

# THE AUDIT PROCESS



Upon receipt of your application and payment we will conduct an application review. This is designed to ensure that all the factors which have an impact on the forthcoming stage 1 and stage 2 audits are identified.

## STAGE 1 AUDIT

The purpose of a stage 1 audit 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 of the standard(s) 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
- An evaluation as to your readiness to proceed with your stage 2 audit

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

- Internal audit
- Management review
- Senior management commitment
- Objectives and targets
- Other key processes

We will compile a detailed report and agree an audit schedule/plan for stage 2. 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.

Stage 2 activities will typically consist of:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opening meeting</li> <li>• Interviews with managers and staff</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits (if applicable)</li> <li>• Evaluation of internal audits, management review and objectives.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of records, documents and policies</li> <li>• Discussions regarding any findings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audits of all relevant processes such as purchasing, complaints etc.</li> <li>• A closing meeting</li> </ul>       |

Where possible a process-based approach is employed.

Your audit will be conducted with reference to the plan agreed at the stage 1 audit. Sufficient samples of documentation, records and interviews are taken to ensure all requirements of the standard(s) have been addressed and compliance can be demonstrated. A three year audit plan will also be agreed 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 failure to address or meet a requirement of the standard. Major non-conformances must be rectified before a certificate can be issued. It is possible that a revisit will be required to verify the corrective action taken.
- A **minor non-conformance** normally occurs when requirements of the standard have been addressed but sufficient records have not been retained to demonstrate full compliance. Minor non-conformances must also be rectified before a certificate can be issued.
- **Observations and opportunities 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 certification.

At the close of the audit, the Lead Auditor will agree the wording of your scope of activities that will appear on your certificate and leave his or her recommendation with you. A plan for the next audit is agreed and whenever possible a date for this audit is arranged.

Should you disagree with the recommendation there is an appeals procedure, further details of which are available on request.

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