

Client information note – Assessment process - ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005

Overview

This Client Information Note explains the main stages of our process for ISO/IEC 20001, IT Service Management, assessment and certification. The assessment process normally includes two visits to your site before we can recommend approval. We call these two visits:

- Stage 1 (document review and planning visit), and
- Stage 2 (initial assessment).

Once we have issued your approval certificate, we will carry out surveillance visits to maintain the approval.

At each visit, our assessors will be open and helpful, and will follow a practical approach. In this way we believe that we add value to the assessment process.

Before we visit, we will discuss and agree with you the visit dates, start and finish times, the assessment team members, how long the visit will last, and which parts of your business we will visit.

Scope and eligibility

This certification scheme applies to the provision of management IT services to internal and / or external customers. It does not apply to products or services, except where the deliverable is IT service management. As a result, the scheme is applicable to organisations in any industrial sector who want certification for the management of their IT services to ISO/IEC 20000-1.

The itSMF Scoping Guidelines set out who is eligible. This will depend on the level of management control that an organisation has over its ISO/IEC 20000-1 processes. To be eligible for certification within the ISO/IEC 20000-1 scheme, you must be able to show that you have management control of all of the processes set out in the ISO/IEC 20000-1 standard.

You can download a copy of the itSMF Certification Scheme – Scoping Guidelines from www.bs15000certification.com/publications.

Important note: If our assessor judges that you do not meet the eligibility and scoping guidelines, the assessment will end.

Stage 1 - Document review and planning visit

Purpose of the visit

We do this visit to:

- find out whether the management system processes and documents required by the standard are in place and put into practice so that a meaningful stage 2 assessment can take place
- collect information about your company's organisation, processes and activities so that we can develop a plan for the stage 2 assessment
- confirm the scope, assessment team requirements, and timing for the stage 2 assessment
- answer any questions you may have about our service
- confirm that you have management control of all ISO/IEC 20000-1 processes and that your certification scope meets the itSMF eligibility and scoping criteria.

The visit will identify any weaknesses or omissions in your system that may need to be put right before the second stage of the assessment.

Carrying out the visit

The visit (which usually lasts for two days), starts with an opening meeting. The assessor will explain to your management team how we carry out assessments, and you will be able to introduce your company. The assessor will agree a plan for the visit with you.

The assessor will then:

- review whether your management system and services are eligible for certification
- review the scope of your management system
- review the design of (and the way that you have documented) your system against the assessment standard and the proposed assessment scope
- conduct a site tour, where appropriate
- produce a detailed plan for the stage 2 visit
- produce a focused report which describes both positive findings and any issues requiring your attention before the stage 2 visit takes place; for your guidance, the report will identify the potential grading of these issues as if they were outstanding at the end of the stage 2 visit

The assessor will usually need to review:

- service management policy
- main roles and responsibilities
- site activities – the assessor will, where appropriate, tour the site to:
 - confirm the processes and services covered by the IT Service Management system
 - identify current controls and performance, and
 - get to know the site ready for the stage 2 assessment
- continual improvement – the assessor will look at IT Service Management objectives and assess whether they reflect policy. He or she will also make sure that:
 - the objectives are established and support continual improvement
 - appropriate planning has been carried out to achieve objectives, and
 - measuring and reporting on performance have been dealt with
- operational arrangements – the assessor will check that procedures are established to manage service management processes
- Monitoring and measurement - the assessor will check that an appropriate range of measuring and monitoring processes, including internal audit programmes and reports, is in place to measure how the service performs. He or she will also review how the management system performs, including your progress against objectives.

The assessor will then look at whether procedures are designed to deal with the following requirements:

- management system documentation
- corrective and preventive action
- internal audits, including a review of the audit programme and reports
- management review process, including a review of records.

The visit ends with a closing meeting to present the stage 1 report and agree the next stage of the assessment process, including any health and safety, security and administrative issues.

Stage 2 - Implementation assessment

Purpose of the visit

During this visit the assessor will focus on how your management system has been put into practice. The Stage 2 visit aims to confirm that:

- your policies, objectives, programmes and procedures are effectively put into practice
- there is a planned and systematic approach for improvement
- you are managing your processes effectively
- the management system meets all the requirements of the assessment standard.

Carrying out the visit

The assessment follows the plan prepared during the stage 1 visit. Members of the assessment team will visit areas with guides who can witness the findings and help the assessment. The stage 2 assessment usually includes a meeting with the representative of senior management with overall responsibility for the management system.

Our assessment team will report, as a minimum, any findings related to:

- follow-up of findings from the stage 1 visit
- activities, products and services identified in the agreed scope for the assessment
- how effective the management system is at achieving your organisation's policy including continual improvement and customer satisfaction
- putting into practice the arrangements to manage the service management processes
- progress to achieve objectives through the management programme
- putting into practice the systems needed by the management system and maintaining appropriate records
- putting into practice monitoring and measurement arrangements to assess how the management system performs and whether objectives are being achieved
- how involved in, and committed to, the management system the senior management are, and
- how effective the internal audit, corrective and preventive action, and management review processes are.

The assessment team will hold review meetings with you each day to discuss any findings. Appropriate staff should be present to confirm that you accept these findings. Please see below in the 'Reporting' section how we define gradings. We finalise the grade of findings at the end of the visit.

The visit ends with a closing meeting to present a summary of the findings, and to agree the next stage of the assessment process. The assessor will give a complete report to the management representative. If we have not reported any Major Nonconformities, and you have informed the assessor of your proposed corrective action for any Minor Nonconformities, the assessor will recommend approval to the assessment standard (although this depends on an independent technical review by our office). However, if any Major Nonconformities have been reported, we will delay approval and carry out a follow-up assessment to review corrective actions. Our team leader will agree with you the arrangements for this visit.

Surveillance visits

Purpose of the visit

Once we have certified your management system, we will begin a programme of surveillance visits (which normally take place every six months). Surveillance visits aim to confirm that the approved management system continues to:

- be maintained
- be in operation, and
- deliver continual improvements.

We also consider the implications of changes to the system. Such changes may have been carried out as a result of changes in your activities, products or services.

We will then consider whether you continue to meet certification requirements.

Carrying out the visit

Themes for surveillance visits will normally have been agreed with you at your previous visit. We will confirm the details with you at an opening meeting.

Themes chosen will allow us to review:

- internal audit and management review reports
- progress in meeting service management objectives

- corrective and preventive action systems including customer satisfaction and complaints
- changes to the system and how effective these are
- how you manage changes relating to responsibilities and the authority of main staff
- how you use the LRQA and the itSMF logos, and

We will also review any outstanding findings.

If we report any Minor Nonconformities during a visit, and the next visit is within six months, we will normally follow them up during your next visit, otherwise we will make arrangements with you for the follow up.

If we report a Major Nonconformity during a surveillance visit, we will arrange a special surveillance visit to follow up the necessary corrective action (normally within three months). This is the first phase of our suspension and withdrawal of approval process.

If your next visit is when we renew your certificate, our assessor will review your 'management elements' records with you, including:

- management review
- managing change
- continual improvement
- internal audit
- corrective action
- preventive action
- specific management elements of ISO/IEC 20000-1, including
 - planning service management and putting it into practice
 - planning new or changed services and putting them into practice
 - our surveillance reports, and
 - changes to your documented management system.

The review will cover the current certification period (that is, the last three years), to decide the level of assessment necessary when we carry out the visit to renew your certificate. As a result, it is important for you to maintain suitable records for this purpose.

At the closing meeting, our assessor will report on the current visit and agree with you the plan for the next visit. If any Major Nonconformities have been reported, the assessor will also agree arrangements for follow-up of actions you will take.

Reporting

The reporting processes for stage 1, stage 2 and surveillance visits are similar. We fill in visit reports to record assessment findings, progress against the assessment plan, positive comments, and also points of clarification or interpretation. We record assessment findings in an Assessment Findings Log, and grade them as Major Nonconformity, Minor Nonconformity, Requires Correction, Scope for improvement, or xLRQA. We define these gradings as follows:

Major Nonconformity: A system failure that:

- is already affecting system effectiveness or deliverables
- puts at risk the capability of the management system
- requires immediate containment
- requires immediate root cause analysis and corrective action.

Our team leader will make arrangements with you for follow up.

Minor Nonconformity: A weakness in an internal facing process or procedure; or a finding where any further deterioration of control could reasonably be considered likely to result in the system becoming ineffective. Requires root cause investigation and corrective action.

If raised at a Stage 2 or Certificate Renewal visit, then the assessor will ask you to indicate the corrective action you will take. This corrective action plan will form part of the independent review by our office before your certificate is issued. If raised at a surveillance visit, although you need to take corrective action within an appropriate time after the visit, you do not normally need to provide us with details of the action until we next visit you.

In both cases, at the next visit the assessor will review the action you have taken and fill in the corrective action review section in the findings log.

Requires correction: A finding that requires correction, but is not indicative of a system failure or weakness and is of insufficient concern or potential impact to merit root cause analysis or corrective action.

Scope for improvement: An isolated error that normally does not merit root cause analysis or corrective action.

xLRQA: An issue for follow-up by the assessor at the next visit

Please keep copies of all our visit reports for three years. In exceptional circumstances, we may ask you to provide copies of previous reports.

Sampling

It is important to remember that even though a problem may not have been identified in an area of activity, it does not necessarily mean that there are no problems. As assessment work is based on sampling techniques, statistically there is always a possibility that issues will not be identified during an assessment. Please remember this when you audit your own management system.

Confidentiality

We will not pass on any of the information we gather about your organisation (including the contents of reports) to any other person or organisation without your permission (except as required by the itSMF).

We have taken care to ensure that the information in this Client Information Note is accurate at the time we issue it. However, the requirements this document is based on can change. If in doubt; please contact your local office to make sure that you have the latest version.