

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

**Conformity assessment—Requirements  
for bodies providing audit and  
certification of management systems**



## **AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021:2011**

This Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard was prepared by Joint Technical Committee QR-010, Conformity Assessment. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 17 October 2011 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 25 October 2011.

This Standard was published on 11 November 2011.

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The following are represented on Committee QR-010:

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Certification Interests (Australia)  
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International Accreditation Forum  
Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand  
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*This Standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021.*

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Originated in Australia as AS ISO/IEC 17021—2006.  
Jointly revised and designated as AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021:2011.

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR-010, Conformity Assessment, to supersede AS ISO/IEC 17021—2006, *Conformity assessment—Requirement for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*.

The objective of this Standard is to specify principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types (e.g. quality management systems or environmental management systems) and for bodies providing these activities.

This Standard is identical with, and has been reproduced from ISO/IEC 17021:2011, *Conformity assessment—Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*.

As this Standard is reproduced from an International Standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number appears on the cover and title page while the International Standard number appears only on the cover.
- (b) In the source text ‘this International Standard’ should read ‘this Australian/New Zealand Standard’.
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References to International Standards should be replaced by references to Australian or Australian/New Zealand Standards, as follows:

<i>Reference to International Standard</i>	<i>Australian/New Zealand Standard</i>
ISO	AS/NZS ISO
9000    Quality management systems— Fundamentals and vocabulary	9000    Quality management systems— Fundamentals and vocabulary
ISO/IEC	AS ISO/IEC
17000    Conformity assessment—Vocabulary and general principles	17000    Conformity assessment—Vocabulary and general principles

The terms ‘normative’ and ‘informative’ have been used in this Standard to define the application of the annex to which they apply. A ‘normative’ annex is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an ‘informative’ annex is only for information and guidance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Certification of a management system, such as a quality or environmental management system of an organization, is one means of providing assurance that the organization has implemented a system for the management of the relevant aspects of its activities, in line with its policy.

This International Standard specifies requirements for certification bodies. Observance of these requirements is intended to ensure that certification bodies operate management system certification in a competent, consistent and impartial manner, thereby facilitating the recognition of such bodies and the acceptance of their certifications on a national and international basis. This International Standard serves as a foundation for facilitating the recognition of management system certification in the interests of international trade.

Certification of a management system provides independent demonstration that the management system of the organization

- a) conforms to specified requirements,
- b) is capable of consistently achieving its stated policy and objectives, and
- c) is effectively implemented.

Conformity assessment such as certification of a management system thereby provides value to the organization, its customers and interested parties.

In this International Standard, Clause 4 describes the principles on which credible certification is based. These principles help the reader to understand the essential nature of certification and they are a necessary prelude to Clauses 5 to 10. These principles underpin all the requirements in this International Standard, but such principles are not auditable requirements in their own right. Clause 10 describes two alternative ways of supporting and demonstrating the consistent achievement of the requirements in this International Standard through the establishment of a management system by the certification body.

This International Standard is intended for use by bodies that carry out audit and certification of management systems. It gives generic requirements for such certification bodies performing audit and certification in the field of quality, environmental and other forms of management systems. Such bodies are referred to as certification bodies. This wording should not be an obstacle to the use of this International Standard by bodies with other designations that undertake activities covered by the scope of this document.

Certification activities involve the audit of an organization's management system. The form of attestation of conformity of an organization's management system to a specific management system standard or other normative requirements is normally a certification document or a certificate.

The publication of this International Standard includes the text of ISO/IEC 17021:2006, including amendments to delete relevant references to ISO 19011, with new text adding specific requirements for third-party certification auditing and the management of competence of personnel involved in certification.

Specific market needs have already been identified, resulting from a lack of specific and recognized requirements for third-party auditors of management systems, such as quality management systems, environmental management systems or food safety management systems. The lack of requirements for auditor competence and the way in which these auditors are managed and deployed has been identified by key interested parties, including industry interested parties, as being a drawback.

This International Standard provides a set of requirements for management systems auditing at a generic level, aimed at providing a reliable determination of conformity to the applicable requirements for certification, conducted by a competent audit team, with adequate resources and following a consistent process, with the results reported in a consistent manner.

This International Standard is applicable to the auditing and certification of any type of management system. It is recognized that some of the requirements, and in particular those related to auditor competence, can be supplemented with additional criteria in order to achieve the expectations of the interested parties.

In this International Standard, the word “shall” indicates a requirement and the word “should” a recommendation.

## AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND STANDARD

**Conformity assessment—Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems****1 Scope**

This International Standard contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of the audit and certification of management systems of all types (e.g. quality management systems or environmental management systems) and for bodies providing these activities. Certification bodies operating to this International Standard need not offer all types of management system certification.

Certification of management systems (named in this International Standard “certification”) is a third-party conformity assessment activity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.5). Bodies performing this activity are therefore third-party conformity assessment bodies (named in this International Standard “certification body/bodies”).

NOTE 1 Certification of a management system is sometimes also called “registration”, and certification bodies are sometimes called “registrars”.

NOTE 2 A certification body can be non-governmental or governmental (with or without regulatory authority).

NOTE 3 This International Standard can be used as a criteria document for accreditation or peer assessment or other audit processes.

**2 Normative references**

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2005, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

ISO/IEC 17000:2004, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

**3 Terms and definitions**

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000, ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

**3.1****certified client**

organization whose management system has been certified

**3.2****impartiality**

actual and perceived presence of objectivity

NOTE 1 Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved so as not to adversely influence subsequent activities of the certification body.