



Swiss Association
for Quality and Management
Systems (SQS)

SQS Customer support

Standard revision ISO 21001:2025

Implementation rules

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1. Introduction

The new ISO 21001:2025 standard for educational organizations—management systems for educational organizations—requirements with guidance for use—has been published. It is a globally recognized management system standard for educational institutions, to which numerous educational organizations in Switzerland are also certified.

ISO 21001 was established in 2015 and is now in its second edition with the new version. It replaced the previous standard ISO 29990. A key aspect of the revision was its adaptation to the current “Harmonized Structure (HS)” in accordance with ISO requirements for management system standards, with individual new requirements and chapters. In Switzerland, the new standards can be obtained and licensed from the Swiss Association for Standardization (SNV) www.snv.ch. They are an important basis for users to further develop their management systems.

This document provides SQS customers with a concise overview of key information and recommendations for adapting their management systems targeted to the new requirements and for implementing the certification transition successfully and on time.

2. Overview of key changes

- Comprehensive editorial revision of previous requirements for better understanding.
- Restructuring of certain chapters to ensure a clearer and more logical sequence.
- Introduction of some additional requirements.
- Inclusion of additional notes for orientation purposes.
- Expansion of the definitions catalog at the beginning to include several additional terms.

In its characteristics, it is a «limited revision».

3. Conversion of certification

3.1 Publication of the new standard and issuance of certificates

ISO 21001:2025 has already been published in English and French.

3.2 Transition period for converting certified management systems to new standards

A three-year transition period is planned from the official ISO publication date. This means that three years after publication of the new standard, the old version will be withdrawn and will no longer be valid. The new standard is valid from the publication date; however, SQS can only carry out certification after receiving the accreditation extension (expected in mid-2026). Certificates issued according to ISO 21001:2018 will lose their validity on June 30, 2028. Until this date, the new requirements must be reviewed by the certification body in order to update the existing certificates.

3.3 Registration for the SQS initial certification following the publication of the new standard

For organizations without existing certification, SQS recommends registering directly under

the new ISO 21001:2025 standard. This creates a future-proof foundation from the outset and avoids the need for subsequent conversion efforts.

3.4 Recertification audits after publication of the new standard

From the date of the accreditation extension, SQS will, where possible, conduct the regular recertification audits planned with customers in accordance with the new standard. In these cases, the renewed certificate will be valid for three years, seamlessly following onto the previous certificate.

This requires that all audit activities—including approval by the expert commission—are completed before the current certificate expires. Otherwise, the certificate will be suspended, which must be avoided at all costs.

Should a company decide to conduct a recertification audit according to the old standard version after publication of the new standard, the validity period of the certificate must be limited to the end of the 3-year transition period (June 30, 2028).

3.5 Surveillance audits from publication of the new standard

Surveillance audits will continue to be conducted according to the old standard until the transition date. However, the date of the last audit before the end of the three-year transition period must be used for the transition at the latest.

3.6 Surveillance audits from publication with conversion to the new standard

A regular or extraordinary surveillance audit for the purpose of converting the certificate to the new standard, which takes place during the validity period of an existing SQS certificate, can be carried out as a conversion-surveillance audit. This requires an application to and approval by the expert commission. In this case, the validity remains tied to the original expiry date of the certification documents.

3.7 Audit time for conversion audits

The audit duration is determined individually based on recognized criteria such as the size and complexity of the organization and is communicated transparently before a transition audit is conducted.

4. Procedure for converting the management system

The following eight steps provide a structured basis for the successful transition to the revised ISO 21001 standard:

- Analysis of the revised standard
- Identify system gaps (GAP analysis by the company itself or – on a voluntary basis – GAP assessment by SQS)
- Determine the appropriate time for the changeover
- Determine implementation procedure (e.g., project plan)
- Involvement of relevant stakeholders

- Updating the existing management system
- Verification of successful implementation through internal audits
- Preparation for the recertification- or surveillance audit with conversion to the new standard

5. Address and utilize further development

The revised standard has been made more user-friendly and easier to understand thanks to editorial revisions. We recommend that you plan sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the revised standard.

6. Services related to the standard revision

With a deliberately focused offering, SQS supports its customers in the effective implementation and application of the new requirements:

- Coordination of the conversion process with the relevant SQS account manager
- SQS GAP assessments for efficient and targeted status assessments

For general questions, please contact the SQS office. For technical information, please contact the SQS auditors.



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