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Global Association for Quality Management

ISO/IEC 17021-1 - Certified Lead Auditor

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ISO/IEC 17021-1 - Certified Lead Auditor - Certification Overview

The ISO/IEC 17021-1 - Certified Lead Auditor certification is a professional qualification designed for individuals who wish to demonstrate competence in auditing and managing audits of management system certification bodies. It focuses on the requirements for competence, consistency, impartiality, and credibility in the certification process. The standard establishes principles and requirements for organizations that audit and certify management systems, ensuring that certification activities are conducted professionally and in accordance with internationally recognized practices.

This certification equips participants with the knowledge and skills to plan, lead, conduct, report, and follow up on audits effectively. It covers audit principles, audit planning, risk-based auditing, evaluation of evidence, audit team management, nonconformity identification, corrective action verification, and audit reporting. Participants gain an understanding of the requirements for certification body operations, auditor competence, impartiality, confidentiality, and decision-making processes.

Successful completion of the Lead Auditor training and assessment demonstrates an individual's understanding of audit methodology and ability to lead audit activities in a structured and professional manner. The qualification supports career opportunities in management system auditing, compliance, quality assurance, certification, and consultancy, and helps professionals strengthen their credibility in the field of international standards and conformity assessment.

Target Audience

This certification is intended for professionals seeking to develop or enhance their expertise in management system auditing and certification processes, including aspiring and experienced Lead Auditors, internal auditors, quality managers, compliance officers, certification body personnel, consultants, management representatives, and professionals involved in conformity assessment.
It is particularly suitable for individuals responsible for conducting, managing, reviewing, or overseeing management system audits and those looking to advance their careers in auditing, certification, quality management, and regulatory compliance.

What Modules are covered?

Module 1 - Introduction to ISO/IEC 17021-1 and Certification Principles

- Overview and purpose of ISO/IEC 17021-1
- Scope and applicability of the standard
- Fundamentals of management system certification
- Principles of conformity assessment
- Certification body roles and responsibilities
- Certification process overview and terminology

Module 2 - Certification Body Requirements and Governance

- Structural and operational requirements of certification bodies
- Legal responsibility and management commitment
- Impartiality, independence, and conflict of interest
- Confidentiality and information security
- Resource management and competence requirements
- Outsourcing and control of external resources

Module 3 - Audit Principles, Planning and Preparation

- Audit principles and ethics
- Audit programme management
- Audit planning and scope determination
- Audit criteria and objectives
- Audit team selection and competency
- Document review and audit preparation
- Risk-based audit approach

Module 4 - Conducting Certification Audits

- Opening meeting and audit coordination
- Audit techniques and methodologies
- Interviewing and communication skills
- Evidence collection and verification
- Sampling methods and audit trails
- Evaluating conformity and identifying nonconformities
- Closing meeting and audit conclusions

Module 5 - Audit Reporting, Corrective Actions and Certification Decisions

- Audit report preparation and documentation
- Classification and recording of nonconformities
- Corrective action review and verification
- Follow-up audit requirements
- Certification decision-making principles
- Granting, maintaining, renewing, suspending, and withdrawing certification

Module 6 - Audit Leadership, Competence and Practical Assessment

- Leadership and management of audit teams
- Auditor competence evaluation
- Professional conduct and ethical responsibilities
- Managing difficult audit situations
- Practical audit case studies and role-play exercises
- Audit report writing exercise
- Final assessment and course review