

4 Supporting quality procedures

To reach and ensure the quality of the services of PTB, a number of supporting procedures are required within the scope of the quality management system of PTB which are -in part- directly related to the customer. They are based on the requirements which mainly arise from the laws (see [Annex 6.2](#)), from DIN EN ISO/IEC 17 025 and, thus, from the principles of DIN EN ISO 9001, as well as from the DFG guidelines for the safeguarding of good scientific practice. For selected fields, the requirements of DIN EN ISO 17 034, as well as DIN EN ISO/IEC 17 065, respectively, are taken into account.

4.1 Press and public relations

Organization

At PTB, press and public relations are organized by the staff office "Press and Information". Internally, this staff office is subdivided into two groups. Most of the products of the staff office are created in team work (within each individual group or between the two groups).

⇒ **Press and information Office**

Information broker, assistance to visitors, organization of fairs and events

⇒ **Editorial and publishing office**

Scientific and journalistic publications, web editing and web publishing, technical editorial office, publishing office

The essential objectives of the staff office "Press and Information" are:

- ⇒ to improve the image of PTB
(key word: modern federal institute)
- ⇒ making PTB (better) known to the public
(key word: we do not only make the time)
- ⇒ well-aimed addressing of the technical public
(key word: broker function)
- ⇒ imparting "PTB's scientific attraction"
(key word: junior staff)
- ⇒ being an information source for the media
(key word: media resonance)
- ⇒ performing educational work for the public
(key word: duty to impart information)

Tasks

It is the task of the staff office "Press and Information" to mediate between those within and those outside PTB, i.e. between PTB and the public. Therefore, the office "Press and Information" occupies – also in the organizational structure - a certain boundary position. This mediation attempt is addressed to both - very specific parts of the public (e.g. to the technical public at fairs) and (above all) to each individual who wants to learn more about PTB ("from the journalist to the citizen"). The external roles of the staff office "Press and Information" extend from an exhibitor at technical fairs to an assistor of visitor groups on the PTB premises, from the editor of metrological publications to the scientific journalist for print and the Internet. The office "Press and Information" sees itself as an active information broker and always tries to maintain its status as a correspondent as independently as possible. Only in this way can a basis of confidence with the public be established.

Products

The products of the office "Press and Information" can be subdivided into two categories: "Public Relations" and "Service". The category "Public Relations" covers all products by which the office

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"Press and Information" directly addresses the public. The products in this category are normally the office's own and the staff office is responsible for their contents. Examples are: public exhibitions, days of presentation ("open days"), assistance to visitors and scientific and journalistic publications in the magazine "maßstäbe", in press information leaflets, in the newsletter "PTBnews", in general leaflets and on the general pages on the Internet under <https://www.ptb.de/cms/en/presseaktuelles.html>.

The category "Services" covers all products which the office "Press and Information" prepares for the PTB's divisions/bodies which, in this case, are direct customers of this office. The contents of all products of this second category have been elaborated by the divisions/bodies which are also responsible for them. Examples are: presentations at technical fairs, the organization of meetings and workshops, technical editing/publishing of the technical journal "PTB-Mitteilungen", PTB Annual Reports, monographs, PTB Testing Instructions, PTB Reports, specific leaflets (exhibit descriptions), contents pages of the divisions/bodies on the Internet under <https://www.ptb.de/cms/en/ptb.html>.

4.2 Control of records and measurement data

At PTB, system-related, order-related and subject-area-related records are created and updated at all organizational levels of the quality management system. The system-related records cover records

- ⇒ for the control of documents
- ⇒ for complaints
- ⇒ for corrective and preventive actions
- ⇒ for audits
- ⇒ for management reviews.

The records which are generated within the scope of the supporting quality procedures and the handling of orders and applications and allow every order and application to be traced back on paper are called "order-related records" at PTB. As far as they are applicable to the division/bodies, these are, in detail, records relating to

- ⇒ calibration/testing
- ⇒ checking of contracts
- ⇒ subcontracting
- ⇒ purchasing
- ⇒ staff
- ⇒ ambient conditions
- ⇒ development/validation
- ⇒ facilities
- ⇒ sampling.

Records for the appropriate subject areas are kept in the area of research.

The **QP "Records"** describes the procedures to be followed all over PTB for the identification, correction and storage of records.

In this context, electronic measurement data are special computational records which can be processed. Their special handling is regulated in the **QP "Handling of measurement data and measurement data processing systems"**.

In the Quality Manuals of the individual divisions/bodies, the activity-specific details for the records are specified.

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4.3 Control of the inspection, measuring and test equipment

All inspection, measuring and test equipment is systematically monitored. The central documentation of the control of the inspection, measuring and test equipment consists of a list containing information on the identification, traceability and maintenance of this equipment. The inspection, measuring and test equipment is identified with a mark showing the next control date.

The details of the registration and identification, of the principles of traceability, and of the elimination, storage and use of the inspection, measuring and test equipment, are specified in the **QP "Control of the inspection, measuring and test equipment"**.

In this way, also the national standards are documented at the level of the divisions.

4.4 Purchasing

The **main steps** of this procedure are:

- ⇒ determination of requirements, incl. drawing-up of purchasing documents
- ⇒ performance of the awarding procedure
- ⇒ acceptance of the service
- ⇒ placing of orders and checking of the incoming goods, or enforcement of warranty claims (if required)

The purchasing procedure is described in detail in the **QP "Purchasing"**.

4.5 Subcontracting

If PTB orders, or parts of these orders, are passed on to third parties, this is a subcontracting procedure.

The reasons for subcontracting, the criteria for the selection of the subcontractor and details - from informing the customer to the documentation - are given in the **QP "Contracting to external bodies"**.

4.6 Training

The scope of basic and advanced training depends on the specific and individual requirements of the staff members. The requirements are laid down by the individual divisions. Together with the committee "Staff" (A-PE) and with the staff representation, a plan is established every year on the basis of the respective requirements of the divisions and the prospective tasks of PTB. The following internal and external training offers are available to the staff members:

(a) Training offers at the federal level, by public institutions

Comprehensive training courses, e.g. in the fields of administrative law, organization, information technology and management, are offered every year by the Federal Academy for Public Administration (BaköV). Furthermore, task-related foreign language training is offered every year by the Federal Languages Office.

(b) Internal subject-area-related training at PTB

Internal training and instruction at PTB is carried out and organized from time to time on specific occasions (e.g. introduction of new technical facilities and procedures, amendments of laws, directives, standards) by the respective persons in charge. Furthermore, training courses in the area of industrial safety and accident prevention are held within the scope required by law.

(c) Guidance to new staff members

To obtain the special knowledge needed, every staff member is familiarized by his functional superior with all theoretical and practical aspects of his future activities. During the training period, the knowledge acquired is regularly checked. After six months and, after this, at intervals of two years, the supervisor assesses and puts down in writing the knowledge and qualifications acquired.

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(d) Meetings

According to the hierarchical structure of PTB, meetings are held on a regular basis at all organizational levels with regard to the organizational and technical tasks coming up in the near future, and once a year also with regard to the working programme. These meetings are not only intended to deal with topical day-to-day business and to define strategies, but also to exchange experience.

(e) Training in the area of quality management

WG PSt 2 "Central Quality Management" develops training programmes for the internal quality management system and for the external assessment activities of PTB staff members in the area of quality management. These programs are organized and implemented in agreement with the Senior Quality Manager. They relate, e.g., to the training of PTB auditors, to the training of PTB quality assistants and to the realization of workshops on recent quality management matters.

(f) Use of external training offers

According to the special requirements ensuing, e.g., from the advancements in technology, in processes and in international standardization, the offers of external providers of training measures are used, with the priority being placed on renowned training organizers recognized in their area of specialization. The permission to take part in external training sessions is obtained through the internal channels of PTB according to the **Statutes of PTB**.

In the **QP "Training of staff members"**, the details of the planning and implementation of training measures within the PTB are specified.

4.7 Handling of feedback

Administrative acts adopted by PTB are always provided with information on the legal remedies available and can be contested by entering an objection. At PTB, objections are dealt with by the Legal Matters Office. According to the Statutes of PTB, the Legal Matters Office will also be responsible or will have to be involved when other legal remedies are used (e.g. action for performance of a service agreed with the PTB or for claims for compensation) and when a lawsuit is to be expected.

In the case of complaints and counter-responses on the merits, which do not yet have the character of a lawsuit, according to the Statutes, the respective person in charge has to have his decision ultimately signed by the next higher officer authorized to give his signature unless this is reserved for the President.

If a complaint implies the accusation of an offence against the regulations, the Legal Matters Office will be responsible for the examination.

If the use of legal remedies, complaints or counter-responses leads to shortcomings of the quality system becoming manifest, these must be eliminated in cooperation with the PTB's agencies responsible for quality management.

The **QP "Handling of feedback"** describes the procedure in detail. Apart from complaints, a distinction is made between objections, appeals and comments; also, the relevant responsibilities within PTB are described.

4.8 Control of nonconforming work

The objective is to avoid the supply of inadequate products and services to the customer. Errors may occur in every procedural step. This may be e.g. incorrect result reports, offers, contracts, invoices or damaged calibration and test items.

The mechanisms of reaction to such errors are specified in detail in the **QP "Dealing with nonconforming test and calibration work"**.

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