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ISO 9001:2026 is here(-ish)*

The sixth edition of the world's most widely used quality management standard replaces ISO 9001:2015.

1M+

certificates

189

countries

6th

edition

* Published, yes. Transition deadlines, not quite. See inside.

Evolution, not revolution

The quality management model is intact. What changes is how explicit the standard is about expectations that used to be implied.

UNCHANGED

Process approach

Plan-Do-Check-Act

Risk-based thinking

Customer focus

Clause architecture

Continual improvement

NOW EXPLICIT

Quality culture

Ethical behaviour

Opportunities

Management of change

Organisational knowledge

Strategic alignment

Quality culture and ethics enter the text

Clause 5.1.1

Top management has to promote quality culture and ethical behaviour.

Clause 7.3

People across the organisation need awareness of that culture and of relevant ethical expectations.

WHAT IT DOES NOT REQUIRE

No ethics committee, culture survey, code of conduct or culture programme. Culture is examined through leadership behaviour, decisions and communication.

WHERE AI ETHICS BELONGS

Fairness, bias and transparency are not ISO 9001 requirements. They sit in an AI management system under ISO/IEC 42001, alongside your QMS.

Risks and opportunities part ways

Clause 6.1 now treats them separately, so pursuing beneficial outcomes becomes a visible activity of its own.

Clause 6.1.2

Risks

Prevent what can go wrong.
Identify it, act on it, check
the action worked.

Clause 6.1.3

Opportunities

Act on what could go right.
Select it, resource it,
evaluate the result.

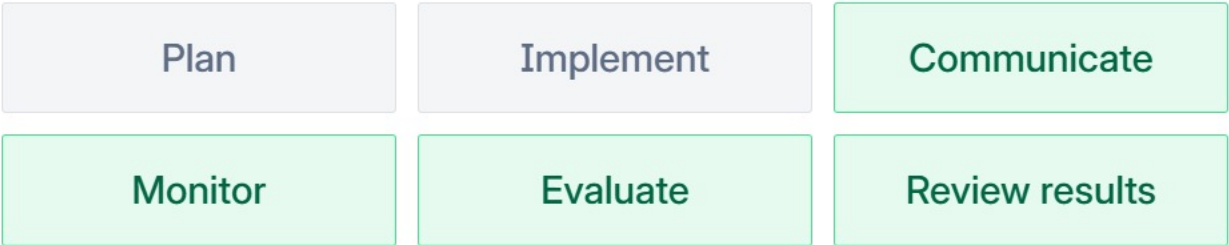
An opportunity is no longer a positive line in the risk register.
Evidence can come from performance trends, customer
feedback, new technology, capability and lessons learned.

EXAMPLE

A rising trend of late deliveries is the risk. The supplier offering vendor-managed stock is the opportunity: selected, resourced, and evaluated against on-time delivery three months later.

Change control has to close the loop

Clause 6.3



2015 STOPPED AT

"We implemented the change."

2026 STOPS AT

"We implemented it, communicated it, checked whether it worked and reviewed the result."

EXAMPLE

A revised work instruction is released, briefed to the line, monitored over the next two production runs, then reviewed for scrap and rework before the change is closed.

Organisational knowledge has to travel

Knowledge now supports the intended results of the whole management system, not only conformity of products and services.

Retained

Captured where it can be found again.

Applied

Used in decisions and daily work.

Shared

Available to the people who need it.

Clause 7.1.6

No formal knowledge platform is required. But a system where critical know-how lives only in one person's head becomes much harder to defend.

EXAMPLE

One engineer knows how the validated test rig is set up. Write it down, train a second person, and link it from the procedures that depend on it.

Climate change is incorporated, not introduced

2024

ISO amended ISO 9001:2015: organisations determine whether climate change is relevant to the context of the QMS, and interested parties may have climate-related requirements.

2026

That amendment is now part of the main text, inside the context and interested-party requirements.

THE REQUIREMENT IS STILL CONTEXTUAL

Determine relevance and record the reasoning. ISO 9001 does not ask for an environmental programme, ESG reporting or sustainability governance.

Clauses 8, 9 and 10 stay familiar

8 Operation

Mainly terminology adjustments. Design, purchasing, production and nonconforming output controls carry over.

9 Performance evaluation

Monitoring, internal audit and management review are intact, with more emphasis on using what they produce.

10 Improvement

Same cycle of nonconformity, corrective action and continual improvement, with leadership more visibly involved.

ANNEX A DOES THE HEAVY LIFTING

Around 15 pages of new explanatory guidance on structure, terminology and intent. Annex B is removed. Annex A stays informative, so it adds no certification requirements.

What the revision did not introduce

AI, digitalisation and supply-chain pressure are why ISO revised the standard. They did not become clauses inside it.

- ✗ An AI governance clause
- ✗ A cybersecurity framework
- ✗ An ESG or sustainability programme
- ✗ A digital-transformation requirement
- ✗ A supply-chain resilience clause
- ✗ A wholesale redesign of your QMS

IF AI IS IN YOUR PROCESSES

ISO 9001 stays technology-neutral, so AI governance, fairness, bias and transparency sit in ISO/IEC 42001, a separate management system that runs alongside your QMS. Talk to Qity about running both in Jira and Confluence.

Quality moves closer to the business

Quality policy and objectives are tied more visibly to context and strategic direction. A mature 2026 system can answer this chain:

What is the organisation trying to achieve?

What does that mean for quality?

Which risks and opportunities affect it?

Which objectives and changes are required?

Are those actions producing the intended results?

TRANSITION

The transition is confirmed, the dates are not

SETTLED

Your ISO 9001:2015 certificate did not expire on 16 September 2026. A transition period will apply.

STILL PENDING

The accreditation framework and audit-duration arrangements have not been finally published.

WORTH KNOWING

IAF ceased operations on 1 January 2026. Its role now sits with Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI).

So treat "September 2029" as a planning assumption, not a published deadline, and confirm dates with your certification body.

Four phases, no rebuild

An effective ISO 9001:2015 system is the starting point, not the problem. Work through it in order.

01 Read
Buy the published standard and use Annex A. Never gap-assess against draft material.

02 Compare
Gap-assess only the six changed areas: culture and ethics, opportunities, QMS change, knowledge, climate context, strategic alignment.

03 Adapt
Extend change records to communication, effectiveness and review. Capture critical knowledge. Refresh awareness and audit plans.

04 Confirm
Use management review as the transition checkpoint, then agree audit timing with your certification body.

ISO 9001:2026 makes quality harder to separate from how the business is run

QITY QMS

Document control, change control, risk, training and design control, inside Jira and Confluence.