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Foreword

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 232, *Education and learning services*.

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Introduction

This document is intended as a resource for educational organization management systems (EOMS) to support the implementation of, or auditing against, ISO 21001:2025 [1]. It is intended for individuals and organizations seeking to understand or conduct audits of an EOMS.

The purpose of this document is to assist auditors and educational organizations by offering a comprehensive set of suggested questions and pointers. These can be reviewed, prioritized and adapted to address specific organizational priorities, challenges, requirements and exigencies.

This document follows the structure of ISO 21001:2025 [1] to ensure alignment between its content and the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1].

Educational organizations — Management systems — Guidance for auditing ISO 21001

1 Scope

This document provides guidance on auditing ISO 21001:2025 [1] through examples of:

— open-ended questions to determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1] have been met;

— evidence to objectively evaluate conformity to the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1]; and

— measures to demonstrate the ability of an educational organization management system (EOMS) to consistently monitor conformity to the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1] over time.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 21001:2025, *Educational organizations — Management systems for educational organizations — Requirements with guidance for use*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 21001:2025 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

4 Context of the organization

4.1 Understanding the organization and its context

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.1 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) Have national, regional or local political, economic and other relevant issues that can affect the educational organization been considered?

b) What process is in place for the identification of external and internal issues?

c) Have all sites, departments, products and services been considered?

d) Have the issues been listed and recorded?

e) Has the organization's purpose, mission and stated strategic direction been considered? Has a perspective been developed on the basis of all of the above?

f) Is this perspective documented and where is it incorporated or available?

Table 1 provides examples of evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.1.

Table 1 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.1

Evidence of audit	Measures
— assessment of the current situation [e.g. strength weakness opportunity threat (SWOT) gap, political economic social technical legal environmental (PESTLE) analysis]; — organization's strategic plan, including action plans; — meeting minutes related to context identification; — management review related to context; — implementation plans with priorities; — (market) analyses including studies of trends; — process for updating context information.	— turnover; — customer satisfaction (learners); — employee satisfaction; — sustainability index; — rankings, market position indices; — revising and updating information relevant to interested parties on time.

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.2 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) What is the process for identifying interested parties (stakeholder analysis, media reports or past information)?

b) How does the organization determine the expectations of external and internal interested parties?

c) How are they documented?

d) How are the expectations addressed by various parts of the educational organization management system (EOMS)?

e) What is the process to periodically review the needs and expectations of interested parties?

Table 2 provides examples of evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.2.

Table 2 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.2

Evidence of audit	Measures
— identification of interested parties to define the sphere of influence of the EOMS (e.g. stakeholder analysis, stakeholder matrix, stakeholder feedback); — documented information relating to how the needs and expectations of interested parties have been determined (e.g. minutes of meetings, interface documentation, cooperation agreements, teaching and learning contracts) and weighted; — documented information demonstrating the link between the conflicting requirements of interested parties and ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.1.	— customer satisfaction (learners) and pedagogical quality of outcomes; — employee satisfaction; — satisfaction of other relevant interested parties; — revising and updating information relevant to interested parties on time.

4.3 Determining the scope of the educational organization management system

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.3 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) How has the scope of the EOMS been established with respect to different target groups with socio-cultural and personally differentiated prerequisites, requirements and expectations?

b) How has the conformity of educational products and services with learner requirements been ensured?

c) What are the related identified risks and opportunities?

d) What are the unique selling points of the organization in the context of competition and developments in the education sector?

Table 3 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.3.

Table 3 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.3

Evidence of audit	Measures
— documented information relating to the scope, specifying the limits and boundaries of the EOMS, including a list of products and services including non-educational services; — documented information giving justification for the possible limitation of the scope and for non-applicability, as long as the limitation does not affect the ability of the EOMS to effectively provide stated products and services; — evidence of externally provided educational services and processes; — analysis of risks and opportunities of non-applicable requirements.	— criteria for the assessment of the educational product; — satisfaction and complaints forms; — process indicators and objectives, including pedagogical quality, productivity, risk rate, satisfaction rates of learners and employees.

NOTE Conformity to ISO 21001:2025 [1] can only be claimed if the requirements that are determined as not being applicable do not affect the organization’s ability or responsibility to ensure the conformity of its products and services and the enhancement of learners' and other beneficiaries' satisfaction.

4.4 Educational organization management system

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) What are the core and subsidiary processes?

b) How are interactions between processes represented?

c) What are the most important internal and external influencing factors and how are they identified?

d) How is process effectiveness evaluated?

e) What performance indicators define the process results?

f) What criteria are used to determine whether sufficient resources are available?

g) How are bottlenecks dealt with?

h) How are processes (including those which are externally provided) managed and documented?

Table 4 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

Table 4 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.4.1 and 4.4.2

Evidence of audit	Measures
— documentation of processes and work instructions, including process mapping to the extent necessary; — process evaluations, including details of monitoring, measuring, analysis, improvements and interaction matrices; — documented information such as event-driven process chains (EPC), swim lanes, interface acquisitions; — assignments of task areas and responsibilities [e.g. responsible, accountable, consulted, informed matrix (RACI)]; — documented information of outsourced processes (e.g. service level agreements, reporting, contracts); — organizational charts and job descriptions of process owners; — processes to determine risks and opportunities, risk matrices and risk assessment reports; — corrective actions; — satisfaction and complaints forms.	— process indicators and objectives; — quality; — productivity; — risk rate; — satisfaction rates of learners and employees.

5 Leadership

5.1 Leadership and commitment

5.1.1 General

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.1 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) What leadership principles are applied by top management? How are these communicated to and expected from other managers?

b) How does the EOMS support the delivery of educational programmes? Are there specific examples?

c) How is the link between the EOMS and the strategic objectives of the organization ensured?

d) In what way does top management manage its actions within the framework of the EOMS?

e) What improvement plans exist with regard to strategy, responsibilities or goals?

Table 5 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.1.

Table 5 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.1

Evidence of audit	Measures
— codes of conduct for teachers, learners and other interested parties; — declaration of commitment of the top management and the wider management team to the quality policy; — documented information of management reviews; — EOMS being a regular agenda item at management meetings; — documented information of resource planning (e.g. human resources, infrastructure, external services); — reviews and updates of the quality policy; — communications policy; — determination of relevant indicators.	— degree to which quality objectives have been met; — return on sales or cost of error ratio; — results of employee satisfaction analyses.

5.1.2 Focus on learners and other beneficiaries

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.2 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) What is the importance of learner orientation in the organization, and how has it evolved?

b) How are learners involved in the continual improvement and development of services?

c) How are risks and opportunities in learner and customer orientation identified and assessed?

d) What measures are in place to ensure effective learner orientation?

e) What improvements have been observed in learners and other relevant interested parties, and which indicators are used to evaluate the improvements?

Table 6 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.2.

Table 6 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.2

Evidence of audit	Measures
— mission statement that takes into account the diverse needs and requirements of learners; — marketing activities, trade fair activities, lectures, publications, awards; — reports on needs analysis concerning training and vocational qualifications for participation in educational services; — customer-oriented business equipment and information material; — process description (e.g. determination of market requirements), benchmarking research; — meaningfully involving learners in the development of educational services and continuous improvement.	— number and qualitative evaluation of active customer relationships; — referral rate; — complaint rate.

5.1.3 Additional requirements for special needs education

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.3 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) How are accessibility needs of learners with special needs assessed and addressed by top management?

b) What training and support are provided to educators and other staff to ensure accessibility?

c) What processes are in place to evaluate and improve accessibility and accommodations over time?

d) How are learners with special needs and their families involved in shaping policies and evaluating impact?

e) What challenges has the organization encountered in implementing accessibility and how were they addressed?

f) How does the organization engage external stakeholders or experts to support inclusive education?

Table 7 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.3.

Table 7 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.1.3

Evidence of audit	Measures
— accessibility and inclusion policies, along with staff training manuals and materials for supporting learners with special needs; — records of accommodation requests and actions taken, plus documentation of staff participation in accessibility and inclusion training and their feedback on training effectiveness; — certifications or accreditations related to inclusive education practices; — physical accessibility improvements, such as ramps, elevators, adaptive furniture, and accessible restrooms; — assistive technology implementations, including screen readers, hearing loops and alternative input devices; — digital accessibility of websites, online platforms and learning materials [e.g. web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) standards]; — learner support services such as individualized education plans (IEPs) and personal learning plans (PLPs), counselling records, and case studies or testimonials from students and families; — engagement and feedback mechanisms, including student-parent surveys, focus groups and collaboration with external disability organizations; — internal audits and action plans, including accessibility assessments, plans to address gaps and examples of improvements implemented based on feedback.	— accessibility policy and staff conformity (policy updates, staff training): — accessible infrastructure and technology (accessible facilities, assistive technologies and digital accessibility); — learner support effectiveness (accommodations provided, response times, complaints and student outcomes); — training and professional development (training coverage, number of sessions and staff satisfaction); — student and parent feedback (satisfaction and perceived accessibility); — continual improvement performance (audits, improvement actions and reduction of issues).

5.2 Educational organization policy

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.2 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) How does the organization ensure that its strategy aligns with the educational policy?

b) What are the most relevant quality objectives and how are they derived from the policy?

c) How is the policy communicated and understood by learners, staff and other stakeholders?

d) What methods are used to determine the effectiveness and relevance of the policy?

e) When was the quality policy last reviewed and what changes resulted from that evaluation?

Table 8 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.2.

Table 8 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.2

Evidence of audit	Measures
— process description; — meeting minutes on the communication of the quality policy; — quality policy on the website; — documented information of the promotion of the mission and vision of the organization at all levels of teaching and administration; — quality awareness training plan; — examples of communicating the quality policy to external interested parties; — identification and dissemination of the quality policy.	— results of internal investigations to understand the contents of the policy document.

5.3 Roles, responsibilities and authorities

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.3 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) How are relevant roles within the organization defined and where are these definitions documented?

b) How are roles, responsibilities and authorities communicated and reviewed for appropriateness?

c) What responsibilities do process owners have, and how are these linked to learner needs?

d) How is it ensured that assigned roles take into account the individual needs of learners?

e) Where and how are responsibilities documented, monitored and updated?

f) How is the effectiveness of this documentation process verified and maintained?

Table 9 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.3.

Table 9 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 5.3

Evidence of audit	Measures
— role descriptions and functional descriptions; — process descriptions, creating functional descriptions; — organizational charts and function diagrams; — organizational and communication structures; — definition of responsibilities and powers, such as process owners; — examples of target agreements.	— achievement of objectives; — process performance counters; — staff turnover, including in teaching and administrative roles.

6 Planning

6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.1 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) Does the organization ensure it achieves its EOMS results by enhancing positives, reducing negatives, and promoting continual improvement?

b) Are risks and opportunities addressed through actions aligned with the defined risk appetite and impact probability?

c) Are these actions integrated into EOMS processes, and is effectiveness regularly evaluated?

d) Does risk-based thinking guide planning for new products, services, and process changes?

e) Are disaster risk reduction and resilience taken into account in strategic and operational planning?

Table 10 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.1.

Table 10 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.1

Evidence of audit	Measures
— risk assessment processes (systematic method) in ISO 21001:2025 [1], 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4; — evaluation and determination of the level of risks and opportunities based on established risk criteria; — actions determined to address the risks and opportunities; — actions being integrated into processes; — evaluation of the effectiveness of actions; — updating of the identified risks and opportunities based on changes in the organization or its context.	— number of errors related to identified risks and opportunities; — failures or level of success for each action; — training of staff on risk-based approach; — number of times risk appetite or risk tolerance is not respected or surpassed; — risk based thinking being applied in the planning process when determining new products, services, or changes to operational processes; — degree to which actions are integrated into processes or used as inputs to planning; — training of staff on actions.

6.2 Educational organization objectives and planning to achieve them

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.2 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) Are the objectives for the EOMS defined at all relevant levels and functions?

b) Is a structured method used to identify objectives and define related performance indicators?

c) Are objectives aligned with the policy, measurable (when applicable), based on requirements, monitored, updated, communicated and focused on conformity and interested party satisfaction?

Table 11 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1] 6.2.

Table 11 — Examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.2

Evidence of audit	Measures
— documented EOMS objectives (e.g. as part of a strategic and tactical plan or improvement plan) at all organizational levels including units and functions linked to policy, continual improvement and conformity to products and services and related to the enhancement of learners and other beneficiaries; — communication of objectives, including involvement of relevant interested parties; — monitoring methods of setting and updating objectives; — action plans that include detailed steps, clear responsibilities and authorities, clear timelines, resources needed, evaluation methods and contingencies.	— degree to which objectives are achieved and aligned with strategy, policy and the needs and expectations of interested parties; — staff knowledge evaluation about objectives and their roles in achieving the objectives (e.g. competencies evaluation matrices); — number and frequency with which performance evaluations against objectives are conducted and reported to top management; — how often and how many staff participate in setting objectives; — degree to which the strategic plan is implemented and achieved.

6.3 Planning of changes

To determine whether the requirements of ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.3 have been met, comprehensive and open-ended questions can be used, such as:

a) Are changes to the EOMS implemented in a planned and systematic way?

b) Does change management consider purpose, risks, impact on EOMS integrity, internal resources, responsibilities and external provider readiness?

c) Are changes validated prior to implementation and verified post-implementation to ensure effectiveness?

Table 12 provides examples of audit evidence and measures for ISO 21001:2025 [1], 6.3.