



THE AUDIT PROCEDURE

Upon receipt of your application and payment we will conduct an application review. Once this has been completed we will contact you to agree a date for your stage 1 audit.

ISOQAR's auditors are selected to meet the requirements of your particular sector. Your company's activity, location of premises, size and complexity are all taken into account.

STAGE 1 AUDIT

The purpose of stage 1 is to assess your organisation's documented policies and procedures against the requirements of the standard(s), and to identify and report any shortfalls prior to the stage 2 audit.

The stage 1 audit will typically consist of:

- An audit of your management system documentation to ensure that all the applicable requirements have been addressed
- Confirmation that all legal/technical requirements are identified and documented
- A site walk around and planning for your stage 2 audit
- An evaluation of your location, processes and site conditions
- Confirmation that all relevant personnel are prepared for the stage 2 audit

We will also audit, wherever possible, and where sufficient records are available:

- Internal audit processes
- Management review
- Senior management commitment
- Complaints
- Purchasing
- Objectives and targets
- Any off site activities if feasible and time allows

Providing sufficient evidence is available at stage 1, it will not be necessary to re-audit these activities again during stage 2 audit.

We will compile a detailed report and a planned audit schedule for stage 2. These will be discussed with you and provided for your information. If deemed appropriate, a stage 2 audit date will be arranged at the closing meeting.

Normally your stage 1 audit will take place at your premises. This enables you to establish a rapport with your auditor and may help reduce the incidence of non-conformances at the next stage. Occasionally, and for very small or simple organisations, stage 1 may take place at our offices.

STAGE 2 AUDIT

At stage 2 we will audit your organisation according to your management system and the requirements of each applicable standard by gathering objective evidence to demonstrate compliance.

Stage 2 activities will typically consist of:

- An opening Meeting
- Staff interviews
- Examination of records
- Site visits (if applicable)
- Evaluation of audit results
- A closing Meeting

Where possible a process-based approach is employed.

Your audit will be conducted with reference to the audit plan. Sufficient samples are taken to ensure all requirements are addressed. This includes performance monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable standard). A three year audit plan may also be discussed at stage 2.

Findings of the audit will be documented in an audit report. If there are any areas of concern to the auditors, one or several of the following may be raised:

- A **major non-conformance** is the total breakdown of a system to meet a requirement of the standard. A number of minor nonconformities against one requirement can represent a total breakdown of the system and thus be considered a major nonconformity. Major non-conformances must be rectified before certification can be recommended by the Lead Auditor.
- A **minor non-conformance** may be either a failure or a single observed lapse in some part of the management system. Minor non-conformances do not affect the recommendation for approval but must be addressed prior to the issue of your certificate.
- **Observations for Improvement.** These relate to existing conditions which, according to the auditor, may warrant clarification or investigation so as to improve the overall status and effectiveness of the management system. They do not affect the recommendation for certification.

At the close of the audit, the Lead Auditor will leave his or her recommendation with you. If you do not concur with this recommendation, there is an appeals procedure, further details of which are available on request.

Our website contains additional stage 1 and stage 2 audit information for standards with specific requirements such as ISO 14001 and ISO 27001.

CERTIFICATION

Following your stage 2 audit, the auditor's report is reviewed at our office by the certification review team. This includes the corrective actions you have implemented to resolve any improvement requests raised. On satisfactory completion of these activities a certificate will be issued.

SURVEILLANCE AND RECERTIFICATION

ISOQAR's certification is valid for a three-year period and monitored at regular intervals. During this time we are required to conduct further audits of your organisation at least once each year (the first of which is typically 6 months after your initial registration). All visits to your company are by appointment, thereby ensuring availability of relevant personnel.

In order to continue your registration at the end of your initial 3 year period, we are required to perform a full re-audit of your organisation for recertification. This is similar in style to your stage 2 audit.

Fees for the recertification audit will be kept to a minimum and discussed with you in advance, normally during the last visit prior to recertification. The aim is to inform you in advance if extra time is needed and to help you budget accordingly. Following successful completion of your recertification audit, we will issue a new 3 year certificate, for which there is a fee.

Please note that all audits are performed on the basis of limited sampling. If discrepancies are not discovered, it is not guaranteed that they do not exist.

EXTENSION TO SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

Amendments or extensions to the initial certified scope are possible. For example, to include additional offices, new standards or new areas of business. Audits for this 'extension' can be carried out with minimum disruption to your organisation, often by allocating extra time around the time (but not instead of) of a routine surveillance visit. Please let us know about any changes by contacting us or completing our online questionnaire at www.isoqar.com/quote.

LOGOS

Following certification your company can display the ISOQAR shield of approval. If your company operates within ISOQAR's accredited scope you can also display the UKAS Accreditation Mark (often referred to as the 'Crown and Tick').