



UPDATE



ISO 9001: Looking to the Future and Anticipating What's Next?

ISO 9001:2015 has already been in print an impressive 8 years and naturally many of our customers are curious when they can expect an update. After all, the prior revision (ISO 9001:2008) only lasted 7 years and itself was a replacement for a standard that was only 8 years old (ISO 9001:2000).

Well, we can all quit wondering as in August 2023 it was announced that the ISO has had a consensus vote to update ISO 9001. As the present time it is projected that the new revision will be available sometime in 2025.

Part of what made this take longer than usual was the position taken by many of the member nations that there was simply no need to update ISO 9001 when the current revision was such an aggressive change to the standard and so many organizations had to overhaul their systems to accommodate new concepts like risk-based thinking, interested parties, and organizational knowledge. These concerns seem to have given way to a larger consensus that feels an update is warranted for a few larger global issues that the ISO is interested in addressing.

What can we expect to be different in ISO 9001:2025? At the present time we can only refer to committee discussions and opinion pieces, but there are a few core concepts that appear to be imminent.

1. The new version of ISO 9001 will likely include language pertaining to climate change. This is actually part of a larger global effort to incorporate climate change language into all ISO published standards. The ISO believes that it has a responsibility to encourage good policy in all areas in which its standards are used. At the present time it is unknown whether this language will manifest as an enforceable “shall” statement or merely as a note within the standard. For our part PJC feels the likelihood of climate change language being written as a shall statement is low overall.

ISO 9001: Looking to the Future and Anticipating What's Next? (Cont.)



2. The new version of ISO 9001 is also expected to address the topic of gender equality. This is actually a topic that has been gaining a great deal of traction in European markets and the ISO similarly feels this is something they wish to deploy via their many standards. In a similar fashion to climate change, it is not yet clear if this will take the form of a shall statement or a note.

Beyond these two topics we know very little of what the ISO has in mind for this latest revision of ISO 9001. There has been chatter that the ISO 9001 standard needs to revisit the concept of Risk Based Thinking and perhaps even provide an official definition of the term “risk”. Others have lobbied for improvements and clarifications in areas like design applicability, process mapping, and internal audit requirements.

Whatever happens next is anyone’s guess in terms of what the actual standard will require, but PJC can assure you of a few key facets of how the new standard will be deployed. The TC 176 Committee will be required to provide a Draft International Standard and Final Draft International Standard as part of their development process. These two documents will be available to PJC and we will provide updates on what we’re seeing in terms of new and/or revised requirements.

Furthermore when ISO 9001:2025 is ultimately published organizations will have a designated period of time to complete their transitions and update their certifications. Past precedent has shown that this period of time will be 2 years at minimum and perhaps as long as 3 years. ISO 9001:2015 will be given an official “end date” which means that your current certificates will be valid up to that end date.

It’s important to bear in mind that (as of right now) a number of key things will not be changing. ISO 9001 will still be a process-based standard. It will still require measurement of process effectiveness. It will still require effective process controls.

Many of the key concepts that have been part of ISO 9001 since day 1 (training records, calibration of measurement devices, corrective action) will not be going anywhere. This should give you some assurance that your past work in establishing your quality management system was not in vain.

Early planning is always key in these transitions. It will be important for you to acquire the new standard as soon as possible and find out what your certification body is doing in terms of a transition plan. Your certification body will also very likely have a set of options for you to complete your transition. In most cases you will be encouraged to complete your transition as part of a recertification assessment.

