AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17021.1:2015
ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015

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Australian/New Zealand Standard™

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

Part 1: Requirements

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.
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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
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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.

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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/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:

Reference to International Standard		*Australian or Australian/New Zealand Standard*	
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

Page

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.