

Key Technical Personnel (KTP) Model Guidance:

What is the KTP Model?

The KTP model is an approach to accreditation to ISO 17020 or approval of a quality management system and assessment of an agency's staff. It allows an accreditation body (such as IANZ or JAS-ANZ) or MPI to focus on certain procedures and the key technical persons who can supervise the staff actually undertaking verification or evaluation rather than assessing all staff within an agency. A sample of operational staff will also be assessed to determine the effectiveness of competence assessment. There must always be at least one key technical person with demonstrated competence in each category of recognition of the agency. For a larger, well operated agency this can reduce the cost of assessment as not all people need to be assessed by the accreditation body or MPI.

When applying the KTP model the following aspects of the assessment increase in importance;

- the agency's documented procedures for the selection, induction, training, competency assessment and monitoring of staff; and
- the assessment of the key technical persons who will be responsible for assessing individuals within the agency to allow them to make a recommendation to MPI that the person has the required knowledge and skills in order to be recognised under a particular category of recognition.

The assessment process must confirm that the agency's procedures for managing the technical competence of individuals are satisfactory.

If a serious or critical issue is identified with an individual's performance or the agency systems, the significance of failure increases. For example, a risk of using this model is potential suspension or withdrawal of agency recognition should a critical non-compliance be identified with the competence of an individual.

What is involved in assessment to the KTP model?

In general, for agencies of five people or less, all personnel will be assessed and the KTP model will not apply.

Under the KTP model, a sample of key individuals in an agency are selected to be assessed by the accreditation body or MPI. Individuals are targeted to ensure that, over time, all people and all scopes are assessed. All scope categories must be assessed during an initial assessment and all scopes must be reassessed every 3 years. Specific scope items may be assessed more frequently if required. High risk categories of recognition, new staff and individuals wishing to add to their recognition scope are selected to be assessed as a first priority. The key technical person/s will be individually assessed as part of the accreditation or MPI assessment process and will need to become a recognised person.

Factors to be considered when determining how many and which staff are assessed include the

- Number of verifiers or evaluators in the agency
- Number of locations where the agency operates from
- The ratio of key technical person/s to operational staff. The decision on which staff to assess can vary depending on geographic spread of an agency, technical scope of work undertaken and provision of supervision
- Risk and technical complexity of the sectors to be serviced by the agency
- Past performance of verifiers or evaluators already witnessed
- Adequacy of staff training, calibration and selection procedures as found during the assessment

- Geographical coverage and how the supervision by a key technical person/s will occur (on-site versus other options)
- Confidence in agency's staff monitoring systems
- Agency reporting structure
- As a minimum, accreditation bodies must comply with ILAC A5 requirements for coverage of staff, scope and locations

Process for approval of KTP model proposals:

An agency that wishes to operate under the KTP Model should first discuss how the model can be applied with the relevant accreditation body if applying for ISO 17020 accreditation or with MPI if applying for recognition to verify businesses subject to a national programme and not wishing to obtain ISO 17020 accreditation. To assist, the agency should develop a proposal outlining how it will be structured and operate, including the agency management, key technical person/s and makeup of any verifier teams. The proposal should describe how the following will be managed:

- Lines of accountability and reporting between the key technical person/s and other verifiers (especially the lines of accountability from the front line staff through to the key technical person/s)
- Number of individuals in a team and geographic location
- Calibration of key technical person/s and other recognised persons
- Team supervision or oversight by the key technical person/s e.g.
 - amount of time that the supervisor is present or able to be contacted
 - extent of direction and overseeing of work carried out
 - capability of the supervisor to intervene as required
 - discussion/checking of reports
 - approval (release) of reports
- Distribution of information to staff by key technical person/s
- Peer review of staff
- Systems for recruitment, training, assessment and monitoring of staff as well as eventual application for recognition of persons to MPI.

Each proposal will be considered on its own merit as each agency will potentially operate quite differently. The number of staff, proposed numbers of KTPs and physical location of staff may vary considerably.

Once the approach has been agreed the agency can use the KTP model to work towards ISO 17020 accreditation or approval of their quality management system and assessment of their staff using the KTP model.