
ISO 9001 Audit Team Leadership: Planning, Conducting and Reporting QMS Audits Course

7 – 11 December 2026
Geneva





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Programme Summary

ISO 9001 audit team leadership is the subject of this one-week training course for quality leaders and senior auditors at advanced level, culminating in an audit plan, evidence file and audit report for a quality management system. Supplier failures and certification findings often trace back to audits that sampled weakly, graded inconsistently or never verified corrective action. The approach follows the audit cycle, from programme and plan, through fieldwork and evidence, to grading, reporting and follow-up. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in ISO 9001 audit team leadership.

The Business Case

An audit is only as useful as the decisions it supports. Organisations that lead audits well detect supplier and process weaknesses before they reach customers, focus improvement effort on the risks that matter, and avoid repeat findings at external audits. Lead auditors who plan by risk and write findings management accepts turn the audit programme into a management tool.

- Supplier Nonconformance and Rejection Rates: Fall as second-party audits target the processes most likely to fail.
- Repeat Audit Findings: Decline as corrective action is verified for effectiveness, not only closure.
- Audit Programme Efficiency: Improves as audit days are allocated by risk and past performance.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 19011:2018: Its audit principles, programme management and audit activity guidance structure Sessions 1 to 4.
- ISO 9001:2015: Its clause requirements, process approach and risk-based thinking define the audit criteria tested in Session 3.
- ISO/IEC 17021-1: Its requirements for certification audits frame the comparison of first-, second- and third-party audits in Session 1.
- ISO 9000:2015: Its vocabulary and seven quality management principles anchor the wording of findings in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Leaders who own an organisation's internal or supplier audit programme.
- Senior auditors who plan and lead audit teams.
- Supplier quality leaders who audit critical suppliers and contractors.
- Quality managers preparing for external surveillance audits.



The programme serves quality, procurement and operations functions in manufacturing, oil and gas, healthcare and construction.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to design a risk-based audit programme in line with ISO 19011.
2. Participants will be able to construct an audit plan and process-based checklists for an ISO 9001 audit.
3. Participants will be able to lead an audit team through interviews, sampling and evidence gathering.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate evidence of the process approach and risk-based thinking.
5. Participants will be able to grade and write nonconformities that are clear and defensible.
6. Participants will be able to conduct a closing meeting, issue an audit report and verify corrective action.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Audit Principles and Programme Management

What makes an audit credible, and how is the audit programme set by risk?

- ISO 19011 Principles of Auditing and Auditor Conduct
- First-, Second- and Third-Party Audits and ISO/IEC 17021-1
- Risk-Based Audit Programme Objectives and Scope
- Allocating Audit Days and Selecting Audit Teams
- Auditor Competence Evaluation and Calibration

Day 2: Planning an ISO 9001 Audit

How does the lead auditor prepare an audit that will find what matters?

- Document Review and Stage 1 Readiness Assessment
- Audit Plan Construction and Team Assignments
- Process Turtle Diagrams for Audit Preparation
- Process-Based Checklists Against ISO 9001 Clauses
- Opening Meeting Agenda and Ground Rules

Day 3: Leading Fieldwork and Gathering Evidence

How are interviews, sampling and observation turned into objective evidence?

- Audit Interviewing and Questioning Techniques
- Sampling Methods and Audit Trails
- Evaluating the Process Approach and PDCA in Practice
- Testing Risk-Based Thinking and Quality Objectives
- Managing the Audit Team, Time and Difficult Auditees



Day 4: Findings, Grading and Reporting

How are findings graded consistently and reported in a form management accepts?

- Major and Minor Nonconformities, Observations and Opportunities
- Writing Nonconformity Statements: Requirement, Evidence and Gap
- Audit Team Review Meeting and Audit Conclusions
- Closing Meeting Conduct and Handling Disagreement
- Audit Report Structure and Distribution

Day 5: Follow-Up and the Full Audit Cycle

Is the audit complete, and has corrective action actually worked?

- Root Cause Review of Auditee Corrective Action Plans
- Verifying Corrective Action Effectiveness
- Applying Day 2 Planning to a Simulated Supplier Audit
- Grading Day 3 Evidence From the Simulation Using Day 4 Criteria
- Completing the Audit Plan, Evidence File and Report

Methodology

The programme uses a field-style audit simulation supported by case analysis. Participants plan, conduct and report an audit of a fictional organisation using role-played interviews and document packs, rotating the lead auditor role. Cases come from manufacturing suppliers and healthcare services.

- Suggested activity: Building a turtle diagram and checklist for a purchasing process.
- Suggested activity: Interviewing a role-played process owner who gives incomplete answers.
- Suggested activity: Grading a set of draft findings and rewriting weak nonconformity statements.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an audit pack for a quality management system: a risk-based audit plan, process checklists, an evidence file from the simulation, graded nonconformity statements and a final audit report with follow-up actions. It serves as a template for the participant's next internal or supplier audit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is ISO 9001 audit team leadership training suitable for experienced auditors?

Yes. It is set at advanced level for auditors and quality leaders who already know ISO 9001 requirements and want to lead audit teams.



Which standards does ISO 9001 audit team leadership training rest on?

It rests on ISO 19011:2018, ISO 9001:2015, ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 9000:2015.

How is the audit pack from ISO 9001 audit team leadership training used at work?

You can use it as a template for planning, conducting and reporting your next internal, supplier or external readiness audit.

How does ISO 9001 audit team leadership differ from a QMS implementation programme?

It trains the auditor's role of planning, evidence gathering and grading, rather than designing and running the quality management system itself.