

Carry out and participate in quality audits

Overview

This standard is about carrying out and participating in quality audits. You manage a programme of quality audits to ensure people are complying with your organisation's quality system and procedures. You carry out quality audits as part of a formal quality management system. You also prepare for, and participate in, quality audits of your own area of responsibility and take action to improve business processes, quality standards or procedures.

This standard is for all managers and leaders.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Manage and carry out quality audits

1. engage colleagues and stakeholders in auditing compliance with your organisation's quality systems
2. establish the scope and objectives of quality audits
3. evaluate the risks of organisational processes not complying with quality systems
4. plan programmes of quality audits which prioritises the areas and processes at greatest risk
5. develop, support and supervise people to carry out audit programmes
6. allocate audits to people, based on their expertise and development needs
7. ensure colleagues responsible for organisational processes understand their roles within quality audits, and the requirements of quality systems and procedures
8. monitor progress of quality audits against planned programmes
9. revise audit activities in the event of significant variances or changes in organisational strategy, risk assessment or resource availability
10. evaluate the results of quality audits and report non-compliance and associated risks to senior management according to the level of urgency
11. provide feedback to auditees to enhance their confidence and commitment to quality

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12. use audit results to inform risk assessment and future quality audit programmes
13. carry out quality audits according to a plan and schedule agreed, giving auditees the required period of notice
14. carry out quality audits in ways which enhance auditees' confidence in the quality system and their commitment to maintaining quality standards
15. define the scope of audits, the responsibilities of the auditees, the quality procedures and previous audit history
16. clarify the purpose of audits and the roles, responsibilities and expectations of yourself and the auditees
17. carry out an investigation of the auditees' work in sufficient detail to reveal any non-conformances with required quality procedures
18. encourage auditees to co-operate fully to achieve the purpose of audits
19. share the results of audits with auditees
20. agree corrective actions to remedy any non-conformances and the date by which the actions should be carried out
21. check with auditees that corrective actions have been carried out by agreed dates
22. seek advice from your manager or quality specialists if you cannot agree actions with auditees
23. escalate any non-conformances which present serious or immediate risks to your manager or quality specialists
24. identify and analyse any problems with processes and procedures

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and report your findings and any recommendations

25. keep complete records of quality audits giving access to authorised people

26. follow the legal, organisational, codes of practice and policies relevant to managing and carrying out quality audits

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27. establish the quality standards and procedures that apply to your area of responsibility

28. monitor work to ensure it consistently meets quality standards and complies with organisational procedures

29. check that records and documentation are complete, up to date and accessible

30. check that any corrective actions agreed in previous audits have been completed and that recommendations have been acted upon, where appropriate

31. provide the auditor with access to information, records and documentation

32. discuss the results of the audit to agree corrective actions to remedy any non-conformances and the date by which the actions should be carried out

33. discuss any areas where business processes, quality standards or procedures could be improved, with the auditor

34. create and carry out any corrective actions by agreed dates

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

General knowledge and understanding

1. how to engage people within your organisation and other stakeholders in auditing compliance with your organisation's quality systems
2. the quality and risk management principles, methods, tools, techniques that can be used and current developments in best practice
3. how to prioritise areas and processes at greatest risk of non-compliance
4. how to develop a quality audit programme
5. the competences that quality auditors require
6. how to calculate the resources required to deliver a quality audit programme
7. how to monitor progress against plans and identify significant variances
8. how to provide feedback to auditees in ways which enhance their confidence and commitment to quality
9. how to carry out quality audits and the importance of doing so according to an agreed audit plan and schedule
10. the different ways of carrying out quality audits to enhance auditees' confidence in the quality system and their commitment to meeting and maintaining quality standards
11. the importance of giving auditees the required period of notice of your intention to audit

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12. the importance of preparing carefully for the audits, and how to do so
13. how to carry out an investigation in sufficient detail to reveal any non-conformances
14. how to decide corrective actions to remedy each non-conformance, the date by which the actions should be carried out, and the importance of agreeing this with the auditees
15. how to identify and analyse inherent problems with processes and quality procedures and why it is important to report your finding and recommendations with an appropriate degree of urgency
16. the importance of checking with auditees that corrective actions have been carried out by agreed dates, and how to do so
17. how to keep complete records of quality audits and the importance of making your audit reports available to authorised people
18. how to identify the non-conformances that present serious or immediate risks to employees or to the organisation and the importance of promptly bringing this to the attention of your manager or quality specialists
19. how to monitor work to ensure it consistently meets quality standards and complies with procedures
20. the importance of ensuring that records and documentation are complete and up to date and how to make these readily accessible to auditors
21. how to identify areas where business processes, quality systems or procedures could be improved

Industry and sector specific knowledge and understanding

22. the industry and sector requirements for quality management and

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auditing

23. the legal, organisational, codes of practice and policies relevant to managing and carrying out quality audits

Context specific knowledge and understanding

24. your organisation's strategy, stakeholders, policies and procedures

25. the people in your organisation with responsibility for quality and the quality systems used

26. the culture and quality management systems in place in the organisation in which the audit is being carried out

27. the customers of the audit and their needs

28. the responsibilities of the auditees and the quality procedures that apply to their work

29. the sources of advice, guidance and support from your manager or quality specialists

30. the authorised personnel who should receive your audit reports

31. the quality standards and procedures that apply to your area of responsibility

32. the records and documentation required for your area of responsibility

33. the corrective actions and recommendations agreed in previous audits

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Skills

1. Assessing
2. Benchmarking
3. Communicating
4. Decision-making
5. Delegating
6. Evaluating
7. Information management
8. Interviewing
9. Involving employees
10. Monitoring
11. Planning
12. Presenting information
13. Problem solving
14. Providing feedback
15. Questioning
16. Reporting
17. Reviewing
18. Risk management
19. Thinking systematically

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