

ISO 9001:2026

Introduction:

On 27 August 2025, the ISO WG N° 29 (Working Group) released the ISO DIS 9001:2026. This version is circulated to ISO member bodies for a final review and ballot. While the DIS is not publicly available, its content is well-known to participating national bodies and experts.

Based on the DIS content and controlled review and voting process, only minor refinements are expected from this stage onward. The final publication of ISO 9001:2026 is projected for September 2026. Following publication, certified organizations will have a three-year transition period (until approximately September 2029) to migrate to the next version of ISO 9001, a timeline subject to formal confirmation by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Major changes in the draft version:

The 2026 revision introduces several targeted updates, many of which align ISO 9001 more closely with the harmonized structure of other ISO management system standards. Among the main changes outlined in the draft are:

1. Integration of Climate Considerations

The 2024 amendment has been formally integrated into Clause 4.1, requiring consideration of climate change as a factor in the organization's context. The requirements have not been expanded.

2. Expansion of Leadership Responsibilities

Clause 5.1.1 now explicitly requires top management to promote and demonstrate a quality culture and ethical behavior. The new 2026 revision includes new guidance on how these can be demonstrated.

3. Tweaks to Quality Policy

The quality policy must now explicitly "take into account the context of the organization and support its strategic direction," strengthening the link between the QMS and business strategy.

4. Clarified Risk and Opportunity Management

The 2026 version of ISO 9001 reorganizes Clause 6.1 into sub-clauses (6.1.1 - 6.1.3) to provide a clearer separation between actions for addressing risks and pursuing opportunities.

5. Expansion of Awareness

Clause 7.3 adds a new awareness requirement for employees to understand "quality culture and ethical behaviour."

Additionally, Annex A has been significantly expanded to provide improved and more detailed guidance aligned with clauses 4 to 10 of the standard. As always, there may be changes following the stakeholder hearing of the draft update version. However, in short, what is revealed in the DIS version should mean quite moderate changes for companies.

Transition schedule:

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is expected to publish transition rules and timelines closer to the final release. Historically, ISO management system standards allow a transition period of up to three years. However, due to the limited scope of changes, a shorter transition period may be proposed.

Conclusion:

The release of the ISO DIS 9001:2026 has provided the long-awaited clarity. The next revision of ISO 9001 is confirmed to be an evolutionary update, refining concepts like leadership, culture, and risk management rather than launching a full-scale overhaul of the standard.

For organizations already certified to ISO 9001:2015, this means you can continue using and improving your QMS. Your current system is not obsolete; it is the **strongest possible foundation** for the 2026 version. The transition will be a process of integration, not a costly and disruptive rebuild.

For those considering certification, the message is even clearer: **there is no advantage to waiting**. Delaying your implementation means postponing the significant benefits of a certified QMS – improved efficiency, enhanced customer trust, and a stronger competitive position. The best way to prepare for ISO 9001:2026 is to build a robust, effective system based on ISO 9001:2015 today.