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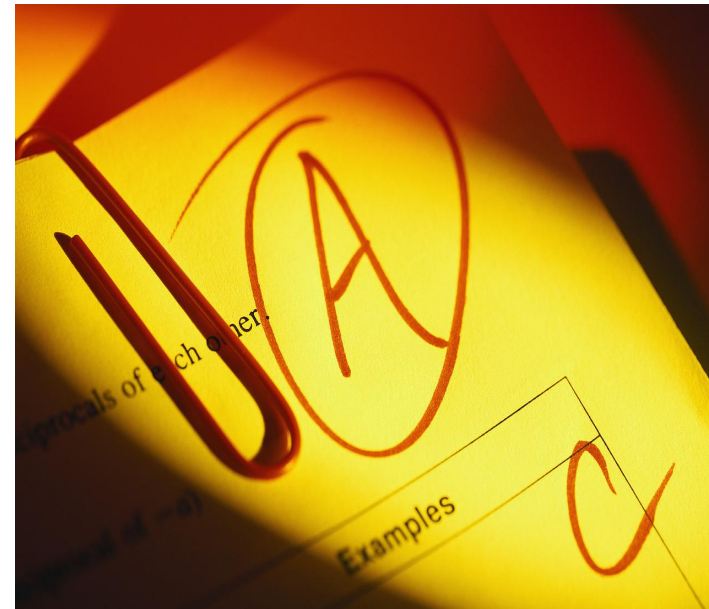
# The Open Group's IT Architect Certification (ITAC) Program

## Board Member Handbook

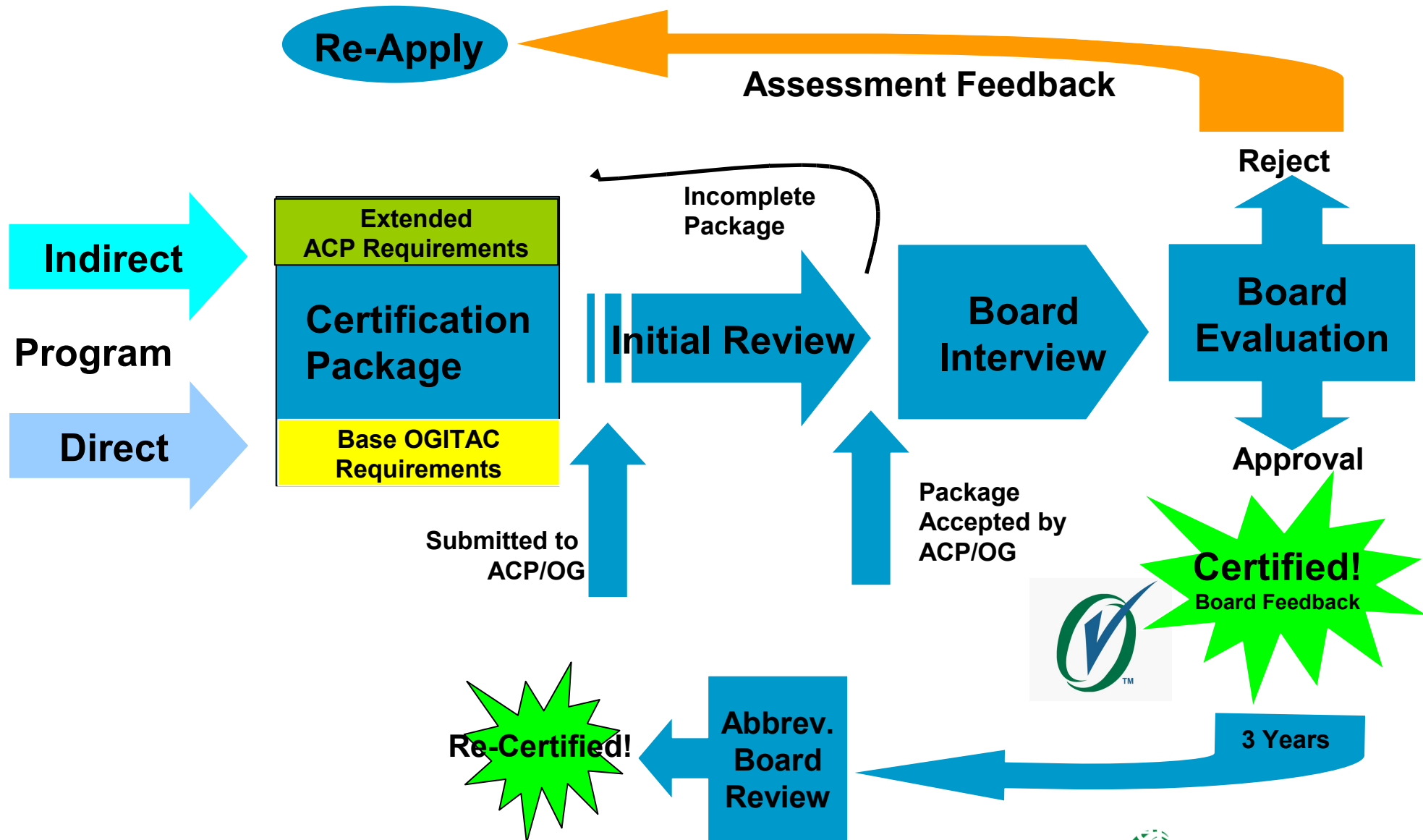
# Contents

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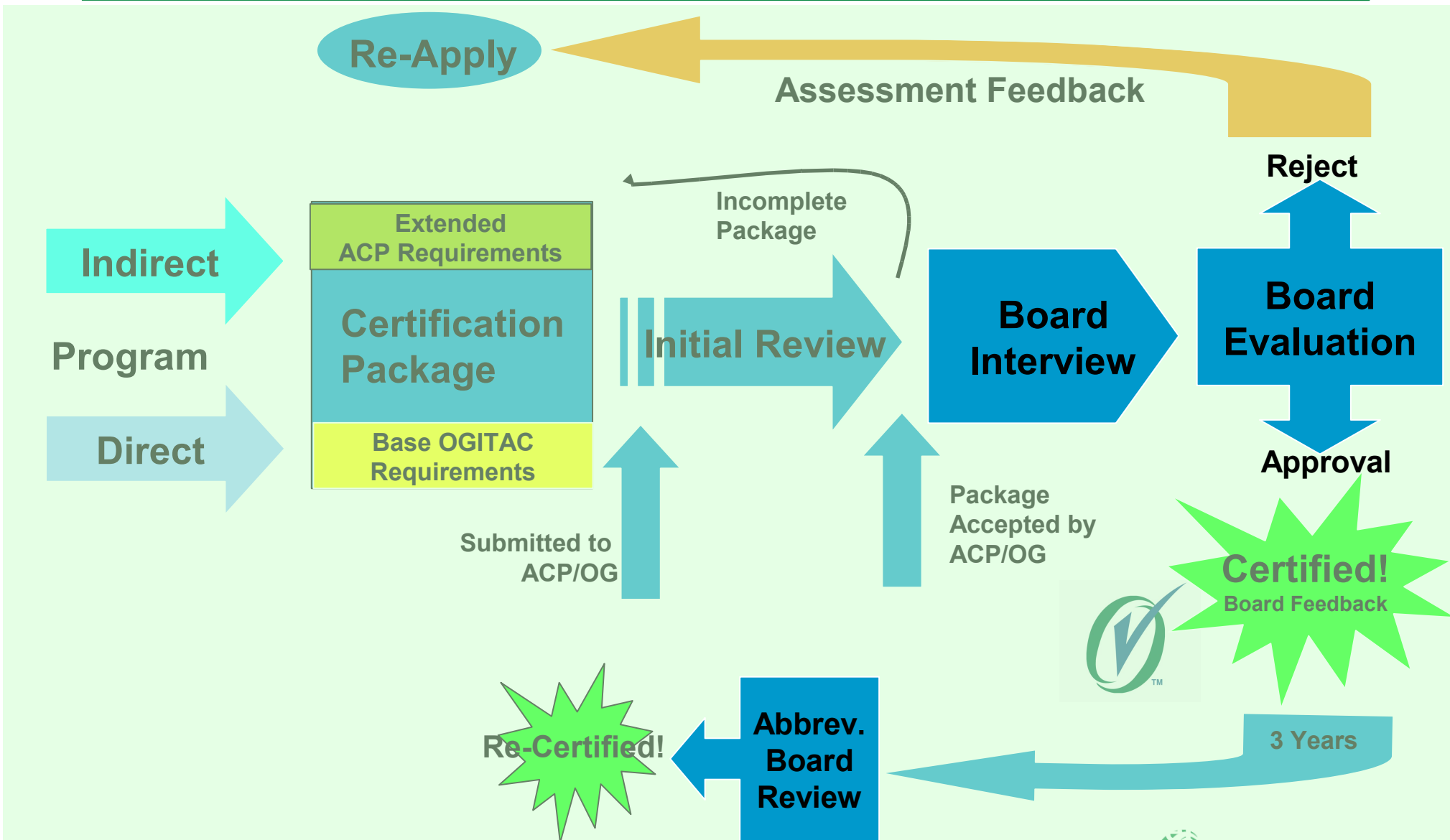
- ❑ Program Overview
- ❑ Board Objectives
- ❑ Joining a Board
- ❑ ITAC Board Process
  - Interviewing Candidates
  - Consensus Meeting
  - Evaluation for Re-certification



# ITAC Certification - Process Overview



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# Core Documents

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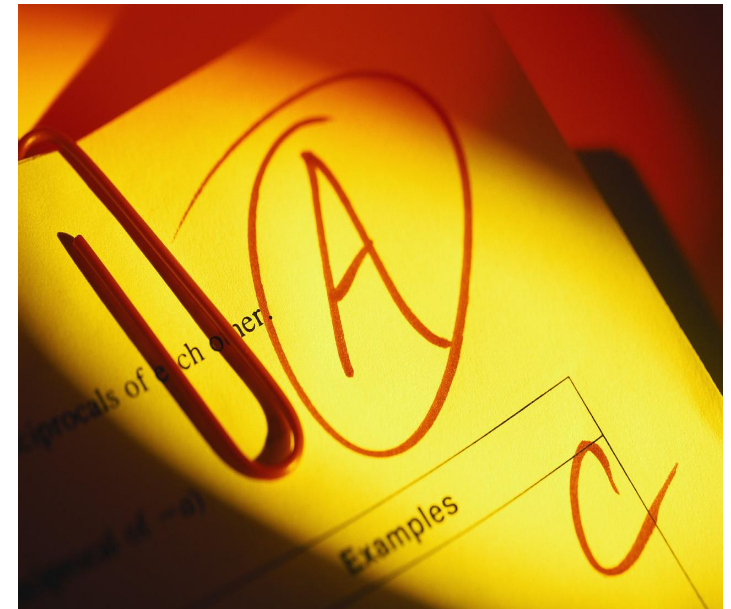
- ❑ Conformance Requirements
  - Core Foundation Skills
  - Experience Criteria
  - Give-Back to the community
  - Professional Development
- ❑ Certification Policy
  - Rules, process, what-ifs
- ❑ <http://www.opengroup.org/itac/cert/docs>



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# Board Objectives

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- ❑ To objectively evaluate each candidate against the applicable ITAC Conformance Requirements
  - By reading and evaluating the Candidate's Certification Package
  - By interviewing the Candidate,
    - To validate the claims in the package
    - To fill in any gaps between Conformance Requirements and the written package
- ❑ To arrive at a majority or unanimous certification recommendation
  - By reviewing each candidate's application with the other Board members,

# Board Objectives (2)

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- ❑ If certification is to be declined, to ensure that you have a clear rationale as to which of the Conformance Requirements are not met
- ❑ To provide developmental recommendations
  - Guide the candidate towards successful certification at the next level
  - Guide their continued growth and development
  - If certification is to be declined, to give the Candidate guidance in working towards successful certification in future
- ❑ To identify prospective Board members

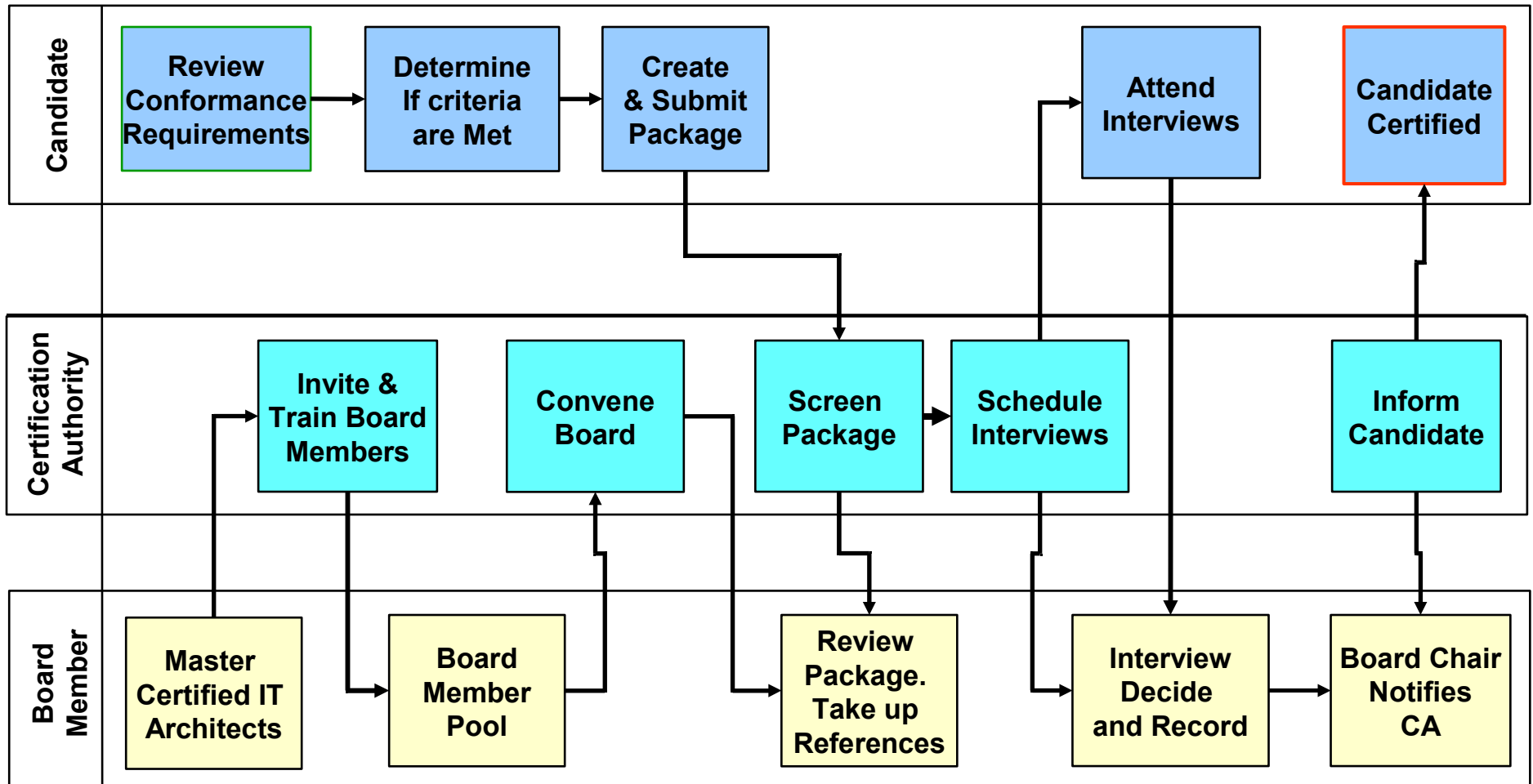
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# ITAC Certification Process Flow Summary



# ITAC Certification Logistics

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- ❑ Boards for Master Certified IT Architect (level 2) initial certification are face to face
- ❑ Boards for Certified IT Architect (level 1) initial certification, and for recertification at either level, take place by telephone
- ❑ Face to face Direct certification boards occur at Open Group quarterly conferences
- ❑ They may occur at other times and places according to need
- ❑ They are arranged by The Open Group, or by an Open Group partner in a particular territory

# Board Member Pool

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- ❑ You are eligible for Board participation if
  1. You are already a Board member for an Accredited Certification Program,Or
  3. You were
    - Unanimously approved by your Direct certification board as a Master Certified IT Architect, and
    - Recommended by your Board to serve as a Board member,
- ❑ To participate, you must have been invited by the CA,
  - And you must be willing to serve!
  - And to follow the rules of the ITAC program

# Board Member Pool (2)

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- ❑ You then sign the Board Member agreement
  - Personal between You and The Open Group
  - Provides for confidentiality for Candidates
  - You agree to evaluate Candidates fairly and objectively
  - You agree to declare any conflict of interest
- ❑ The Program pays Board members an honorarium (which you may choose to donate to charity)
  - US\$100 per candidate for certification
  - US\$50 per Candidate for re-certification
- ❑ The program does not pay travel or subsistence expenses

# Board Member Community

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- ❑ As a board member you may wish to contact other board members in your region or globally
  - For support
  - E.g. questions about process
- ❑ The Open Group provides email aliases/exploders to enable such communication
  - And will help facilitate such communication and the development of a Board Member community

# Convening a Board

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- Depending on your location and demand from Candidates, you will be invited to serve on a Board
  - in your area or,
  - with the agreement of your employer, at another location, such as an Open Group conference
- If you agree to serve, you will be allocated to a board that is convened to interview a set of candidates

# Convening a Board (2)

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- ❑ Boards members will normally be from 3 different companies
  - At least two experienced - no more than one “first timer”
- ❑ Boards will normally be convened for one day only,
  - Exceptionally for two days
- ❑ No more than 5 Candidates per day
- ❑ Refreshments and lunch will normally be provided
- ❑ The CA will provide an email alias which Board members should use for all correspondence in connection with the Board

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# Candidate Evaluation is a Challenging Process

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- There are many challenges to completing the assessment
  - Fixed amount of time for the interview
    - Just one hour
  - Many Criteria to evaluate
    - Core Foundation Skills
    - Experience requirements including a minimum of 3 project profiles
    - Professional Development criteria
    - Community Contribution Criteria
      - Board Participation is a giveback activity
  - Being objective and consistent in candidate evaluations



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***Fair and Accurate Evaluations  
Require Careful Preparation***

# Brush up your knowledge of ITAC

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- ❑ Inputs to the evaluation process are
  - The Candidate's completed package,
  - The Conformance Requirements and
  - The Board report form (web reporting system)
- ❑ Download and review the Conformance Requirements - and check for Interpretations
  - [www.opengroup.org/itac/cert/PR](http://www.opengroup.org/itac/cert/PR)

# Brush up your knowledge of ITAC (2)

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- ❑ Look at the Board Report form to see what information you will be required to record about the Candidates
- ❑ Remember: there may have been updates to the program since you were certified – or last served on a Board
- ❑ Ask your Board Chair or other board member for assistance in understanding anything that you are unsure of

# Prepare for the Interview

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- ❑ Read the package as soon as it is made available to you (twice is suggested)
- ❑ Understand the Candidate's skills and experiences
  - Skills are as important as experience
  - Opportunities can be fleeting and experience obtained in many contexts
- ❑ Identify areas needing clarification during the interviews and prepare ample open ended questions to address all areas of concern

# Role of the Chair

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- ❑ One of the three members of a Board will be appointed as chair by the CA
- ❑ The additional responsibilities of the chair are:
  - To ensure the other Board members have downloaded the Candidates' packages
  - To divide up the references between the Board members for checking
  - To ensure that the consensus meeting takes place
  - To ensure that the Board members complete the Board Report forms to record their evaluation and decision
  - To provide the final summary text that will be sent to the Candidates when they are informed of the result

# The Facilitator

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- ❑ The CA will normally provide a facilitator to support the consensus meeting
- ❑ The facilitator represents the CA and is responsible for ensuring due process is followed
- ❑ The facilitator is not usually an IT Architect and will not be familiar with the Candidates or their Packages
- ❑ The facilitator does not have a vote in the Board and has no opinion on whether or not Candidates meet the Conformance Requirements.
- ❑ In the absence of a facilitator, the Chair assumes these responsibilities

# Ensuring a Fair Outcome

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- The Chair and facilitator must
  - Ensure that a fair and objective decision is reached about each Candidate
  - Ensure that the discussions in the consensus meeting focus on the Candidates' adherence to the Conformance Requirements
  - Ensure that any decision to decline a Candidate is supported by majority agreement that one or more of the Conformance requirements have not been met
- ***Remember: fairness is the responsibility of all three Board members***

# Take up References

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- ❑ Agree with other board members who will check which references
- ❑ Call and ask for confirmation that the Candidate did the work claimed
  - If you can't reach them by phone, use email as a last resort
- ❑ We do not expect detailed confirmation, but we are looking to ensure that the project and the reference are real, and that the Candidate did participate in the work in the role described

# Be Objective

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- ❑ Identify experiences from the package that demonstrate behavior
- ❑ Don't rely on your "impression" or "gut feel"
- ❑ Probe into the candidates past decisions and behavior to determine leadership, communications and decision making capabilities

# Prepare Questions

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- Prepare open ended questions to probe into areas of concern
  - Areas of contradiction within the package
  - Their experience in difficult situations and how they handled it
  - Complex situations where they took a leadership position
  - Difficult architectural decisions or compromises they had to make
  - A difficult client or team situation they had to deal with
- Look for specific examples where the candidate has proven they possess the skills and experience to meet the requirements

# Quality and Objectivity are Paramount

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- ❑ Conduct your interviews in a professional and courteous manner
- ❑ No informal discussions about Candidates with other board members
  - Limit Candidate discussions to consensus meetings
- ❑ Inform the Candidates of any significant issues and concerns you have about their conformance to the requirements of the ITAC program, and given them the opportunity to address those items during the interview
  - Remember : you are evaluating the Candidate, not the Package

# You may be an experienced ACP Board Member

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- ❑ You may have served on boards for Accredited Certification Programs
- ❑ You may therefore be used to checking for additional requirements imposed by that program
- ❑ **Be sure only to evaluate candidates against the ITAC conformance Requirements.**

# More 'do's and 'don't's

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- ❑ Do remember to refresh your memory about the candidate and the package just before the interview
- ❑ Do not directly discuss, reveal or imply your potential decision with a candidate, whether it be positive or negative
- ❑ Do not discuss with the candidate their package quality or whether they should have applied
- ❑ Interview time should be used for the candidate and their quest for certification only

# Starting the Interview

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- ❑ Establish rapport with the candidate
- ❑ Place them at ease. They are likely to be nervous
- ❑ If you are the first to interview them
  - remind them of the logistics – 3 x 1 hour interviews with breaks in between
  - Ensure they know that results and conclusions will be communicated by the CA at a later date

# Starting the Interview

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- Let them know how the interview will proceed and what to expect...
  - “We will spend the next hour going over questions I have prepared after reviewing your package....”
  - Advise them to listen to your questions and be specific with their answer
  - Make sure they know when you are starting the interview
  - At the end, check they know where to go for their next interview

# During the Interview

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- Ask open ended specific questions, not leading or general ones
  - Allow the candidate time to think before they respond. If they draw a blank, encourage them to take their time and think about their response
  - Allow for periods of silence. Questions are only of value if you wait for the answer
  - In worst case, if the candidate cannot respond, move on

# During the Interview (2)

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## □ Maintain Control

- Remember, the person asking the questions is the one in control
- If the candidate starts rambling, regain control by politely interjecting and advising the candidate that the interview time is short and you have many questions yet to ask
- Ask your next open ended question to take control of the session again
- Once you hear what you were probing for or your question has been answered, move onto the next question

# During the Interview (3)

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- ❑ You may need to place the candidates responses into context if their background and experience is different than yours.
  - Strive to determine if they meet the spirit of the requirement based on their responses
- ❑ Your questions should be focused on the skills and capabilities, not the person
  - This keeps the session professional, non-biased and avoids any claims of discrimination

# During the Interview (4)

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- If their responses are too general, ask for specifics
  - Setting the tone early and being persistent will “condition” the candidate to respond with specifics
- If you are getting a one sided view of the candidate, look for contrary evidence
  - If the candidate “walked on water” in everything they have done, ask for an example where they had a negative experience, and vice versa
  - Strive to get a well rounded view of the candidate by the end of the interview
- Candidates may use pen and paper, but are not permitted to bring additional material to the interview

# Tips for Evaluating the Project Profiles

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- ❑ Seek evidence of architecture work the candidate performed
- ❑ What architectural decisions were they responsible for?
- ❑ What alternatives they considered and why they were rejected
- ❑ What rationale did they use to select the architecture?
- ❑ What were the risks and how were they mitigated?
- ❑ Why did they select the method used versus another?
- ❑ Are the Projects in the Profiles significant?

# What Makes the Projects in the Profiles Significant?

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- Each project profile should involve some complexity and significance
  - Type of Project
  - Degree of technical challenge involved
  - “Degrees of freedom” they had
    - Was there only one possible solution or was the architecture already decided?
  - Significance to the client
  - Risk
  - Size, number of solution components
  - Time necessary to perform a quality design as a solution to the business problem

# Reaching a Decision

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- ❑ **You must Determine whether the Candidate meets the Conformance Requirements, or identify those they do not meet**
- ❑ During and after the interview take lots of notes
  - You will need them during the consensus meeting to defend your vote even if you felt the candidate was clearly a Yes or a No.
  - One or more of the other interviewers may not have come to the same conclusion
  - Use the on-line Board Report form as soon as possible
- ❑ Make a preliminary decision on your own, then reach a unanimous or majority decision as a Board

# Your Preliminary Decision

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- ❑ For each requirement you believe the Candidate did not meet, you must identify specifically why they did not meet it
  - Generalities like “There was something about that profile I didn’t like” are not acceptable and will be rejected
  - All decline reasons must relate to specific criteria as documented in the Conformance Requirements
- ❑ Even though a candidate may rate themselves higher than you agree with, all they must do is meet the minimum requirement
- ❑ If any Conformance Requirements are not met, your decision should be to decline

# Your Preliminary Decision

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- Your preliminary decision should be one of Yes, Yes?, No?, or No
  - “Yes” means that you believe all Conformance Requirements are met
  - “Yes?” or “No?” mean that discussion is required at the consensus meeting
  - “No” means that you believe one or more Conformance Requirements are not met
- If in doubt, err on the side of the candidate
  - You have to be certain about a non-conformance to deny certification
  - If you are not certain, give the candidate the benefit of your doubt

# Board Report Form

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- ❑ As soon as possible after the interview, complete the Board Report form on the CA web site
- ❑ For each gap or deficiency you identified in the Package, put a comment into the Board report form explaining whether the gap was or was not covered to your satisfaction during the interview
- ❑ There may not be time to fill in the form before the consensus meeting
  - But it **MUST** be completed while the interview is still fresh in your mind
  - **Completed forms are essential for the CA to complete the certification process**

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# Consensus Meeting Process

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- All Board Members **MUST** participate in the consensus meeting
  - As soon as possible after the interviews
- The consensus meeting for face to face interviews will normally take place immediately after a day of interviews
  - Exceptionally, the meeting may be delayed or may need to extend beyond the time available.
  - Face to face is preferred, but telephone conferences are allowed
- The consensus meeting for telephone interviews will take place by telephone conference

# Consensus Meeting Process (3)

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- ❑ Be open minded and listen to the views and comments of the other Board members
- ❑ Focus on the Conformance Requirements
- ❑ To be certified, a candidate needs to have 2 “Yes” votes
- ❑ Discussions start with the easiest candidates
  - those with 3 “Yes” votes
- ❑ For candidates obtaining 3 “Yes” votes, the interviewers will be asked if there is a nomination of that candidate to the board pool
  - The responses must be a unanimous “Yes” for Candidates to be nominated

# Consensus Meeting Decisions

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- ❑ A discussion will be started for candidates with “?” and “No” preliminary decisions
- ❑ Interviewers will discuss their observations on how the candidates did or did not meet the certification criteria
- ❑ Keep the discussion focused on the criteria the candidate missed
- ❑ Once discussions have completed or upon decision of the chair/facilitator a final vote will be taken
- ❑ For the final vote each interviewer must answer “Yes” or “No” only

# Supplementary questions

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- ❑ During the Consensus meeting, you may discover that some aspect of a Candidate's package appears to be non-conformant, but the issue was not adequately covered during the interviews
- ❑ To avoid a Candidate being declined because of a failure by the Board, the Board is allowed to ask the Candidate supplementary questions.
- ❑ The facilitator should be asked to put an agreed question to the candidate by email and the response will be provided to the three Board members

# Guidance to Candidates

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- If the candidate is to be certified, the board is encouraged to provide recommendations to guide the Candidate in their future development as an IT Architect
  - Including recommendations for achieving the next level of certification
- If the candidate is to be declined, there must be agreement amongst the declining interviewers on the specific criteria not met – at least two board members must agree that at least one of the Conformance requirements is not met

# Decline Guidance

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- ❑ A decline **MUST** be based on a failure to meet the Conformance Requirements
- ❑ The response to Candidate **MUST** clearly identify what requirements were not met
- ❑ Provide:
  - General observations about the candidate relative to the Conformance Requirements
  - A Positive Statement
  - Statement of the specific requirement(s) not met
  - Developmental recommendations

# Decline Guidance (2)

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- ❑ Be specific
  - (good) "Profile #2 was judged to not be a valid profile because it did not meet the requirement ..."
  - (not good) "At least one of his Profiles does not meet the criteria specified in the Nomination Guide."
- ❑ Make sure
  - The "Recommendations" tie back to your observations and the specific requirement(s) you cited as not met
  - The reasons for decline match those stated in the consensus meeting

# Communicating Guidance and Results

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- The Chair is responsible for
  - Gathering developmental recommendations for successful Candidates
  - Gathering decline justification and recommendations from the other board members and getting their agreement on the final text
- **Only the CA communicates with Candidates, be they Accepted or Declined**

# Level 1 Option

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- If you are evaluating a candidate who has applied for certification at Level 2, Master Certified IT Architect, then
  - If the Candidate is agreed not to meet the requirements for Level 2
  - But there is a majority agreement by the Board that the Candidate DOES meet the requirements for Level 1
  - Note this on the Board Report form and inform the CA

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# Evaluation for Re-Certification

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- ❑ Evaluation for Recertification is an abbreviated version of the process used for first Certification
- ❑ Certified IT Architects are considered to have shown that they meet the conformance requirements at the time of original certification, and are not required to show this again
- ❑ But they are required to show that they have continued to practice as an IT Architect during the last three years, and have met the required Professional development and Community Contribution requirements
  - See the Conformance Requirements, section 5

# Evaluation for Re-Certification

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- ❑ Re-Certification Candidates must supply a completed re-certification package
- ❑ A Certification Board will be convened and Candidates assigned to it
- ❑ Interviews will be conducted by telephone
- ❑ Interviews have no pre-set duration, although at least 20 minutes is recommended
- ❑ Board report forms are required to be completed
- ❑ The Consensus meeting will take place by teleconference

# Support

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- ❑ Questions of clarification about either the Conformance Requirements or the (re)certification process should be sent by email to:

[ITAC-board-support@opengroup.org](mailto:ITAC-board-support@opengroup.org)