in Operating Procedure OP 18 and is subject to approval by the ICNDT Executive Committee (IEC) and the International Committee. The document describes (a) the objectives of the MRA, (b) the obligations of ICNDT members that are signatories to the MRA, (c) the criteria for Personnel Certification Bodies to become registered under the MRA and (d) the high level processes by which the MRA is managed.

Disclaimer

ICNDT accepts no liability for the use of certification awarded by any PCB registered under the MRA. In accordance with ISO 9712 (*Non-destructive testing – Qualification and certification of NDT personnel*) the responsibility for the quality of NDT rests with the employer of the certificated person.

Jurisdiction

The ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement is subject to the jurisdiction of Austria.

Revision and Approval Status

Issue / Draft	Date	Details	Status / Approval
Issue 1	15/05/2013	Previous issue	Approved by ICEC, PGP & GA
Issue 2	30/09/2015	Modified to improve clarity; requirement for additional information to be provided by applicant PCB	Approved by ICEC, WG1, PGP & GA
Revision 3	15/02/2017	Approval by PGP replaced with approval by the International Committee. Issue 2 changed to Revision 3	Approved by IEC
Revision 4	14/06/2018	Section 6.3 revised to clarify expectations of auditors' NDT expertise Sections 6.1 and 6.4 revised to enhance the review process and to have clarity.	Approved by ICEC and IEC then by ICNDT GA on 14 June 2018
Revision 5	23/01/2020	Section 6.5 revised to require an annual return from PCBs to confirm continuity of registration. Section 6.7 revised to allow use of the ICNDT MRA logo by registered PCBs	Agreed by ICEC and IEC and approved by ICNDT Annual Meeting on 23 January 2020

1 Scope

This Operating Procedure covers the operation of the ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MRA). The Operating Procedure is supported by lower level Work Instructions (WI) under control of the ICNDT Certification Executive Committee (ICEC).

2 References

OP13	Use of ICNDT Logo
OP 18	ICNDT Certification Executive Committee
OP 20	Personnel Certification Body Conformity Assessment (PCB CA)
OP 24	Procedure for Complaints and Appeals Relating to ICEC Activities
ISO 9712	Non-destructive testing – Qualification and certification of NDT personnel
ISO/IEC 17011	Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
ISO/IEC 17024	Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons

Note 1. Any requirement for conformity with the above documents means conformity with the current edition (up to 12 months will be allowed between the issue of a revision and implementation of a referenced document).

3 Abbreviations

AB	Accreditation Body
AQB	Authorised Qualification Body
CA	Conformity Assessment
EA	European co-operation for Accreditation (https://www.european-accreditation.org/)
IAF	International Accreditation Forum (https://www.iaf.nu/)
ICEC	ICNDT Certification Executive Committee
ICNDT	International Committee for Non-Destructive Testing
IEC	ICNDT Executive Committee
GA	ICNDT General Assembly
MRA	Multilateral Recognition Agreement
OP	Operating Procedure
PCB	Personnel Certification Body
PGPC	ICNDT Policy & General Purposes Committee
WG1	ICNDT Working Group 1
WI	Work Instruction

4 Multilateral Recognition Agreement

4.1 General Principles

The MRA (the Agreement) is in two parts, described as 'Schedule 1' and 'Schedule 2'. Schedule 1 comprises the list of national societies / institutes (Parties) that are members of ICNDT and have signed the agreement, committing to supporting the objectives of the MRA. Schedule 2 comprises a list of personnel certification bodies (PCB) that meet the required criteria and are registered by ICNDT under the Agreement.

A PCB seeking registration under Schedule 2 must be proposed for registration by a Party to the MRA Schedule 1. In some cases this may be academic, as many national societies are PCBs. But this need not be the case and there may be more than one PCB in a country.

4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Agreement are to elevate standards and to harmonise NDT personnel certification operations of personnel certification bodies registered under the Agreement.

4.3 Administration of the Agreement

This MRA is administered as a series of agreements under the jurisdiction of Austrian law, and shall be administered by the ICNDT Certification Executive Committee (ICEC), which assigns the day to day responsibility for reviewing applications for PCB registration to the ICEC Secretary.

4.4 Complaints and Appeals

Any complaints or appeals concerning the implementation of the Agreement or registration of PCBs shall be dealt with under Operating Procedure OP 24.

5 Multilateral Recognition Agreement: Schedule 1

5.1 Obligations

Each Party to Schedule 1 of the MRA shall:

- commit itself to the pursuance of the objectives of the MRA;
- promote the recognition and acceptance of the certification issued by PCBs registered under Schedule 2 of the MRA;
- assist other interested parties by giving a clear overview of the NDT personnel certification activities in its own country, including a description of the sectorial arrangements;
- provide other Parties with non-confidential information on the certification scheme(s) operated by PCBs registered under this Agreement;
- consult with and seek membership of the scheme and technical committees of NDT PCBs in its own country;
- indemnify ICNDT against liability for the Party's use or misuse of this MRA.

5.2 Access to Schedule 1 of the MRA

Access to Schedule 1 of the MRA is available to any ICNDT member that has committed to accept the obligations set out above.

5.3 Fees, Renewal and Termination

- There are no fees for Schedule 1 of the MRA and no requirement for renewal.
- The agreement may be terminated at any time by mutual agreement between the Party and ICNDT.

5.4 Publication of Schedule 1

The register of Parties to Schedule 1 of the MRA is available on the ICNDT website.

6 Multilateral Recognition Agreement: Schedule 2

6.1 Criteria for Registration

An NDT PCB seeking registration under this MRA shall meet the following criteria:

- Be proposed for registration under Schedule 2 by a Party to this MRA that is a signatory to Schedule 1 (see notes 2a, 2b and 2c below);
- Shall have confirmed their acceptance of the ICNDT Code of Practice for Personnel Certification Bodies set out in Appendix 1.
- Shall have provided information on the possible use of Authorised Qualification Bodies and sectorial arrangements and shall have a published code of ethics (see 6.2.3 below);
- Shall be independently accredited (see 6.3 below);
- Shall have provided evidence that the accreditation meets ICNDT requirements (see 6.4 below);
- Shall have remitted to the ICNDT the current initial application fee or the renewal fee if applicable.

Note 2a. If a Party to this MRA (a signatory listed in Schedule 1) is also a PCB, this shall not on its own be reason to refuse to propose other PCB in the country concerned for registration.

Note 2b. If the ICNDT member in the country concerned is not a Party to this MRA, an NDT PCB based in that country may be proposed for registration by any ICNDT member that is party to this MRA with the agreement with the national NDT Society (if it exists) of the applicant PCB.

Note 2c. The Certification Executive Committee has the right, if it wishes, to ask the national NDT Society of the applicant's country for an opinion on the suitability of the applicant PCB.

6.2 Additional Information

ISO 9712 permits some freedom for a PCB (a) to establish one or more Authorised Qualification Bodies (AQB) under its control and (b) to set up sectorial arrangements to satisfy national needs. In addition, ISO 9712 requires a PCB to develop a code of ethics. Information is required on the way that the PCB implements these points both to check compliance with ISO 9712 requirements and to publicise details on the ICNDT website if registration is successful (see 6.7 below). Further details are given in 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 below.

Note 3. The requirement for this information was introduced in Issue 2 of this Operating Procedure. PCBs registered under Issue 1 of this Operating Procedure will be required to provide the information on or before renewal of their registration (see 6.5 below).

6.2.1 Management Structure and Use of Authorised Qualification Bodies

The requirements for a PCB ('Certification Body' in ISO 9712) are given in clause 5.2 of the standard. Clause 5.2.2 c) states that the PCB "may delegate, under its direct responsibility, the detailed administration of qualification to authorized qualification bodies, to which it shall issue specifications and/or procedures covering facilities, personnel, calibration and control of NDT equipment, examination materials, specimens, conduct of examinations, examination grading, records, etc". The requirements for an Authorised Qualification Body (AQB) are given in clause 5.3 and Clause 5.3.2 notes that "If there are no authorized qualification bodies, the certification body shall fulfil the requirements of the qualification body".

The use or otherwise of one or more AQBs is acceptable for registration under the MRA but a PCB seeking or renewing registration shall provide information on the management structure of the PCB, including whether the PCB is part of the national society / institute or a separate legal entity and whether or not qualification is delegated to one or more AQBs. On successful registration, this information will be made available in the register entry on the ICNDT Website (see 6.7 below).

6.2.2 Definition of Sectors

'Sector' is defined in ISO 9712 as a "particular section of industry or technology where specialized NDT practices are used, requiring specific product-related knowledge, skill, equipment or training". It is noted further that "A sector can be interpreted to mean a product (welded products, castings) or an industry (aerospace, in-service testing)" and a reference is made to normative Annexe A which provides reference lists of product and industrial sectors without precluding the development of additional sectors to satisfy national needs.

A PCB seeking or renewing registration, or one already registered that is altering its sectorial arrangements, shall provide a definition of the sectors used and shall inform the ICEC Secretary of any changes during the period of registration. This information will be made available in the register entry on the ICNDT Website (see 6.7 below).

Note 4. The existence of different sectorial arrangements between PCBs shall not be used as a barrier to harmonisation. If certification awarded by a PCB under the ICNDT MRA does not fully cover a particular sector required, for example, in another national jurisdiction then this should be remedied by additional examination, not by a complete new certification. The PCB in the other national jurisdiction may require a certificate holder to undertake to abide by the code of ethics for that national jurisdiction (see 6.2.3 below).

6.2.3 Code of Ethics

Clause 5.2.2 k) of ISO 9712 requires that "The certification body shall require all candidates and certificate holders to give a signed or stamped undertaking to abide by a code of ethics which it shall develop for the purpose and publish." A PCB seeking or renewing registration shall provide a copy of

its code of ethics which will be made available in the register entry on the ICNDT Website (see 6.7 below).

6.3 Accreditation

For registration under Schedule 2 of the MRA, the ICNDT requires evidence of independent accreditation in conformance with ISO/IEC 17024 and ISO 9712. This will usually be provided by an Accreditation Body (AB) meeting the following criteria:

- The AB is a member of an international body acceptable to ICNDT (see note 5);
- The accreditation process is judged satisfactory by ICNDT on the basis of a review of the Accreditation Body's Assessment Report;
- The Accreditation Body's Assessment Report demonstrates in the judgement of ICNDT that the assessment involved an assessor with NDT qualifications (for example ISO 9712 certification Level 3 in at least one method) or sufficient experience of auditing certification bodies to be able to assess compliance with ISO 9712 (see Notes 6 and 7 below).

Note 5. Accreditation Bodies which are members of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) or the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) meet this requirement.

Note 6. It is reasonable to ask this of Accreditation Bodies because they are required to use "experts" who are defined in ISO 17011 as a "person assigned by an accreditation body to provide specific knowledge or expertise with respect to the scope of accreditation to be assessed".

Note 7. ICNDT considers it good practice to include a qualified NDT assessor in the audit team and encourages accreditation bodies to comply with this. However, ICNDT recognises that PCBs do not control the makeup of the audit team. Occasionally the ICEC review team may decide to: (i) judge it to be acceptable for the audit to be performed by a suitably experienced auditor who does not have NDT qualifications but understands the requirements of ISO 9712 or (ii) accept other evidence which demonstrates compliance with ISO 9712.

6.4 Assessment of Application

The application for registration shall include evidence that the independent accreditation of the PCB meets ICNDT requirements. This shall include but not be limited to:

- A copy of the main quality management system documents;
- A certificate of accreditation from the national/international accreditation body;
- A document demonstrating the scope of accreditation;
- A copy of the most recent assessment report from the national/international accreditation body.

Note 8. All copies of documents will be treated in confidence and will be returned or destroyed in the event of an unsuccessful application.

Note 9. All documents shall be provided in the English language.

Note 10. While not mandatory, it will be useful if an application is made shortly after assessment or re-assessment by the accreditation body. This will help to ensure (a) that the assessment report is up to date and (b) that a three-year renewal of MRA registration (see 6.5 below) is synchronized with a further re-assessment by the accreditation body.

Each application shall be assessed by a panel composed of ICEC members that, if necessary, may seek advice from other experts. The results of this assessment shall be fully recorded and available for audit if required.

If it is concluded that some or all of the ICNDT requirements are not met, ICNDT may offer an assessment under the ICNDT Personnel Certification Body Approval Scheme (see ICNDT OP 20). This may be a complete conformity assessment or a limited assessment targeted at specific items. The cost of this assessment will be paid for by the applicant.

The ICEC or the review panel has authority to make further enquiries about the performance history of the applicant PCB or its directors. If these enquiries raise doubts about the applicant PCB, then a specific conformity assessment audit may be deemed necessary or the application may be refused. There is no right of appeal against such decisions.

6.5 Renewal and Continuity of Registration

Registration under the ICNDT MRA is valid for three years after which the PCB may apply for renewal of an initial or renewed registration. The criteria for renewal are the same as for initial registration.

Within the three-year period before renewal, registration shall be maintained subject to annual submission of a return to the ICEC Secretary. The details required for the annual return are specified in OP19_Form C, but typically the requirements are:

- Continued validity of ICNDT recognised accreditation or ICNDT certificated conformity of the NDT PCB demonstrating compliance with the standards referred to in the PCB's scope of accreditation or ICNDT certificate of conformity;

and

- Provision of the latest assessment report from the accreditation body confirming compliance with the standards referred to in the PCB's scope of accreditation;
- Provision of any major revisions to the quality management system documentation;
- Provision of any changes to the scope in which certification is offered including methods/techniques, sectors and levels;
- Provision of any changes in the list of AQB's (if any) and reports of any AQB audits including witness assessment;

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- Where accreditation is based on an ICNDT assessment of conformity under OP20, ICNDT reserves the right to carry out a surveillance audit during the three year renewal period at cost to the registrant;
 - Continued compliance with the ICNDT Code of Practice for NDT PCBs (see Appendix 1).

The ICEC will review the annual submission and decide whether continued registration is adequately supported. An NDT PCB failing to fulfil the conditions for continued registration shall be de-registered on the authority of the ICEC. A deregistered PCB shall have access to the complaints and appeals process detailed in OP 24

6.6 Fees

The fees for registration comprise:

- An initial application fee;
- A three-year renewal fee.

See OP20 for the fees relating to a full or part conformity assessment (see 6.4 above).

The fees will be proposed by the ICEC and confirmed at the Annual General Meeting of ICNDT. A list of the current fees, updated annually, is available on the ICNDT website at <http://bit.ly/1G1Ye4q>.

6.7 Publication of Schedule 2

A certificate is provided to the PCB to acknowledge registration (see Figure 1) and the list of PCBs registered under Schedule 2 of the MRA is available on the ICNDT website at <http://bit.ly/MRASched2>. Additional information, where available, (see 6.2 above) is provided in an appendix to the register on the website.

The registered NDT PCB may announce that holders of its certificates gained under these arrangements *“are certificated by a body which is registered by the ICNDT as meeting the requirements of Standards and Technical Documents referenced in its schedule of Accredited Scope or scope of its ICNDT Certificate of Conformity”*.

A PCB registered under Schedule 2 of the MRA may use the ICNDT MRA logo as defined in Figure 4 of Operating Procedure OP13:

- When advertising their certification;
- On certificates relating to the certification issued during the period of valid registration indicating compliance with the standards referred to in the PCB’s scope of accreditation or ICNDT certificate of conformity, including on certificates issued following the renewal process permitted in ISO 9712. PCBs are advised to check that such use of this logo is acceptable to their accreditation body.

6.8 Process for Application for Initial Registration and Renewal of Registration

The process map for application and renewal of registration is shown in Figure 2. The renewal process is similar to the initial application except that the ICEC are able to take cognisance of information provided by the initial application and any following renewals.



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING

The World Organisation for NDT

ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MRA) for Personnel Certification in NDT Certificate of Registration

<Name of PCB>

The above named NDT Personnel Certification Body (PCB) has satisfied all of the eligibility criteria for registration under the ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MRA) for PCBs, including having undertaken to abide by the ICNDT Code of Practice, and has been nominated and accepted for registration within the terms of the Agreement signed by those Members of the International Committee for NDT (ICNDT) listed in Schedule 1 to the Agreement.

The Personnel Certification Body may therefore announce that holders of its certificates issued under these arrangements are certificated by a PCB which is registered by the ICNDT as meeting the requirements of the applicable Standards (including ISO 9712:2012 and ISO/IEC 17024:2012) and Technical Documents referenced in the schedule of conformity (scope) issued by the accreditor and/or the ICNDT.

A copy of the MRA, including a list of the signatories and a schedule of those certification bodies satisfying the criteria for registration, is available at www.icndt.org and from all parties that are signatory to the Agreement.

All signatories to the Agreement, and all PCBs registered under the Agreement, are bound to promote the recognition and acceptance of the certificates issued by all other ICNDT Registered NDT Personnel Certification Bodies.

Signed for ICNDT

Initial registration date:	<date>
This certificate number:	<#>
Issue date:	<date>
Expiry date:	<date>

Chairman

Disclaimer: ICNDT accepts no liability for the use of certification awarded by PCB registered under the MRA. In accordance with ISO 9712 the responsibility for the quality of NDT rests with the employer of the certificated person.
Jurisdiction: The ICNDT Multilateral Recognition Agreement is subject to the jurisdiction of Austria.

Figure 1: Example of a certificate

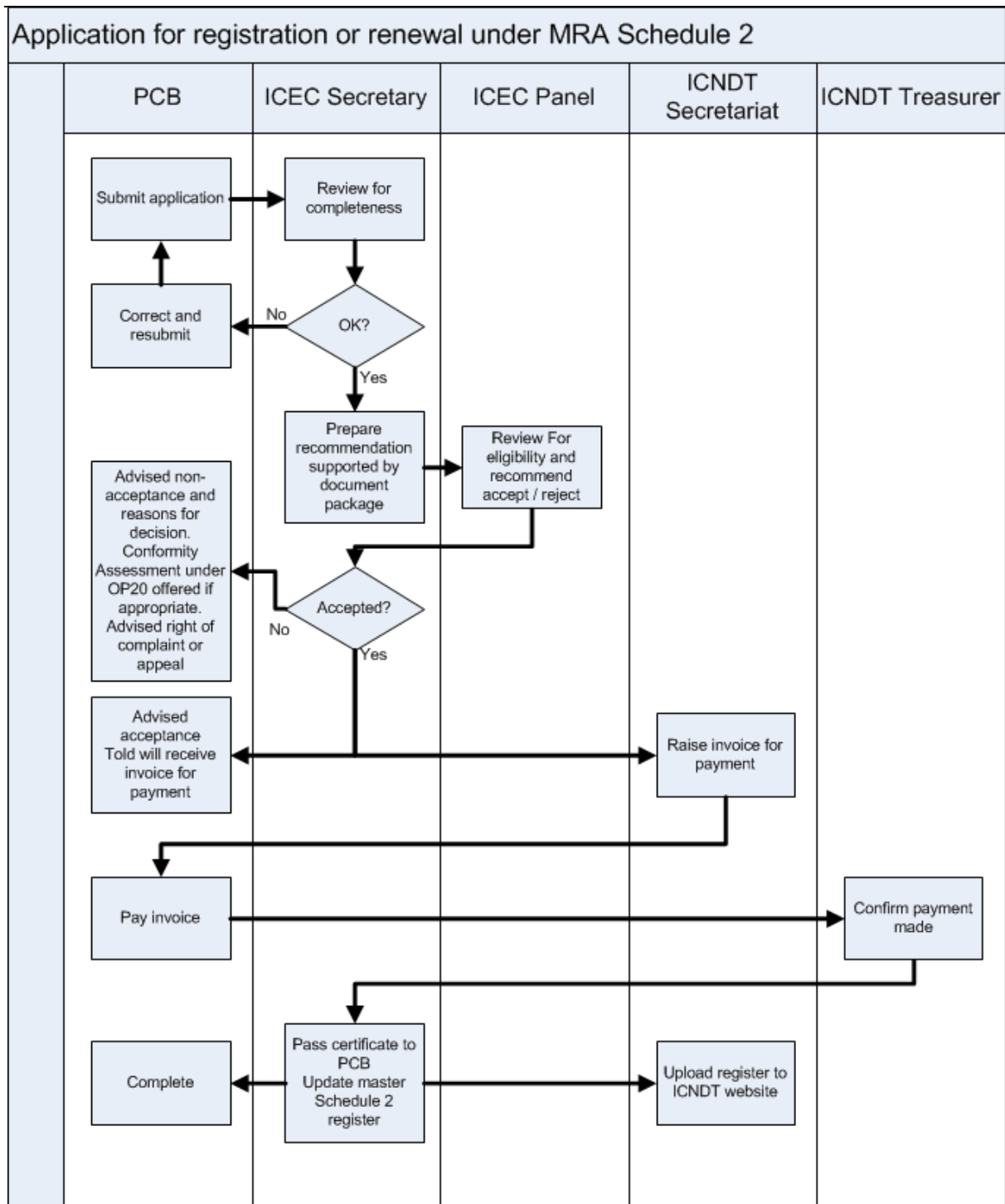


Figure 2 Process map for application and renewal of registration

Appendix 1: Code of Practice for Personnel Certification Bodies

NDT personnel certification bodies (PCBs) seeking ICNDT registration under the ICNDT Multilateral Agreement on Recognition of Certification are obliged to sign an undertaking to comply with this Code of Practice. *Inter alia*, they shall:

1. Maintain compliance with the standard(s) and specification(s) detailed on their certificate of accreditation or the ICNDT certificate of conformity, notifying the ICNDT Certification Executive Committee (ICEC) of any change in status, or in the standards with which the certification scheme that they operate to complies;
2. Require all candidates and certificate holders to give a signed or stamped undertaking to abide by a code of ethics which they shall develop for the purpose and publish;
3. Promote recognition and acceptance in their own country of the certificates of conformance issued by other NDT PCBs registered under the ICNDT MRA;
4. Keep confidential all examination material, including examination questions and specimens, in secure conditions with strictly controlled access only to authorized individuals;
5. Conduct their business in a responsible manner and utilize fair and equitable practices in dealing with clients and candidates;
6. Perform their professional duties with proper regard for the physical environment and the safety, health and well-being of certificate holders and candidates for certification;
7. Protect to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the wellbeing of the public and the provisions of this Code of Practice, any information given to them in confidence by an employer of certificated NDT personnel, candidates and certificate holders, or members of the public;
8. Avoid conflicts of interest with employers of certificated NDT personnel or candidates, but when unavoidable, forthwith disclose the circumstances to the employer or candidate;
9. Not falsify nor permit misrepresentation of their Accreditation, ICNDT certificate of conformity or certificate of registration under the ICNDT MRA;
10. Refrain from making unjustified statements or from performing unethical acts which would discredit the NDT profession or the ICNDT;
11. Immediately report to the ICEC any perceived violation(s) of this Code of Practice by any party;
12. Accept the right of the ICNDT, and provide unhindered access to a nominated representative of the ICNDT, to investigate any alleged infringements of this Code of Practice;
13. Indemnify ICNDT against liability for the PCB's use or misuse of the ICNDT MRA and/or PCB CA systems which are administered as a series of signed agreements under the jurisdiction of Austrian law.