

Verify a Certificate >

Global · Remote & on-site

EN

CYCLE
3-YR

THE CERTIFICATION LIFECYCLE

The certification process

From application to recertification — one defined path, delivered under ISO/IEC 17021-1, with the certification decision held independent of the audit team at every stage.

Basis · ISO/IEC 17021-1

Remote · where permitted

Multi-site · IAF MD1

3-year cycle

HOW CERTIFICATION WORKS

A single, transparent path — for every applicant

Certification is not a purchase; it is an **independent assessment of conformity**. Every organisation we certify follows the same defined process, is audited against the same published requirements, and is judged on the same basis: the evidence gathered during the audit.

The audit team gathers and records that evidence. A separate, competent decision-maker — who did not conduct your audit — reviews it and decides whether certification is granted. That separation is required by **ISO/IEC 17021-1** and is what gives a Skyeblanc certificate its meaning.

Below is the full lifecycle we make public, as required by Clause 8: initial certification, the three-year cycle, and every process for maintaining, changing, suspending or withdrawing a certificate.

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INITIAL CERTIFICATION

From application to certificate

Seven stages take a new applicant from first contact to an issued certificate. Stage 1 and Stage 2 are the on-site or ICT-assisted audits; the technical review and the certification decision that follow are carried out independently of the audit team.

1

Application & review

You tell us the standard, your scope of activities, employee numbers (including shifts and part-time), sites and locations, and any existing certification. We review the application to confirm we are competent to audit your scope, and that no impartiality conflict exists.

Application review

Impartiality screening

2

Contract & audit programme

We determine audit duration using the applicable scheme and accreditation requirements — IAF MD 5 for QMS, EMS and OHSMS — and return a fixed-fee quotation and a programme for the full three-year cycle. Once agreed, a certification agreement sets out the rights and obligations of both parties before any audit begins.

Duration · Scheme requirements

Certification agreement

3

Stage 1 audit

A readiness review of your documented management system, scope, objectives and internal audits. Stage 1 confirms you are ready for Stage 2, identifies areas of concern, and finalises the Stage 2 plan. It may be conducted on-site or remotely.

Readiness review

4

Stage 2 audit

The main assessment: your management system audited in operation against every requirement of the standard, across your defined scope and sites. The audit team gathers objective evidence and records any findings — from observations to nonconformities.

5

Conformity assessment

Delivery · on-site / ICT-assisted

Technical & report review

Before any decision is taken, the audit report and supporting evidence are subjected to a technical review by competent personnel — confirming that the audit was planned and conducted to the applicable scheme requirements, that the evidence supports the findings and the recommended scope, and that any nonconformities have been properly categorised and closed out.

Technical review

Report & evidence check

6

Independent certification decision

The complete audit record is reviewed by an authorised and competent Skyeblanc certification decision-maker who took no part in the audit. Certification is approved only where the evidence and the applicable certification requirements are satisfied. Where they are not, certification is refused or deferred pending resolution of nonconformities — and the reasons are given.

Independent decision

Approve · refuse · defer

7

Certificate issued & published

On a positive decision we issue your certificate, stating the certified scope, sites, standard and certification cycle. The certificate is added to our public register for verification, and made available through the applicable certificate-verification and accreditation databases required by the relevant accreditation framework, where applicable.

Public verification

Certificate issuance

MAINTAINING CONFORMITY

The three-year certification cycle

Certification is not a one-off event. It is maintained across a three-year cycle of surveillance, then renewed by a full recertification audit.

YEAR 0



Initial audit

Stage 1 & Stage 2, independent decision, certificate issued.

YEAR 1



Surveillance

First surveillance audit confirms the system remains effective and conforming.

YEAR 2



Surveillance

Second surveillance audit — continued conformity and improvement checked.

YEAR 3



Recertification

A full recertification audit renews the certificate for a further cycle.

Surveillance audits are planned so the whole management system is audited across the cycle. A lapse or a missed surveillance audit can lead to suspension.

LIFECYCLE DECISIONS

Granting, maintaining and withdrawing certification

Every decision that can be taken over the life of a certificate — each made against defined criteria, each open to appeal.



Granting

Certification is granted when the independent decision-maker is satisfied the evidence demonstrates conformity across the certified scope.

Initial & recertification



Refusing

Where evidence does not support conformity and nonconformities are not resolved, certification is refused or deferred — with the reasons stated.

Reasons provided



Maintaining

Certification is maintained through the planned surveillance programme, provided the system continues to conform and findings are addressed.

Annual surveillance



Renewing

Recertification at year three, via a full audit, renews the certificate for another three-year cycle without a break in validity.

Every 3 years



Suspending

Certification may be suspended — for example after a serious unresolved nonconformity, a missed surveillance audit, or misuse of marks. Suspension is temporary and time-limited.



Restoring

A suspended certificate is restored once the issue that caused the suspension is resolved and verified within the permitted period.

On verified resolution

Temporary



Withdrawing

Where a suspension is not resolved in time, or a client no longer meets the requirements, certification is withdrawn and removed from the public directory.

Removed from directory



Expanding scope

Adding sites, activities or standards to a live certificate is assessed by an audit sized to the extension before the scope is amended.

Scope extension audit



Reducing scope

Scope is reduced where part of a system no longer conforms or is discontinued — the certificate is reissued to reflect the true certified scope.

Certificate reissued

CHANGES & SPECIAL AUDITS

Transfers, short-notice audits and scope changes

Situations that fall outside the routine cycle — each handled to a defined rule.

Transfer of certification

Where you hold a valid, accredited certificate from another certification body and the certification is eligible for transfer, it can be transferred to Skyeblanc Certification. Transfers are handled under the current applicable transfer requirements, including IAF MD 2 where applicable. We review your current certification, audit history and any open nonconformities before accepting the transfer.

Transfer · applicable requirements

Short-notice & special audits

We may conduct audits at short notice — for example to investigate a complaint, examine a certified client after a significant change, or follow up on a suspension. The grounds are defined in the certification agreement.

Investigations & follow-up

Changes to your organisation

Certified clients must notify us of changes that affect certification — legal status, ownership, structure, key personnel, sites, or the management system itself — so we can assess the impact on the certified scope.

Client obligation to notify

Appeals against a decision

Any certification decision can be appealed. Appeals are handled by people who were not involved in the decision being appealed, and never disadvantage the appellant.

[Complaints & Appeals →](#)

HOW WE DELIVER

Audited globally — on-site and remotely

Remote & ICT-assisted auditing

Where permitted by the applicable scheme and accreditation requirements and appropriate to the risk, audits may be delivered using information and communication technology — document review, live video assessment and interviews. The mix of on-site and remote is decided by risk, never by convenience, and conforms to **IAF MD4**.

[ICT-assisted auditing](#) · IAF MD 4 where applicable

Multi-site organisations

For organisations operating across multiple sites under one management system, audits use a sampling approach: a representative selection of sites is audited each cycle so that, over time, the whole network is covered. Sampling conforms to **IAF MD1**.

[Multi-site sampling](#) · IAF MD1