

CERTIFICATION AND APPEAL PROCESS

1. Request an application form for certification, from Alpha Certification Services. Complete the form and return to Alpha Certification Services. The form can be by hand, posted, e-mailed or faxed. Alpha will then generate a Quotation for a three-year certification cycle. This Quotation will be accompanied by our Conditions for Certification, which should be read carefully to ensure full understanding of requirements. Any queries may be discussed and resolved by contacting our personnel by telephone or e-mail.
2. To accept our Quotation, merely sign and date on the last page of the Quotation as indicated and return to our offices. A confirmation letter of receipt and acceptance will be sent to you by return.
3. A Lead Auditor will be allocated to process your certification. He/she will contact you to agree a provisional schedule for your certification, assist with any queries and arrange to obtain the necessary system documentation for review.
4. When the Manual, procedures and any other relevant system documentation are complete, the Lead Auditor will review these documents against the requirements of the ISO 9001 Standard at the on-site 1st Stage certification audit (this also includes that Internal Audits and a Management Review has been conducted). Most potential problems with documentation can be identified at this stage. A formal report is issued, identifying the problems or queries for you to address prior to the on-site certification audit.
5. The Lead Auditor will discuss and confirm the date for the on-site 2nd Stage certification audit with you. This will be determined taking into account any time needed for you to make changes to documents, arising from deficiencies identified during the document review. An invoice, covering the certification audit fee, will be issued two weeks prior to the agreed certification date (refer point 12 below).
6. At least two days prior to the confirmed audit date, the Lead Auditor will send you the certification audit programme. This will provide an outline of the audit, identify the audit team (if more than one Auditor), and provide information on the agendas for the opening and closing meetings. If you have any objections to any members of the audit team, you may contact the Alpha offices and discuss the issue. Auditors can be changed if valid reasons are given.
7. All audits commence with an opening meeting. During this meeting the conduct of the audit will be explained, the programme confirmed and any questions you have, answered. This meeting may be attended by whomever you wish to attend, but it is recommended that senior management be present.
8. All audits are conducted by sampling objective evidence – records, observation of working practice, and discussion with personnel at all levels of your organisation. If the audit requires more than one calendar day to complete, at the close of each day there will be a brief feedback on the progress so far.
9. Should the Lead Auditor decide, at any stage of the audit, that there is a complete breakdown of the system which will require substantial changes, he/she will call an immediate meeting with you to decide whether to suspend the remainder of the audit or to follow the audit to its conclusion.
10. At the end of the on-site Certification Audit, a closing meeting will be held to provide an overview of the audit, identify the deficiencies noted and advise the decision of the Lead Auditor regarding recommendation and confirmation of your scope of certification.

Deficiencies identified will be noted on an Observation Form, or a Corrective Action Request form. Where Corrective Action Requests are classified as minor, only a written indication of the action to be taken to address the deficiency is required before the certificate can be issued. Where a Major Corrective Action Request is identified, this requires completion of the corrective action and acceptance by the Lead Auditor before the certificate can be issued. Where possible, this will be by submission of written evidence.

11. An organisation can appeal when they disagree with any deficiencies and/or the final decision presented at the closing meeting.

This appeal is formally handled by Alpha Certification Services and an independent committee reviews all relevant documentation, records, and will interview relevant personnel

A final arbitratory decision is then made and the organisation notified accordingly (AD Form 29 must be requested from Alpha Certification Services) for this process.

12. An organisation can appeal when they disagree with any deficiencies and/or the final decision presented at the closing meeting.

This appeal is formally handled by Alpha Certification Services cc and an independent committee will review all relevant documentation, records, interview relevant personnel etc.

A final arbitrary decision is then made and the organisation notified accordingly.

(Ad Form 29 must be requested from Alpha Certification Services for this process)

13. Upon receipt, the Lead Auditor will finalise the audit report and submit all the certification audit documents through to the Alpha Certification Services offices for a final, independent review. This is to ensure continued impartiality and objectivity.

14. Certificate issue is normally within two weeks of the receipt of the audit documentation and recommendation from the Lead Auditor. However, it is a condition of certification that no certificate or approved report may be issued unless payment has been received. A certificate, approved report and rules for use of your certification logo are then issued.

15. Generally, surveillance audits for single-site certifications will be scheduled to take place on a twelve-monthly basis from the date of the certification audit and will be quoted on such a basis. However an option exists for nine monthly surveillance audits for those clients who prefer a more frequent visit programme, and can be requested at the time of quotation, or at a later date. It should be noted however that a change in audit frequency after acceptance of the quotation will require a revised quotation to be issued.

For large multi-site certifications audits, quotations are issued on a basis of six-monthly surveillance audits.

Where clients fail to effectively maintain their management system, Alpha Certification Services reserves the right to move the client to a more frequent visit programme until confidence is returned.

The month of each surveillance audit is confirmed at the closing meeting of the preceding on-site audit. However, you will be contacted in the month prior to the scheduled month to mutually agree and confirm the actual audit date. While some flexibility is allowed, audits must take place within plus/minus one month of the original scheduled month.

16. A re-quote and re-audit will be required at the end of each three-year registration cycle in accordance with ISO 17021:2006 accreditation rules, although the man-days required are generally slightly less than for the initial certification audit.

<p>If you have any further queries or require clarification on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact us. If no one is available please leave a message and be assured someone will revert to you promptly.</p>
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