



Integrated management systems

Answering your questions





Introduction

As the global community recognises the ever-growing requirement to demonstrate compliance, there is increasing dialogue around the importance of management system certification and more importantly, how businesses manage their management systems most effectively.

In a recent webinar, industry experts from LRQA discussed the benefits of adopting an integrated management system (IMS). Here, key questions from the webinar are answered by our experts:



Paul Smith

Commercial Management Systems Trainer | LRQA

Paul joined LRQA in 2013 as a management systems trainer, who specialises in quality, environmental and health and safety management systems and process improvement.



Bill Barnes

Auditor Manager | LRQA

Bill is an Integrated Senior Lead Assessor working for LRQA since 2005 and is involved in ISO 9001, 14001, 45001 and Responsible Care audits.





Frequently asked questions

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What is an integrated management system (IMS)?

Put simply, an IMS is any management system that combines elements to address different ends. If your management system is designed to protect your customers from poor-quality products, then it's a Quality Management System (QMS). A system that is designed to protect the environment from being harmed by your operations is an Environmental Management System (EMS). A system that prevents occupational health and safety risks is an Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). A system that is designed to cover more than one of these is an IMS.

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What are the benefits of having an IMS?

By having an IMS, you will streamline your processes, ultimately leading to more efficient and cost-effective management systems. Having an IMS also encourages different departments to work more collaboratively to understand overall risk, as opposed to only viewing risk through the lens of their respective departments.

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Is it best practice to have one company policy for an integrated management system, or individual policies for each management system?

This is down to the business to determine, however, LRQA recommends combining policies into one company policy to illustrate the intent to treat each system equally and streamline processes. However, the objectives for your management system should include targets specific to the standard.

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Is it best practice to also integrate the management system review elements?

Yes, LRQA recommends integrating the management system review for the three main standards (QMS, EMS, OHSMS). This is the best way to show that your IMS is effective and represents integrated audits and nonconformity effectiveness.

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What role is responsible for maintaining and continually improving the IMS?

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This is down to the business to determine; in some cases, there is one person appointed to the role of managing the IMS (for example, the QHSE Manager); in other cases, there may be multiple people appointed to the role(s) – this is often the case for larger organisations with more complex IMS.

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Is it best practice to integrate risk assessments?

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Yes. All standards that follow the Annex SL framework have a common clause relating to risk assessment (clause 6.1). LRQA recommends reading this clause in each of the standards and devising an integrated approach to managing risk and opportunity.

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In cases where individual management systems are at different stages of the three-year audit cycle, what is the best approach to integration?

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Speak to LRQA about synchronising your assessment schedules. If all your management systems are certified by LRQA, your assessor will simply arrange for an integrated assessment. If you are currently certified by different certification bodies and looking to transfer your certification to LRQA, our assessors are on hand to support you in this process and help you integrate your management systems.

[Find out more about transferring to LRQA →](#)

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What is the best practice for integrating management systems when the scope of each system is different?

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You can integrate management systems regardless of the scope of each system providing that your operations comply with each standard. For example, if you already have a well-established QMS but only recently implemented your EMS, you can still integrate the two on the condition that you produce your products or deliver your services in a manner that prioritises quality and minimises environmental impact.



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Are there any disadvantages of not integrating management systems?

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In some cases, siloed management systems can lack visibility of how their processes interrelate with other business risks. Having an IMS encourages different departments to work more collaboratively to understand overall risk, as opposed to only viewing risk through the lens of their respective departments.

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Will ISO integrate some or all its management system standards into a single business management system standard over time?

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It is very unlikely that ISO will integrate its management system standards any time soon. Despite the Annex SL framework, the continual development of each management system standard is influenced by its respective technical committee.

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What implications does the latest amendment to ISO management system standards to include a new requirement and text relating to climate change have on an IMS?

A

The inclusion of a new requirement and text relating to climate change across all ISO management system standards should not have implications on IMS. The new requirement and text are consistent across all affected standards and act merely as a prompt to ensure businesses are considering their potential impact on climate change.

Download our whitepaper or read our news article to find out more about the latest amendment to ISO management system standards to include a new requirement and text relating to climate change.

[News article →](#)

[Whitepaper →](#)





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Should training solutions be focused on individual management systems, or should training be integrated?

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The appropriate training option depends on your starting point. If your employees are more familiar with one standard and require additional training in another, LRQA offers a variety of standard-specific courses, including lead auditor courses. Conversely, if you are starting from scratch or your employees have equal proficiency across standards, LRQA's integrated management systems training courses are an excellent choice to develop or improve their skills.

[Find out more about our training courses →](#)

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How can LRQA help?

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Our assessors are trained and qualified to deliver integrated assessments. With a team of over 3,100 assessors supporting over 50,000 globally, LRQA is relentless in helping its clients achieve their management system goals.

[Find out more about our certification services →](#)





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About LRQA:

LRQA is a leading global assurance partner, bringing together decades of unrivalled expertise in assessment, advisory, inspection and cybersecurity services – underpinned by data-driven insights – to help its clients navigate a new era of risk.

Operating in more than 150 countries with a team of more than 5,000 people, LRQA’s award-winning compliance, supply chain, cybersecurity and ESG specialists help more than 60,000 clients across almost every sector to anticipate, mitigate and manage risk wherever they operate.

Get in touch

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