

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

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

Part 1: Requirements



AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021.1:2015

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 30 November 2015 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 26 November 2015.

This Standard was published on 22 December 2015.

The following are represented on Committee QR-010:

Association of Accredited Certification Bodies
Australasian Procurement and Construction Council
Australian Information Industry Association
Certification Interests, Australia
Consumers Federation of Australia
International Accreditation New Zealand
Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand
National Association of Testing Authorities Australia
New Zealand Organisation for Quality
Therapeutic Goods Administration

Keeping Standards up-to-date

Standards are living documents which reflect progress in science, technology and systems. To maintain their currency, all Standards are periodically reviewed, and new editions are published. Between editions, amendments may be issued. Standards may also be withdrawn. It is important that readers assure themselves they are using a current Standard, which should include any amendments which may have been published since the Standard was purchased.

Detailed information about joint Australian/New Zealand Standards can be found by visiting the Standards Web Shop at www.saiglobal.com.au or Standards New Zealand web site at www.standards.co.nz and looking up the relevant Standard in the on-line catalogue.

For more frequent listings or notification of revisions, amendments and withdrawals, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand offer a number of update options. For information about these services, users should contact their respective national Standards organization.

We also welcome suggestions for improvement in our Standards, and especially encourage readers to notify us immediately of any apparent inaccuracies or ambiguities. Please address your comments to the Chief Executive of either Standards Australia or Standards New Zealand at the address shown on the back cover.

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

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

Part 1: Requirements

Originated in Australia as AS ISO/IEC 17021—2006.
Previous and first joint edition AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021:2011.
Jointly revised and redesignated as AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021.1:2015.

COPYRIGHT

© Standards Australia Limited/Standards New Zealand

All rights are reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without the written permission of the publisher, unless otherwise permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Australia) or the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

Jointly published by SAI Global Limited under licence from Standards Australia Limited, GPO Box 476, Sydney, NSW 2001 and by Standards New Zealand, Private Bag 2439, Wellington 6140.

PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR-010, Conformity Assessment, to supersede AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021:2011, *Conformity assessment—Requirements 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 17021-1:2015, *Conformity assessment—Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems, Part 1: Requirements*.

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

- (a) In the source text ‘this part of ISO/IEC 17021’ should read ‘this Australian/New Zealand Standard’.
- (b) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

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

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

CONTENTS

1	Scope	1
2	Normative references	1
3	Terms and definitions	1
4	Principles	4
	4.1 General.....	4
	4.2 Impartiality.....	4
	4.3 Competence.....	5
	4.4 Responsibility.....	5
	4.5 Openness.....	5
	4.6 Confidentiality.....	6
	4.7 Responsiveness to complaints.....	6
	4.8 Risk-based approach.....	6
5	General requirements	6
	5.1 Legal and contractual matters.....	6
	5.1.1 Legal responsibility.....	6
	5.1.2 Certification agreement.....	7
	5.1.3 Responsibility for certification decisions.....	7
	5.2 Management of impartiality.....	7
	5.3 Liability and financing.....	9
6	Structural requirements	9
	6.1 Organizational structure and top management.....	9
	6.2 Operational control.....	9
7	Resource requirements	10
	7.1 Competence of personnel.....	10
	7.1.1 General considerations.....	10
	7.1.2 Determination of competence criteria.....	10
	7.1.3 Evaluation processes.....	10
	7.1.4 Other considerations.....	10
	7.2 Personnel involved in the certification activities.....	10
	7.3 Use of individual external auditors and external technical experts.....	11
	7.4 Personnel records.....	12
	7.5 Outsourcing.....	12
8	Information requirements	12
	8.1 Public information.....	12
	8.2 Certification documents.....	13
	8.3 Reference to certification and use of marks.....	14
	8.4 Confidentiality.....	15
	8.5 Information exchange between a certification body and its clients.....	15
	8.5.1 Information on the certification activity and requirements.....	15
	8.5.2 Notice of changes by a certification body.....	16
	8.5.3 Notice of changes by a certified client.....	16
9	Process requirements	16
	9.1 Pre-certification activities.....	16
	9.1.1 Application.....	16
	9.1.2 Application review.....	16
	9.1.3 Audit programme.....	17
	9.1.4 Determining audit time.....	18
	9.1.5 Multi-site sampling.....	18
	9.1.6 Multiple management systems standards.....	19

9.2	Planning audits	19
9.2.1	Determining audit objectives, scope and criteria	19
9.2.2	Audit team selection and assignments	19
9.2.3	Audit plan	21
9.3	Initial certification	22
9.3.1	Initial certification audit	22
9.4	Conducting audits	23
9.4.1	General	23
9.4.2	Conducting the opening meeting	23
9.4.3	Communication during the audit	24
9.4.4	Obtaining and verifying information	24
9.4.5	Identifying and recording audit findings	25
9.4.6	Preparing audit conclusions	25
9.4.7	Conducting the closing meeting	25
9.4.8	Audit report	26
9.4.9	Cause analysis of nonconformities	27
9.4.10	Effectiveness of corrections and corrective actions	27
9.5	Certification decision	27
9.5.1	General	27
9.5.2	Actions prior to making a decision	28
9.5.3	Information for granting initial certification	28
9.5.4	Information for granting recertification	28
9.6	Maintaining certification	28
9.6.1	General	28
9.6.2	Surveillance activities	29
9.6.3	Recertification	30
9.6.4	Special audits	31
9.6.5	Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification	31
9.7	Appeals	31
9.8	Complaints	32
9.9	Client records	33
10	Management system requirements for certification bodies	34
10.1	Options	34
10.2	Option A: General management system requirements	34
10.2.1	General	34
10.2.2	Management system manual	34
10.2.3	Control of documents	34
10.2.4	Control of records	35
10.2.5	Management review	35
10.2.6	Internal audits	36
10.2.7	Corrective actions	36
10.3	Option B: Management system requirements in accordance with ISO 9001	36
10.3.1	General	36
10.3.2	Scope	37
10.3.3	Customer focus	37
10.3.4	Management review	37
	Annex A (normative) Required knowledge and skills	38
	Annex B (informative) Possible evaluation methods	41
	Annex C (informative) Example of a process flow for determining and maintaining competence	43
	Annex D (informative) Desired personal behaviour	45
	Annex E (informative) Audit and certification process	46
	Bibliography	48

INTRODUCTION

Certification of a management system, such as the environmental management system, quality management system or information security 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, products and services, in line with the organization's policy and the requirements of the respective international management system standard.

This part of ISO/IEC 17021 specifies requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. It gives generic requirements for such bodies performing audit and certification in the field of quality, the environment and other types of management systems. Such bodies are referred to as 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 part of ISO/IEC 17021 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;
- c) is effectively implemented.

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

[Clause 4](#) describes the principles on which credible certification is based. These principles help the user to understand the essential nature of certification and they are a necessary prelude to [Clauses 5 to 10](#). These principles underpin the requirements in this part of ISO/IEC 17021, 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 part of ISO/IEC 17021 through the establishment of a management system by the certification body.

Certification activities are the individual activities that make up the entire certification process, from application review to termination of certification. [Annex E](#) provides an illustration of the way in which many of these activities can interact.

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 usually a certification document or a certificate.

This part of ISO/IEC 17021 is applicable to the auditing and certification of any type of management system. It is recognized that some of the requirements, 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 part of ISO/IEC 17021, the following verbal forms are used:

- "shall" indicates a requirement;
- "should" indicates a recommendation;
- "may" indicates a permission;
- "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.

Further details can be found in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

NOTES

AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND STANDARD

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

This part of ISO/IEC 17021 contains principles and requirements for the competence, consistency and impartiality of bodies providing audit and certification of all types of management systems.

Certification bodies operating to this part of ISO/IEC 17021 do not need to offer all types of management system certification.

Certification of management systems is a third-party conformity assessment activity (see ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.5) and bodies performing this activity are therefore third-party conformity assessment bodies.

NOTE 1 Examples of management systems include environmental management systems, quality management systems and information security management systems.

NOTE 2 In this part of ISO/IEC 17021, certification of management systems is referred to as “certification” and third-party conformity assessment bodies are referred to as “certification bodies”.

NOTE 3 A certification body can be non-governmental or governmental, with or without regulatory authority.

NOTE 4 This part of ISO/IEC 17021 can be used as a criteria document for accreditation, peer assessment or other audit processes.

2 Normative references

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

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

ISO/IEC 17000, *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**

presence of objectivity

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