



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ACCREDITATION

What is the purpose of accreditation?

Accreditation enables individuals who are not voters or polling staff to enter polling centers and stations to observe election day procedures, including polling and counting of ballots. Their presence reinforces the transparency and accountability of the electoral process, and thereby enhances public confidence in the electoral process. To this end, accredited persons are not entitled to interfere in proceedings and are required to adhere strictly to all relevant laws, regulations and codes of conduct.

Whom must be accredited?

With the exception of registered voters, polling and security staff, and special guests of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), all individuals entering a polling station must be accredited by the IEC. The majority of those applying for accreditation may be divided into three categories:

1. National and International Observers
 - Representatives of observer groups
 - Special guests, invited by the IEC
2. Candidate and Political Party Agents
 - Representatives of independent candidates
 - Representatives of political parties registered in Afghanistan
3. Media
 - Representatives of national and international media organizations

In addition, accreditation must be obtained for any assistants, translators, audio-visual or other accompanying support persons. Special protection personnel may also be accredited; however, no weapons are allowed within 500 meters of any polling center, unless authorized by the Ministry of Interior.

What are the privileges and responsibilities of those accredited?

Each category of accreditation affords its own set of privileges and responsibilities. Among these:

1. National and International Observers:
 - May be present at voter registration centers and polling and counting stations for the purpose of observing all the stages of the elections, including the voter registration, candidate nomination, electoral campaign, polling, vote counting, results tabulation, addressing of the complaints and the certification and announcement of results;
 - May have access to information related to electoral process;
 - May prepare and publish impartial reports relevant to electoral events;
 - May prepare impartial reports of the electoral process and share it with the Commission, government, United Nations and media; and
 - May officially lodge their objections and complaints to the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ACCREDITATION

- According to the Code of Conduct for Observers, in the case that they observe any irregularity, which may disrupt the electoral process, “they shall communicate the matter to the authorities of the Independent Election Commission through any possible means.”
2. Candidate and Political Party Agents:
- May have access to information related to the electoral process;
 - May observe the polling and counting on behalf of their candidate or political party;
 - May observe the counting, sign the appropriate result form (indicating their presence during the process) and record the results;
 - May bring questionable or irregular activities to the attention of the Polling Station Chairperson and record their remarks in the polling station journal;
 - May officially lodge their objections or complaints to the IECC;
 - Must respect that only one agent per candidate is permitted in a polling station at any given time; and
 - Must not misrepresent events in reports or official complaints.
3. Media:
- May have access to polling centers and stations throughout the polling and counting processes; Must report with impartiality, accuracy, fairness and equity and refrain from broadcasting or releasing election related reports that could cause violence or tribal, linguistic, regional, ethnical or religious discrimination;
 - Not accept any gift or payment from a political party or candidate;
 - Must only report official numbers and information; cite the sources of articulated opinions and information; and refrain from printing, broadcasting or publishing incorrect, misleading or defamatory information;
 - Must respect the decisions of IEC, IECC, and Media Commission, and take the necessary actions for the implementation of their decisions; and
 - At the request of the IEC, correct mistakes in their election reports, as soon as possible.

According to the Electoral Law (Article 55), all observers and agents are required to observe the Electoral Law, all other legal regulations and procedures, and relevant Codes of Conduct. In addition, they must:

- Act neutrally and impartially;
- Not interfere with the polling or counting process in any way;
- Not knowingly publish false information in their reports or complaints;
- Visibly display their accreditation badges/ID cards; and
- Not wear or carry any sign that associates them with a candidate or political party.
- In addition, male observers and agents must not enter female polling stations.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ACCREDITATION

What is the proper procedure for being accredited?

Observer groups, candidates, political parties and media organizations intending to send representatives to election sites must apply for accreditation as “entities,” and register each of their members. All relevant application forms are available online at www.iec.org.af; or may be collected, in person, from the IEC headquarters in Kabul or in any provincial IEC office, from Saturday to Wednesday, from 8am to 4pm; and on Thursday from 8am to 1pm. Applications for accreditation of entities must be received **at least 2 weeks prior** to Election Day. Applications for accreditation of individuals must be received **at least 1 week prior** to Election Day. For more information, IEC Accreditation Officer, Mr. Sikandar Dawran may be contacted, directly via email at sikandar.dawran@iec.org.af or via telephone at +93 (0) 799 156 211.

Who oversees the proper behavior of observers, agents and media?

The Polling Station Chairperson is responsible for maintaining order in the polling stations and, subject to the approval of the Polling Center Manager, is authorized to request any observer, agent or member of the media to leave a polling station in the case that they violate the Constitution, Electoral Law, regulations or any other documents approved by the Commission (Polling Regulation, Article 4). Moreover, the IEC reserves the right to revoke the accreditation of any entity or individual who violates the Electoral Law, decisions of the IEC or IECC; whose party, candidate or organization requests the cancellation of his or her accreditation; or in the case of the dissolution or withdrawal of his or her party or candidate.

All observers, agents and media are subject the Electoral Law, and all other national laws. They are required to act in accord with their respective Codes of Conduct and to respect the resolutions of the IEC and IECC. In the case that an official complaint is brought to the IECC, the individuals in question – regardless whether they are permanent IEC staff, temporary polling staff, or any other individuals or groups – will be subject to investigation and held to account. Those who violate the Election Law or any other laws of the country may be referred to judicial authorities (Law on Structures, Duties and Authorities of the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission, Article 11).