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The information detailed within this document was correct at time of publication. For more details about this scheme and other services we provide, we advise you to see the IRCA website at www.irca.org.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT IRCA AND THE QMS SCHEME

■ IRCA and Auditor Certification

History:

The International Register of Certificated Auditors (IRCA) began certifying auditors in 1984. It was set up as part of an initiative by the UK government to make business and industry more competitive. The aim of this initiative was to achieve efficiencies by reducing the costs of supplier audits by replacing them with a fewer number of third party audits. Each third party audit of a supplier would then be accepted and recognized by all customers of that supplier.

In addition to IRCA, the other bodies involved in this new structure included an accreditation body (now UKAS), a national standards making body (BSI Standards), and a number of certification bodies. The quality management standard used was the British standard; BS 5750, which later became ISO 9001.

This quality infrastructure proved to be extremely successful and is now recognized world-wide to be the most effective and most commonly used method for assuring the quality of supplier organizations. This same structure is now used in other contexts, e.g. to assure the compliance of organizations' management systems to occupational health & safety, food safety and environmental requirements. But whatever the context, because the structure relies heavily on competent auditors and consultants, the role played by IRCA has been essential to its success.

During the years since inception, IRCA has earned a reputation for integrity and for adding value. The evaluation and certification methods developed and used by IRCA have been adopted by most other auditor certification bodies. Although most countries now offer alternatives to IRCA through their own national auditor certification programs, IRCA certification remains internationally as popular as ever. Around 24,000 auditors have been awarded certification since 1984, and over 100 countries are currently represented on the IRCA register. IRCA is the only auditor certification body that has international recognition and remains the certification that supplier organizations, certification bodies and auditors value most.

IRCA training:

IRCA certification of auditor training courses is recognized and valued internationally. Although developed originally to support auditor certification, IRCA has evolved certification of training to become an independent activity successful in its own right. Originally designed for auditors wishing to become certified, the courses proved very popular with students who were seeking information on quality, environmental and health & safety management for a variety of reasons. Now, only a small minority of students attending these courses are auditors. Training organizations in many parts of the world regard IRCA certification as an essential requirement for trading. The number of courses IRCA offers has increased to cover a wide range of applications, and continues to expand as Training Organizations demand certification for an increasing range of courses. Around 60,000 students a year attend IRCA certified training in all parts of the world.

Links with the CQI:

IRCA is an operationally independent division of the Chartered Quality Institute. The CQI own right is recognized worldwide as one of the international champions of quality. Together, in their respective roles, IRCA and the CQI provide a successful contribution to business and industry based on integrity, absolute impartiality, and adding value to the business process.

■ The QMS Scheme

To have credibility, accredited certification needs competent auditors. To be efficient and competitive, business and industry needs competent auditors. The purpose of our Quality Management Systems Auditor Certification Scheme (the QMS Scheme) is to provide confidence to accredited certification and to business and industry that auditors certified to this scheme are competent.

As part of the certification process we will evaluate you against requirements which reflect the key skills, knowledge and experience that define competence and which you, the QMS auditor need to have and demonstrate during an audit.

The QMS Scheme is based on the key standards:

- ISO 9001:1994 *Quality Systems –Model for Quality Assurance in Design, Development Production, Installation and Servicing*
- ISO 9002:1994 *Quality Systems –Model for Quality Assurance in Production, Installation and Servicing*

and the auditing guidance standard:

- ISO 19011:2002, *Guidelines on Quality and/or Environmental Management Systems Auditing.*

Our award of certification means we have recognized that you understand and are competent (depending on the grade awarded) to:

- uphold the principles of proper ethical conduct, fair presentation and due professional care
- communicate clearly orally and in writing with personnel at all levels of an organization
- plan and organise an audit of a QMS
- evaluate objective evidence and determine the effectiveness of a QMS
- report accurately audit findings and conclusions
- lead the audit team and manage the audit process

The scope of certification is general, i.e. it does not include nor does it require any industry sector specific competencies. You may select from a list, up to 4 standard industry sectors within which you have acquired work experience. These details, although included within the register, are self declarations and are outside the scope of certification.

The details of all certified auditors are included within a register which is publicly available.

The Scheme is intended for:

- quality auditors, e.g. those employed by third party certification bodies/registrars, or by purchasing organizations
- quality practitioners, e.g. quality consultants, quality managers and other quality personnel.
- employees conducting quality management system audits within their own organization i.e. internal audits.

This document provides you (new applicants and existing IRCA certified auditors) with information and instructions on:

- the certification process and how to apply

- the requirements for initial certification
- the requirements for renewal of certification, including CPD requirements
- the types of audits acceptable for certification
- fees
- the Code of Conduct.

Certification within the QMS scheme is available, without restriction, to all individuals worldwide who satisfy the certification requirements.

Transfer to the ISO 9001:2000 certification scheme:

If you are already certified to the QMS 1994 scheme and wish to become certified as a QMS 2000 auditor (as described in IRCA/602), you may transfer instead of applying for initial certification. Please see our website for our transfer requirements and an application for transfer form.

2. CERTIFICATION GRADES

The QMS Scheme has four grades of certification:

- QMS Internal Auditor
- QMS Provisional Auditor
- QMS Auditor
- QMS Lead Auditor

To assist you in determining which grade is right for you, we have listed below descriptions of the characteristics of each grade and a brief summary of the certification requirements. You will find a more comprehensive description of these in the next section; 'Requirements for Initial Certification'.

■ QMS Internal Auditor

Who is suited to this grade?

You should consider this grade if you conduct internal audits of your organization's QMS. In most cases you will not be a full time auditor, and you may only audit a few times a year, but you will have a good understanding of quality management systems and how they add value within your own organization.

Because internal auditing is only part of your work, we do not require the same level of qualification and experience as for the other grades.

Certification to this grade is valuable to you in the same way as with other qualifications that recognize your competence. It is valued by your employer not only as an indicator of your competence, but also because it supports your organization's management system.

Summary of certification requirements for this grade:

Education

- At least secondary education

Work Experience

- Five years, or 4 years with a degree or near degree
- One year's quality work experience

Auditor Training

- An IRCA certified QMS Internal Auditing course or accepted alternative

Auditing Experience

- Five audits totalling at least 15 hours

■ QMS Provisional Auditor

Who is suited to this grade?

This is the entry or training grade, and you should consider this if you intend to make auditing your career. The grade recognizes you to have the appropriate personal attributes, educational, professional and technical competencies but have not yet had sufficient opportunity to meet the auditing experience requirements necessary for certification to the other grades. Most career auditors start at this grade and it is seen as the first step.

This grade is also used by experienced auditors who are taking a temporary break from auditing or have moved from auditing to management, but who see value in maintaining IRCA certification.

Summary of certification requirements for this grade:

Education

- At least secondary education

Work Experience

- Five years, or 4 years with a degree or near degree
- Two years quality work experience

Auditor Training

- An IRCA certified Auditor/Lead Auditor course or accepted alternative

Auditing Experience

- None

■ **QMS Auditor**

Who is suited to this grade?

This grade is a natural progression from the provisional grade and you should apply for regrade (from provisional) as soon as you have completed the auditing experience. This grade recognizes you as a competent auditor, contributing as an effective member of an audit team. It is regarded as the next step in the career ladder and most auditors who hold this grade intend to move onto the lead auditor grade.

Summary of certification requirements for this grade:

Education

- At least secondary education

Work Experience

- Five years, or 4 years with a degree or near degree
- Two years quality work experience

Auditor Training

- An IRCA certified Auditor/Lead Auditor course or accepted alternative

Auditing Experience

- Four audits as an auditor-in-training totalling 20 days, 10 days minimum on-site

■ **QMS Lead Auditor**

Who is suited to this grade?

Most auditors working for certification bodies are lead auditors, as are auditors who perform supplier audits for large organizations. This grade is reserved for competent auditors experienced at managing audits and leading teams.

Summary of certification requirements for this grade:

Education

- At least secondary education

Work Experience

- Five years, or 4 years with a degree or near degree
- Two years quality work experience

Auditor Training

- An IRCA certified Auditor/Lead Auditor course or accepted alternative

Auditing Experience (in total, i.e. assuming you do not currently hold the QMS Auditor grade)

- Four audits as an auditor-in-training totalling 20 days, 10 days minimum on-site
- Three audits as lead auditor-in-training totalling 15 days, 10 days minimum on-site.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION

We will evaluate your application based on your demonstration of the competences¹ needed for effective audit of quality management systems. You can demonstrate these competences through a combination of education, work experience, auditor training and audit experience.

Unless otherwise indicated, we will accept a less comprehensive coverage of the scope and depth of competences for the QMS Internal Auditor grade.

Competences

■ Generic Auditing Competence

- Audit principles, procedures and techniques which enables you to apply these as appropriate to different audits and ensures that you conduct audits in a consistent and systematic manner.
- Management system and reference documents which enables you to comprehend the scope of the audit and apply audit criteria.
- Organizational situations which enables you to comprehend the organization's operational context.
- Applicable laws regulations and other requirements relevant to the discipline which enables you to work within, and be aware of the requirements that apply to the organization being audited.

■ QMS Auditing Competence

- Quality related methods and techniques which enables you to examine quality management systems and to generate appropriate audit findings and conclusions.
- Processes and products, including services, which enables you to comprehend the technological context in which the audit is being conducted.

■ Education

For all grades you need to have completed a minimum of secondary education. If you have a degree or near-degree² level qualification we will reduce the requirement for Work Experience (see below).

Acceptable qualifications include those awarded by an institution recognized by a national governmental body or accredited by a national professional body.

¹ You will find a more complete listing of the competences in ISO 19011:2002, section 7.3.

² We use the UK definition of a degree as the degree benchmark. But we recognize that not all degrees awarded in the UK and in other countries meet this standard. Many fall just short, either in content or in duration and we call these 'near degrees'. For the purposes of this scheme we recognize a near degree as meeting the tertiary education intent of this requirement and will accept this as equivalent to a degree.

All post graduate diplomas, undergraduate and post graduate degrees awarded in a relevant subject will normally be accepted.

■ Work Experience

General, relevant work experience:

For all grades you need to have at least 5 years relevant work experience, this is reduced to 4 years if you have a degree or near degree. We consider relevant work experience to be a technical, managerial or professional position where you are required to exercise judgement, solve problems and communicate with other managers, employees, and customers.

Quality work experience:

For all grades except QMS Internal Auditor, you must also have completed 2 years (which may be included as part of the 4 or 5 years total work experience) within a context where quality and quality issues formed the major part of the job. Such experience must have provided you with the practical knowledge necessary to audit quality management systems effectively:

For QMS Internal Auditor, the requirement is for 1 year of quality work experience, and we will accept quality experience of a more general nature.

For all grades, periods of training cannot be included in this work experience requirement.

■ Auditor Training

For QMS Internal Auditor grade you must have successfully completed either:

An IRCA certified *Internal Auditor* course (or an acceptable alternative)

or

The training requirement specified for any of the other grades.

For all other grades you must have successfully completed:

An IRCA certified *Auditor/Lead Auditor* course (or an acceptable alternative)

Acceptable alternatives include some QMS courses approved by other training approval bodies, e.g. we accept some (but not all) courses approved by JAB, EARA (IEMA) and RAB as being of an equivalent standard. Exceptionally, we will consider accepting training completed through other ways, but the onus will be on you to satisfy us that this training at least meets our requirements.

You should normally have successfully completed auditor training within the 3 year period immediately prior to application for certification. We may accept training completed prior to this period if you provide evidence of recent, relevant work experience, and currency of your auditing skills.

We advise you to refer to the IRCA website (www.irca.org/auditor_train/pdf/152.pdf) for a current listing of all IRCA approved training organizations offering IRCA certified QMS auditor training courses.

■ Auditing Experience

For QMS Internal Auditor grade:

You need to have performed at least 5 internal audits, each of which must have been of at least 3 hours duration and must have included all elements of the audit cycle; audit planning, document review, auditing, interviewing, audit reporting and must not have involved areas or activities that you yourself perform. (We will

accept audits of activities for which you are directly or indirectly responsible, e.g. as a line manager).

For QMS Provisional Auditor grade:

No auditing experience is required for certification to this grade.

For QMS Auditor grade:

You need to have performed at least 4 complete audits. Auditing activity must include document review, preparation and performance of on-site audit activities and audit reporting.

The duration of these audits must not be less than 20 days, 10 days of which must have been acquired on-site.

Although we recommend you should complete all of the audits under the direction and guidance³ of an auditor competent as a team leader (currently certified as a lead auditor or who has equivalent competence), we acknowledge that for many auditors this will be very difficult and costly to arrange. Consequently, we will accept a minimum of 1 audit under these conditions. We may require this team leader to attest to your competence to audit as a team member.

For QMS Lead Auditor grade:

In addition to the audit requirement for the QMS Auditor grade listed above, you must have completed 3 acceptable audits as the leader of an audit team which included at least one other auditor.

The duration of the 3 lead audits must not be less than 15 days, 10 days of which must have been acquired on-site.

Although we recommend you should complete all of the audits under the direction and guidance³ of an auditor competent as a team leader (currently certified as a lead auditor or who has equivalent competence), we acknowledge that for many auditors this will be very difficult and costly to arrange. Consequently, we will accept a minimum of 1 lead audit under these conditions. We may require this team leader to attest to your competence to lead an audit team.

General Guidance on Acceptance of Audits:

What audits do we accept?

For all grades except QMS Lead Auditor, we will only accept audits performed during the previous 3 year period. For QMS Lead Auditor grade, you must have acquired the lead audit experience during the previous 2 years. We define 'previous period' as being that period immediately prior to the date we receive your completed application.

We must be able to verify all audit experience you submit in your log sheets. Please make sure you include detailed information of the audits you perform and provide sufficient contact details so that we are able to perform the verification.

We will only accept audits that have been performed in accordance with the auditing guidance standard, ISO 19011:2002 (or ISO 10011, for audits conducted prior to the issue of ISO 19011) and against ISO 9001:1994, ISO 9002:1994 or ISO 9001:2000 or an alternative standard we accept as being equivalent. Audits

performed against alternative national, international or company standards may be acceptable.

If you are already certified as an EMS auditor (auditor, lead auditor or principal auditor grades only) we will accept audits against ISO 14001:1996, or acceptable alternatives, where these do not exceed 25% of the QMS audit experience requirement.

We will accept supplier audits (also known as *second party* audits), and certification audits (also known as *third party* audits) and internal audits (also known as *first party* audits). We also accept consultancy audits (see below), which can be performed as first, second or third party audits.

Internal (first party) audits:

For QMS Internal Auditor grade we will accept internal audits performed by you on parts of your own organization where you are independent from the operational activities you are auditing.

We will consider accepting internal audits for other grades providing that, in addition to you being independent from the operational activities you are auditing, the scope of the audit was sufficiently broad and the audit was sufficiently complex to require you to use a range of auditing skills. So that we can consider your internal audits for acceptance, we advise you to provide us with appropriate and relevant supporting information.

Consultancy Audits:

We will accept audits performed by you when acting as a consultant for a client if all of the following are satisfied:

- the client (auditee) already had a fully established QMS prior to the audit
- you had no part in setting up the QMS being audited (except in specific circumstances as described below)
- you were independent of the auditee
- the scope of the audit included all elements of the QMS

We will also accept pre-assessment audits performed by you on a QMS that you were involved in developing if the certification body subsequently awarded certification at the first attempt.

Surveillance (partial system) audits:

We do not normally accept surveillance (partial system) audits when submitted for initial certification (except for QMS Internal auditor). However, we do accept surveillance audits for renewal of certification. As a general rule we consider five surveillance audits to be equivalent to one full QMS audit, but recognize that some surveillance audits can be very extensive. In such instances, we will accept fewer than five surveillance audits (as being equal to one full QMS audit) if you provide us with evidence that supports your claim.

Audits we do not accept:

We do not accept:

- audits of the same QMS that are repeated more frequently than once every 12 months.
- audits of less than one day (6 hours of on-site audit activity exclusive of breaks) duration, except for QMS Internal Auditor grade where we will accept audits of 3 hours exclusive of breaks.
- gap analysis, close out or follow up visits.

- audits performed before successful completion of the formal training requirement.

4 HOW TO APPLY

■ What you do

■ Request an application pack

We will provide you with an application pack free of charge. Either contact us and we will send it to you by post, or download all the documents yourself from our website.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7245 6833

Fax: +44 (0)20 7245 6755

Email: qms@irca.org.

Website: www.irca.org.

■ Complete and submit the application form and documents

When you apply for certification, please complete the forms as instructed, enclose all the additional material requested and send to us with the application fee.

At the application stage, please send only the application fee. Do not send an annual certification fee. If your application is successful, we will write and ask you to pay the annual certification fee.

We need all correspondence in support of the application to be in the English language, or to be accompanied by certified translations of the originals. This is particularly important for educational qualifications, training courses and audits.

All qualifications submitted must be supported by documentary evidence. An example of acceptable evidence would be a good quality photocopy of the original certificate, indicating the awarding body, the title and date of the award and the name of the person to whom the award was made. If any of this information is not available or is not clear, we may ask you to supply us with more evidence.

The same applies if a copy of the certificate is not available, for example where it has been lost or destroyed. Acceptable evidence would include an official letter from the awarding body confirming the award.

A transcript (i.e. an official, detailed account of the course content) of an award would also be acceptable evidence if it clearly states the date and title of the award.

If no documentary evidence can be supplied by the awarding body, it is unlikely we would accept your qualification.

■ What we do

We usually take about four weeks to process each application. But that time may vary depending on the time required to verify the information submitted with the application. Giving us all the information we need will speed up the application process.

The process has four parts:

■ Administrative check

All applications are checked first by our administration staff to make sure you have included all the information we need.

■ Technical evaluation

This phase is performed by IRCA's technical experts, the Reviewing Officers. The Reviewing Officers evaluate the information submitted against the certification requirements and perform verification of some or all of this information. At the conclusion of the technical evaluation, the Reviewing Officers will make a recommendation on certification to the Certification Manager.

We consider verification to be an essential element supporting the overall credibility of the certification process. Consequently, great care is taken by the Reviewing Officers in reviewing and verifying applications against all aspects of the certification requirements. We will perform the evaluation as speedily as we can, but sometimes it is not possible to be as quick as we (and you) would like. Processing your application is likely to take longer if you have unusual educational qualifications, or if your current (or former) employers are slow to provide verification information, or if the auditee organizations are not helpful.

■ **Certification**

The final decision on your certification is made by the Certification Manager. The certification decision is performed independently from the technical evaluation process (detailed above).

■ **Offer and award of certification**

The Certification Manager will write formally to you with an offer of certification to the appropriate grade. We will send you this offer and ask you to pay your first annual fee.

Certification will be awarded when we receive your payment of the annual fee.

Your details are then added to the register of certified auditors and we will send you your certification card.

5. FEES

Fees are set annually and apply for the calendar year (1 January - 31 December). Details of current fees are available from us.

■ Application fee

We need you to pay this fee when you send in your application. Unfortunately, we will not be able to progress applications that are not accompanied by an application fee.

This fee covers the costs of the application process and is not refunded if the application is unsuccessful.

■ Initial certification fee

This fee covers the cost of the administration of your certification during the first year, or part of the year in which you are first certified. We need you to pay this fee before we can award certification.

This fee will vary depending on the time of year we award certification.

■ Annual certification fee

This fee covers the annual cost of administering your certification and you are required to pay this by the beginning of each year. We will normally send you the invoice around October.

■ Application for regrade fee

This fee covers costs of evaluating your regrade. We need you to pay this fee when you submit your request and, as with the application fee, the regrade fee is not refundable.

If you are regraded during the year we will not ask you to pay any further certification fees for that current year.

You may request a regrade at any stage during the certification period.

There is no regrade fee if you are regraded as part of the (3-year) renewal of certification process.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

You must renew your certification every three years. i.e. at the end of the third complete year. We will write to you around October of the last year in your certification period and ask you to send us your audit and CPD logs, and other documents. We will evaluate these against the renewal requirements listed below and make a certification decision. We will then write to you with the results.

The renewal of certification process involves these five requirements:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Audit experience
- Declaration of Complaints
- Compliance with the IRCA Code of Conduct
- Payment of the Annual fee

■ Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

For all grades except the QMS Internal Auditor grade, you must have completed at least 45 hours of appropriate CPD during the 3 year period immediately prior to renewal of certification.

We need you to provide us with evidence that you have met this requirement.

(See Appendix I for guidance.)

■ Audit Experience

We need you to record and submit your audit experience on the audit log sheets (IRCA/106) which we supply.

For QMS Internal Auditor grade

You need to have completed a minimum of 5 audits, the total duration of which must be at least 15 hours.

For QMS Provisional Auditor grade

There is no requirement to perform audits.

For QMS Auditor grade

You need to have completed at least 5 acceptable audits.

For QMS Lead Auditor grade

You need to have completed at least 5 acceptable audits, any 2 of which must have been as the leader of a team which included at least one other auditor.

We will accept some ISO 14001:1996 audits as meeting this requirement (ISO 14001:1996 audits must not exceed more than 50% of the audit days or audit number requirement).

You must have performed all audits within the previous three year certification period.

■ **Declaration of Complaints**

We need you to tell us about any complaints made against your professional conduct. It is important that we know of any complaints as we need to consider these as part of the renewal of certification process. We will investigate all instances of complaints. If complaints are made against your conduct and you do not declare them, the consequences will be far more serious and may result in suspension or withdrawal of your certification.

■ **Compliance with the Code of Conduct**

We need you to make a declaration that you have always acted in compliance with the Code of Conduct (see Appendix III).

■ **Payment of the Annual Fee**

And finally, we need you to pay the annual fee (please note there is no additional fee for renewal). Because the fee will be dependent on the grade we offer you after renewal, we do not ask you to pay this fee until after we have completed the renewal. We will write to you with the results of the renewal and enclose the fee invoice and your new certification card.

7. HOW TO REGRADE

You can apply to be regraded to another grade at any time. When we offer you initial certification we will indicate the audit experience and competences you need to attain the next grade(s) of certification. To apply for regrade, you should complete IRCA/106 log sheets, enclose any additional information requested and send to us with the regrade fee.

A successful application for regrade will not normally result in a change to your renewal of certification date.

If you decide not to apply for regrade during your initial certification period, as part of the renewal of certification process we will write to you around October of the last year in your certification period and ask you to send us your audit and CPD logs, at this point we will let you know the current regrade requirement. There is no regrade fee if you are regraded as part of the (3-year) renewal of certification process.

Please contact us if you need further advice on how to regrade.

8. OTHER INFORMATION

■ The Certification Period

When your application is successful, we award certification for a period of 3 complete, calendar years. This 3 year period is referred to as the certification period. At the end of each certification period we require you to renew your certification. If you are successful at renewal, we award you certification for a further 3 year 'certification period'. And so on.

During the certification period, at the end of the first and second years, you may maintain certification by payment of the annual certification fee and by compliance with the Code of Conduct. We don't require you to submit any other documentation at the end of year 1 and year 2. At the end of the third year, all certified auditors are required to complete the renewal of certification process.

■ QMS Standards other than ISO 9001:1994 & ISO 9002:1994

We will accept audits performed against standards which we evaluate as being equivalent to ISO 9001:1994 & ISO 9002:1994 or against ISO 9001:2000. We maintain a list of acceptable, alternative standards but it is possible that you may claim audits against a standard that is not on this list. We have a procedure for evaluating new standards and you are advised to contact us for advice where you consider an alternative standard may be acceptable to us.

■ Certification Cards, Certificates and the Register

We will send you a Certification Card following initial award of certification and annually thereafter when you pay your annual fee and comply with any other requirements. All cards are valid for the year in which they are issued and until 31 January of the following year.

This card is your primary evidence of certification and you should present this when you first begin an audit and thereafter whenever appropriate.

Although the card is issued to you, it remains our property and you must return it to us should we ask you to.

The IRCA Certificate is intended for display as a formal recognition of your certification to a specific grade. You should not use it as proof of certification. Contact us if you wish to purchase a certificate.

We can supply registers which include basic details of IRCA certified auditors. We do not routinely publish a complete register, as details are constantly changing, but registers are generated on demand and according to specific instructions. (An example of a request might be: "Please provide me with a register listing all QMS Lead Auditors in Mexico")

Registers in electronic format (i.e. sent to you as an attachment to an e-mail) are usually supplied free of charge but we may make a small charge if your request is complex.

■ Appeals and Complaints

You have the right to appeal against any certification decision taken by us. We operate a quality system that includes established procedures for considering appeals and complaints.

■ **Enforcement of Certification**

We retain the right to withdraw your certification if you do not continue to meet the certification criteria. In most cases withdrawal will be preceded by an offer of an alternative grade for a period during which you have the opportunity to meet the requirements and be reinstated to the grade you originally held.

Similarly, we reserve the right to undertake action against your certification if we find you to have acted contrary to the Code of Conduct. Options available include suspending, or in instances of serious or sustained breach, withdrawal of your certification.

■ **Confidentiality**

We undertake to consider as strictly confidential all information, correspondence and documentation submitted by you to us in support of your certification activities.

We reserve the right to publish relevant details of each certified auditor in the register.

■ **Legal Status**

The certification of auditors by us and all activities associated with the administration of the register is governed in accordance with English Law and is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts.

APPENDIX I GUIDANCE ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

CPD is a framework that encourages you to continuously update your professional knowledge, personal skills and competencies. The purpose of CPD is to make you more effective as an auditor, and to make the auditing profession more credible. The concept of CPD, and the value it contributes, is now recognized and accepted throughout all professional fields.

As part of the renewal of certification process, you must demonstrate to us you have completed at least 45 hours CPD within the last 3 years in subjects that are broadly related to auditing and QMS.

Because there are so many topics that we recognize will enhance your auditing competence, we do not attempt to list them here. But we categorize these into 2 areas which are consistent with the 2 main areas of competence required by QMS auditors:

1. Quality related
2. Auditing related

We recognize that no single method for learning suits everyone. Therefore, we will accept CPD acquired in ways that range from the very informal (e.g. reading and self study) to the formal (e.g. classroom training). We recognize that some ways of acquiring CPD are more effective than others, so we apply a 'weighting' where some activities are accorded more recognition than others. The activities are divided into 3 broad categories:

- a) Unstructured; where 3 hours are accepted as one CPD hour

Included in this category would be distance and open learning study which is not assessed and does not lead to a qualification, the reading of professional and technical journals, books and other publications, relevant aspects of on-the-job training, where specific outcomes have been planned and identified.

- b) Semi-structured; where 2 hours are accepted as one CPD hour

Included in this category would be non-interactive lectures, talks, etc., informal professional body meetings of a more social nature (networking opportunities) the research, preparation and first delivery of lectures/courses, publishing articles and forms of open and distance learning that involve assessment and that result in the acquisition of a qualification.

- c) Structured; where each hour is accepted as one CPD hour

Examples of this category would be interactive and highly participative training courses and seminars, professional body meetings with formal lectures, active participation in development of standards.

The range of activities that may be included within each category is extensive and the small number of examples above are intended to provide broad guidance only. Most auditors submit evidence of activities that include all 3 categories, but it is not a requirement that you do so. The only restriction we place is that unstructured CPD cannot constitute more than 1/3 (i.e. 15 hours) of the total acceptable CPD hours.

It remains your responsibility to provide a case for acceptance of any activity you submit, and this must be supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence. This will involve you making and retaining records of your activities, and having these properly verified where possible. We have developed a CPD and training log sheet (IRCA/173) for this purpose.

It is in your interests to provide us with information in a clear, logical and easily understandable format. The speed with which we are able to evaluate and renew your certification will depend on this.

APPENDIX II DEFINITIONS

Audit

A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which audit criteria are fulfilled.

Auditee

The organization being audited.

Audit Client

The person or organization requesting an audit.

Audit Team

Two or more auditors performing an audit, one of whom is appointed as leader.

Lead Audit

An audit where the auditor performed the audit whilst leading a team of at least one other auditor.

Sole Audit

An audit where one auditor performed all phases of the audit.

First Party Audit

An audit performed within an organization by that organization's own auditing resource. Also referred to as an Internal Audit.

Second Party Audit

An audit of contractors/suppliers undertaken by, or on behalf of, a purchasing organization. This may include the audit of companies or divisions supplying goods or services to others within the same group. Also referred to as a Supplier Audit.

Third Party Audit

An audit of an organization performed by a body that is independent of the organization being audited, e.g. Certification Body or Registrar.

APPENDIX III

CODE OF CONDUCT

It is a condition of certification that you agree to act in accordance with, and be bound by the following Code of Conduct:

1. To act in a strictly trustworthy and unbiased manner in relation to both the organization to which you are employed, contracted or otherwise formally engaged (the audit organization) and any other organization involved in an audit performed by you or by personnel under your direct control.
2. To disclose to your employer any relationships you may have with the organization to be audited before undertaking any audit function in respect of that organization.
3. Not to accept any inducement, gift, commission, discount or any other profit from the organizations audited, from their representatives, or from any other interested person nor knowingly allow personnel for whom you are responsible to do so.
4. Not to disclose the findings, or any part of them, of the audit team for which you are responsible or of which you are part, or any other information gained in the course of the audit to any third party, unless authorised in writing by both the auditee and the audit organization to do so.
5. Not to act in any way prejudicial to the reputation or interest of the audit organization.
6. Not to act in any way prejudicial to the reputation, interests or credibility of IRCA.
7. In the event of any alleged breach of this code, to co-operate fully in any formal enquiry procedure.