LRQA

Remote Audit

CLIENT INFORMATION NOTE

Introduction

Today's businesses operate on a global scale and at multiple locations and there have been growing reasons, needs and capabilities in recent years that challenge the effectiveness of traditional on-site assessment methodology.

LRQA has always been valued by its customers for the pragmatism and insights provided by its auditors - the challenge is the retention of these values in the digital world. But as information and communication technology (ICT) becomes more sophisticated, it can be used to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of the assessment, as well as to support and maintain the integrity of the audit process.

What is Remote Audit?

Very simply, remote audit of management systems conducted by LRQA is when ICT (Information Communication Technology) is used as part of the audit methodology.

Remote audit can be used in several situations such as:

- Gap analysis
- Stage 1 and parts of the Stage 2 audit can be done remotely (see table below)
- The remote follow up of corrective and preventive actions in response to non-conformities. Documentation can be shared via our Client Portal and reviewed by the Team Leader combined with interview using audio and/or video connection (e.g. using Teams).
- Remote site activities can be audited remotely, by verifying documentation, data and records, by interviewing auditees and even by auditing facilities and processes using live streaming video.

Depending on the situation and your preferences remote audits can be carried out on your main site, reaching out to other sites which are part of your organisation, or with the auditor working remotely, for example from home, from the LRQA office or your main site reaching out to remote locations.

Principles of Remote Audit

Remote audits:

- Facilitate the same amount of audit of customer's management systems if not more.
- Permit LRQA to witness and audit more locations and capabilities with approximately the same amount of resources we would utilise for on-site audits.
- Should complement but not fully replace traditional assessment techniques.
- Are NOT mandatory.

  Will normally require the same amount of audit time where some of the time previously on site will now be provided remotely.
- Should be undertaken consecutively with on-site days (a gap between remote and on-site dates is acceptable but needs to be kept to a minimum).

When can Remote Audit be used?

The use of remote audit is permitted under IAF rules and in some cases by certification scheme owners, but its application is controlled and cannot be used in all circumstances. It's application to food related management system standards is not currently permitted by scheme owners.

PLEASE NOTE that in times of national and international emergency, further concessions may be made by each scheme owner. Please visit www.lrqa.com for further information.

The table below shows the current rules around application:

Standard	Remote Audit	Notes
ISO 9001 ISO 14001 ISO 50001 ISO/IEC 27001 ISO 22301 ISO/IEC 20000-1 ISO 22000	**Yes**	No restrictions on Stage 1 (in accordance with IAF MD41) At least 50% where Stage 2 duration is at least 2 days
ISO 13485	**Yes**	No restrictions (in accordance with IAF MD4). At least 50% where Stage 2 duration is at least 2 days Restrictions may apply if delivered in conjunction with MDSAP.
ISO 45001 / OHSAS 18001	**Yes**	The central function must be audited annually. If the IAF MD11 criteria for sampling are met, then a sampling regime can be established. At least 50% where Stage 2 duration is at least 2 days. Remote auditing may be employed but only if it is limited to reviewing documents or records or interviewing staff of workers. No restrictions (in accordance with IAF MD4).
AS 9100 series	**Yes**	Restricted to no more than 30% of the allocated audit time. Aligned with IAF MD4 requirements.
Other products authorised by Accreditation Bodies (e.g. NHSS, CMS, etc.)	**Yes**	No restrictions on Stage 1 (in accordance with IAF MD41) At least 50% where Stage 2 duration is at least 2 days
IATF 16949	**No**	
IRIS	**No**	

1. IAF Mandatory Documents (MD's) can be downloaded from

https://www.iaf.nu/articles/Mandatory_Documents_/38

Benefits of using Remote Audit

The use of remote audit provides several benefits:
Fast & Flexible

- Audit dates can be agreed and delivered quickly, minimising any potential disruption.
- Increased access to technical experts globally, with multiple stakeholder participation now possible.

Safe & Sustainable

- Reduced health and safety risks for people travelling to hazardous or hard to reach locations.
- Less travel means a smaller carbon footprint and a more environmentally friendly delivery method.

Excellence & Expertise

- Audit outcomes and accredited certification are maintained by robust processes and technical expertise.
- Delivered through secure, easy-to-use, online platforms to protect your information and the integrity of your audit

Applicability & Risk Review

For each application, LRQA shall identify and document the risks and opportunities that may impact audit effectiveness, including the selection of the technologies, how they are managed and the customer and LRQA have the necessary infrastructure to support the use of the ICT proposed.

The audit plan shall identify what ICT will be utilised and the extent to which ICT will be used

Remote audits may not be considered appropriate when:

- When the customer has a history of nonconformance at the location being audited.
- As a change to approval to include a new customer facility, scope, or significant change.
- When no on-site audit has taken place for an extended period of time.

Planning of Remote Audit

Before initiating a remote audit, it is important to define:

- The programme for the planned remote audit with pre-defined records and documentation to be available during the audit.
- The proposed scope of audit and the activities, areas, processes, information and personnel to be involved in the remote audit.
- The timeframe for conducting the remote audit in terms of hours and days.
- How information is reviewed that cannot be shared remotely

The customer should provide to LRQA:

- Designated individual(s) that will facilitate, manage and coordinate the arrangements of the audit on behalf of the customer. This should include translators, when necessary.
- Applicable files, projects, reports, records, etc.
- Customer procedure(s) and documents for process(es) being audited. Some information, such as project report files, may need to be sent to the auditor for review in advance.
- Other evidence deemed essential and necessary.

Technology planning should include:

- Determining and agreeing the platform (e.g. Go-To- Meeting, WebEx, Skype/ Teams, etc.) for hosting the audit, to be agreed upon between LRQA and the customer.
- Granting security and/or profile access to the auditor.
- The use of webcams, mobile devices, etc. when physical evaluation of an event is desired or necessary.
- It is important that the media platforms agreed upon are tested prior to the audit to ensure the technology functionality and compatibility between the auditor and the customer.

Conduct of Remote Audits

Support from the customer

- The customer's management system owner should be available during the scheduled remote audit periods for discussion, clarifications, support and provision of additional information
- Appropriate Top Management should be available for pre-planned interview
- The customer's management system control documents shall be provided before or at the start of the remote audit.
- Where access is permitted to the customer's online portal, guidance will be provided by the customer
- Desktop sharing is to be encouraged for the customer to show and inform the auditor

Techniques and technologies can include:

- Tele- and video-conferencing (e.g. Skype/Teams)
- Web meetings (e.g. WebEx/GoTo)
- Webcam
- Live streaming devices (mobiles)
- Document transmission
- E-mail
- Dropbox
- Photographs and video
- Remote/managed access to customer management system – subject to IT security risk controls (supervised access is recommended)
- Hard copy packs

The output of the Remote Audit activity is communicated with the customer as if it were an end of day wrap up meeting. This can be verbally, by email or a partial report. The detail will include a summary of the activity, potential or actual findings; areas for on-site follow up or change in the planned review areas.

LRQA Remote

Remote audit sometimes has to be flexible and include audit of physical processes. LRQA's Remote app enables assessment on the move through an IOS or Android device. Multiple users can securely interact through visual media in real-time. LRQA Remote records audio and visual data as well as written notes as a record of the audit.

Reporting and Post Audit

Generally, reporting is the same as for onsite audits but in addition, the audit report will record the technology used and the storage medium of associated records including geo-data regarding the location of the audit, where applicable.

Audit reports and related records will indicate the extent to which ICT has been used in carrying out audit and the effectiveness of ICT in achieving the audit objectives.

Security and Confidentiality

The use of ICT for audit purposes shall be the default delivery methodology but must be agreed in advance by the customer being audited. The customer and LRQA shall ensure that information security and data protection measures and regulations are in place and mutually agreed before ICT is used for audit purposes.

Both parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure and safeguard security and confidentially of data in any format.

In the case of non-fulfilment of these measures or non- agreement of information security and data protection measures, LRQA shall use other methods to conduct and fulfil the audit objectives.

Note: LRQA will not store or keep information collected directly from a remote assessment other than as agreed with the client or for the purposes of completing a assessment report.

YOUR FUTURE. OUR FOCUS.