Eight things people get wrong about accreditation

Accreditation sits quietly behind the certificates on supplier lists, tender documents and product claims, and it is widely misunderstood. This pack sets out, in plain language, what the process actually involves.

MYTH

1

Accreditation guarantees the result.

REALITY

It does not, and it does not claim to. Accreditation is an independent, periodic assessment of a certification body against the requirements of the relevant standard. It is evidence that a recognized process was followed and checked, not a warranty against every outcome.

MYTH

2

Once you are certified, you are certified for good.

REALITY

A certificate is a status to maintain, not a badge you keep. Certification is checked again at intervals, typically annually, and a certificate stays meaningful only while those checks continue.

MYTH

3

One certificate is as good as any other.

REALITY

On paper they can look the same. An accredited certificate rests on an independent check of the body that issued it; an unaccredited certificate rests on the issuer's own word.

Three more, on how accreditation actually works

MYTH

4

The assessor who visits decides whether you pass.

REALITY

The assessor evaluates the certification body against the standard and makes a recommendation. The decision to grant or refuse accreditation sits with a separate committee, not the assessor who did the work.

MYTH

5

Accreditation checks the paperwork, not the practice.

REALITY

Documents are part of it, but not the whole of it. Assessment includes watching a certification body's people conduct an actual audit, not just reading the report that came out of one.

MYTH

6

Accreditation is the certifier's concern, not the buyer's.

REALITY

It is the other way around. Accreditation exists so buyers, regulators and procurement teams can trust a certificate without having to audit the certifier themselves.

The last two, and what it all adds up to

MYTH

7

Accreditation only checks technical skill.

REALITY

Technical skill matters, but it is not the whole test. Assessment also examines whether a certification body is impartial: free of commercial pressure, with governance that protects its independence.

MYTH

8

Accredited for one thing means accredited for everything.

REALITY

Accreditation is granted for a defined scope, not as a blanket approval. A body accredited for one activity is not automatically accredited for another.

IN SHORT

Strip the eight myths away and what is left is simple: accreditation is the independent, standards-based check on the body behind a certificate. It is the discipline ASCB has applied for more than 30 years, since 1995, so that an accredited certificate means what it says.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Trust in the certificate rests on trust in the accreditation behind it.

230+	140+	30
ACCREDITED BODIES	COUNTRIES	YEARS OPERATING