

## Making effective use of ISO 19011

ISO 19011:2002 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing replaces the old ISO 10011 series of quality management systems (QMS) auditing standards and provides guidelines for first, second and third party auditing of both quality and environmental management systems. While much of the standard is relevant to third party QMS audits, not all of its clauses are directly applicable. The standard contains options relating to auditing methods and auditor competence but the content is not mandatory.

The guidance is intended to be flexible and the application can differ according to the size, nature and complexity of the organisation to be audited. It is up to each third party auditing body to use the guidelines to the extent appropriate to their needs and relevance to their own working practices. The standard is divided into a number of sections including the following:

### ***Principles of auditing***

An auditor should be familiar with the five principles of auditing and apply them to the audit process.

### ***Managing an audit programme***

This will generally be the responsibility of the management of a third party auditing body and not an individual auditor. Auditors should be aware that audit programmes are monitored and reviewed at appropriate intervals. Auditors should provide input for improvement of audit programmes.

### ***Audit activities***

This guidance emphasises the importance of and the techniques for planning, conducting and reporting an audit and is of particular relevance to an auditor. Auditors should be very familiar with the guidance in Section 6 of ISO 19011 on these issues.

### ***Competence and evaluation of auditors***

The guidance on the competence and evaluation of auditors gives new emphasis to the importance of team competence as well as that of the individual, which replaces the prescriptive qualification criteria for auditors that were formerly set out in ISO 10011-2.

Competence is now defined as 'demonstrated personal attributes and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills'. Less importance is now placed on prescribed levels of education, workplace and auditing experience and numbers of completed audits. These are now used as inputs to the knowledge and skills necessary for auditor competence.

Much of this guidance will be used by third party auditing bodies when setting their own competence criteria for auditors. However, individual auditors should be aware of the content of this section so that they can maintain, improve and work within the limits of their professional competence.

Practical help can be found throughout the guidelines and provides examples and additional clarification on various topics, although some may not be applicable to third party auditing.

This article is an edited version of 'Making effective use of ISO 19011' from the website of the ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group, and is reproduced courtesy of ISO and the IAF. These papers were developed on current best practice and therefore have not been formally endorsed as International Accreditation Forum (IAF) guidance or ISO TC176 interpretations. For further information about the Auditing Practices Group

<http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2122/138402/138403/%203541460/customview.html?func=ll&objId=3541460&objAction=browse&sort=name>.

The ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group is an informal group of QMS experts, auditors and practitioners drawn from the ISO Technical Committee 176 Quality Management and Quality Assurance (ISO/TC 176) and the IAF. It has developed a number of guidance papers and presentations that contain explanations about the auditing of QMSs. These reflect the process-based approach that is essential for auditing the requirements of ISO 9001.

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