

Qualification by Similarity

The USB-IF offers a Qualification by Similarity program to member companies. The QbS program allows a USB product that is substantially similar to a fully tested and certified USB product to be granted certification based on its similarity to the originally certified product. The purpose of the QbS program is to speed time-to-market and to minimize certification costs. It is not intended to eliminate the requirement that a product actually passes USB-IF compliance tests.

Policy

The only authority to grant Qualification by Similarity to a product is the USB-IF compliance committee and the certification review board. No test facility or any other entity is authorized to grant or pursue Qualification by Similarity requests on behalf of the USB-IF.

The new product must be similar to a USB certified product that has undergone full and complete compliance testing. The new product cannot be compared to another product that itself has been granted Qualification by Similarity.

If the original certified product on which the Qualification by Similarity is based is older than 3 years, then a complete and full retest is required of the new product.

Procedure

1. Member companies submit a Qualification by Similarity request using the form at <http://www.usb.org/kcompliance/similarity/>
2. When applicable, the USB-IF will obtain specification sheets/drawings of both the originally certified and new products
3. A review of the QbS request and specification sheets/drawings will be performed by the USB-IF compliance committee. One or more of the authorized test labs and/or other experts in a given field may be consulted.
4. The USB-IF will issue its assessment to the vendor. One of three outcomes is possible:
 - a. Qualification by Similarity is granted and no other action is required. A new TID will be issued to the new product
 - b. Qualification by Similarity is denied. All certification tests are required for the new product
 - c. Qualification by Similarity may be granted provided the new product passes a subset of specific compliance tests
5. If the assessment requires passing a subset of compliance tests, the vendor will be informed of the required tests in an email from the USB-IF that includes a ReplyID number
6. The vendor will submit the product for testing to the authorized test lab of their choice along with a copy of the email
7. The test lab should request a copy of the specification drawings from the USB-IF to verify that the connector submitted for testing matches the envelope drawing. Please use the ReplyID number when requesting the envelope drawing.
8. The authorized test lab performs only the tests identified in the email
9. Upon successful completion of the tests, the authorized test lab will send an email to TechAdmin@usb.org along with the test results and the ReplyID number.
10. If the product passes all required tests, then the USB-IF will grant Qualification by Similarity to the product and issue a TID number.