

## Introduction

The ISO 9001:2015 standard is used to help organisations to integrate a Quality Management System (QMS) within their business processes and operations for the delivery their product and services. The standard applies to organisations of all sizes and sectors as it is bespoke to each individual organisation. The ISO 9001 standard was updated in 2015 to include context of the organisation, risk based thinking, services, leadership and all forms of external provision. There is a three year transition period for organisations with an existing certified system to ISO 9001:2008 to enable upgrade to the new standard.

A QMS provides a structured approach to managing quality performance and planning to enable quality management to be an integral part of your organisation.

## What are the business benefits?

Establishing a QMS to ISO 9001:2015 includes a constant leadership role from top management which ensures that the QMS is fully integrated across the organisation. The standard adopts the needs for continual improvement of quality performance whilst allowing for good business practices and improved competitive advantage.

Benefits of implementing a QMS into your organisation include:

- Enhanced customer satisfaction and feedback
- Better understanding of business processes identifying efficiency improvements and reducing costs
- Quality assurance integrated into business operations
- Improved precision in manufacturing and less wastage of products
- A mechanism for continual improvement in your organisation
- Improved organisation reputation giving confidence to stakeholders and customers
- Providing a competitive and financial advantage
- Improved cross-functional communications within your organisation
- Full integration with other business management systems

## Basic Structure

The QMS is designed to sit within the organisations business processes with input from all levels of management. The identified objectives and targets for the business need to be integrated into normal business operations.



An QMS has identified outputs such as:

- Quality policy
- Objectives, targets and programmes
- Risks and opportunities report
- Internal audit reports
- Operational controls
- Corrective action reports
- Non-conformity reports
- Training and Competence records
- Management Reviews

## How to get started

The processes for implementing a QMS are:

The first step to establishing a QMS is to look at your organisation to determine the **context**. The context is based on **internal and external issues** that may affect the organisation. There should be a **customer focus** throughout all considerations for implementing a QMS.

A key document is the **Quality Policy** as a public statement of the organisations intentions regarding the quality of deliverables (products and/or services).



## Risks and Opportunities

ISO 9001 has always focussed on business risk, however the new 2015 standard has a stronger emphasis on risk assessment and the identification of opportunities through the business process cycle. Risk management is an end-to-end process that looks upstream and downstream from your organisation incorporating suppliers and customers. A QMS has risk at its core allowing business processes and planning to consider risks and opportunities as part of day-to-day business operations.

## Training and Competence

An important part of a QMS is to ensure that the personnel carrying out operations and processes within the business receive appropriate training to a competent level. Records of all staff training must be maintained and reviewed regularly particularly on a change of role or responsibility. Ensuring competence allows the business to be confident in its employees and gives employees confidence and engagement within the organisation.

## Non-conformance and Corrective Action

Non-conformance and corrective action continue to be a vital part of ISO 9001:2015. Providing a method for continual improvement and business continuity the QMS embeds processes in the business that are essential for customer satisfaction and reliable, quality products or services. The 2008 standard also had a requirement for preventive action methodology however the 2015 standard is viewed as a preventive action as a whole.



## Certification

Certification to ISO 9001:2015 can be achieved through a certification body accredited by UKAS ([www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)). Once certified your organisation can display the certificate and logo on marketing materials to demonstrate your commitment to quality management to customers and other interested parties.

If you would like more information contact GEP Environmental and speak to one of our consultants.