

# Assessment Process: Stage 1

## CLIENT INFORMATION NOTE

### Overview

This Client Information Note (CIN) explains our Stage 1 audit process for Management System assessment and certification. Please see other CINs in this series for explanations of our other processes.

### Objective of the Audit

The assessor will review the system to determine that it fulfils the requirements of the assessment criteria and covers the activities detailed within the assessment scope. This may be undertaken on-site or remotely (off-site) depending upon scheme requirements.

The assessor will interview senior management representatives of the organisation to determine that the following has been undertaken:

- Identified the Context of the Organisation
- Identified their interested parties
- An analysis of the risks and opportunities that could impact upon their business
- That they have as a result of the above determined the context in which the system will operate and have also identified the scope of the management system, and
- That they have identified any

applicable legal, statutory or regulatory requirements that the system has to address

The assessor will then use the information gathered as a result of these interviews to review the design of the system, to determine if you have addressed the potential risks and opportunities within the system and to determine if the needs of your interested parties have been addressed.

In addition, the assessor will review and confirm the contractual arrangements which are in place with LRQA. This includes any changes required as a result of the outcome of the Stage 1 Audit (including changes to the scope of assessment, duration of the Stage 2 Audit, and duration of subsequent surveillance assessments). The assessor will also determine the planning, logistics, sampling, etc. that will be used during the Stage 2 audit.

### Completing the Stage 1 Audit

The LRQA office will confirm the details as to the assessor or assessment team, the dates and duration of the audit to you in advance, the assessment team leader will confirm the timings of the audit and any logistical issues with you on their initial contact. Stage 1 Audits may be completed using remote audit for all or part of the assessment where there is reasonable justification based on risk and where scheme requirements permit.

The audit starts with an opening meeting.

The assessor will explain to your management team how we carry out assessments, the objective and scope of the audit and you will be able to introduce your company. The assessor will agree the details of the plan for the audit with you.

As part of the plan for the audit the assessor will then:

- Review the design and documentation of your system against the assessment standard and proposed assessment scope
- Produce a detailed plan for the Stage 2 audit, and
- Produce a focused report which describes both positive points, and any issues requiring your attention before the Stage 2 audit takes place. The report will identify any grading of these issues as if they were findings outstanding at the end of the Stage 2 audit.

The assessor will also need to review:

- That the context of the organisation has been established including identifying the applicable interested parties
- That the scope of the management system has been determined.
- That the information has been used in formulating the management system policy
- Main roles and responsibilities, particularly those of top management in relation to the management system.

- **Site activities** – the assessor will, as appropriate, tour the site to:
  - Confirm the processes and products covered by the management system
  - Identify current controls and performance, and
  - Get to know the site ready for the Stage 2 assessment.
- **Product and statutory requirements** - our assessor will look at any product and service performance or standards compliance claims that you make in your company literature. They will also check that any applicable legal, statutory or regulatory requirements, relating to your organization and the assessment criteria to be met, have been addressed in your management system.
- **Continual improvement** – the assessor will review your objectives and assess whether they reflect your organisation policy statement. The assessor will also ensure that:
  - Objectives are established and support continual improvement
  - Appropriate planning has been conducted to achieve objectives, and
  - Measuring and reporting on performance have been dealt with.
- **Operational arrangements** – the assessor will check that the processes and process measures are established to control your operational processes.
- **Monitoring and measurement** – the assessor will check that an appropriate range of measuring and monitoring processes, including internal audit programmes and reports, are in place to measure performance. The assessor will also review how your management system performs, including your progress against objectives.

Our assessor will evaluate whether the following system elements are in place:

- Management system documented information
- Corrective action
- internal audits, including a review of the audit programme and reports
- Management review process, including a review of records.

The assessment ends with a closing meeting to present the Stage 1 report outcome and agree the next stage of the assessment process.

The documentation reviewed during the Stage 1 audit will be used at future audits as a baseline. However, you should continue to review system documents as a result of internal improvement activities. At each assessment we will need to identify the changes between the latest issue and the baseline.

## Reporting

At the end of the audit we will produce a report which details the outcome and any findings that have been identified.

## Get in touch

Visit [www.lrqa.com](http://www.lrqa.com) for more information

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