



ISO 21001

Briefing notes

Educational organization management systems

What is ISO 21001?

ISO 21001 provides a common management tool for organizations providing educational products and services capable of meeting the needs and requirements of learners and other customers. It is a stand-alone management system standard, aligned with other ISO management system standards (such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, etc.) through the application of the high level structure.

ISO 21001 focuses on the specific interaction between an educational organization, the learner, customers and other relevant interested parties. It specifies requirements for an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) when such an organization :

- Needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide, share and facilitate the construction of knowledge while conforming with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements
- Aims to enhance the satisfaction of learners, other customers and personnel through the effective application of its EOMS, including processes for improvement of the system



To whom does this standard apply ?

All requirements of ISO 21001 are generic and intended to be applicable to educational organizations that provide, share and facilitate the construction of knowledge through teaching, training or research, regardless of type, size and the product and service provided. The standard therefore applies to the management system of any organization utilizing a curriculum to provide, share and transfer knowledge.

Why is ISO 21001 important ?

There is a critical and continuous need for educational organizations to evaluate the degree to which they meet the requirements of learners and other customers, in order to improve their ability to continue to do so.

ISO 21001 focuses on the specific interaction between an educational organization, the learner and other customers. Current educational processes are becoming increasingly focused on co-creation where the traditional customer-supplier relationship is refined into a collaborative partnership. This standard will give guidance on how to deliver quality in this challenging new environment.

Education differs from many other sectors in that a successful educational process maximizes the chance that a learner will succeed, though it cannot guarantee that outcome. The effort and capability of both the learner and educational organization are crucial variables for the educational process to be successful. Learning involves the internalization of knowledge, methods and skills. The educational organization stimulates this internalization and provides the framework, input, processes and learning resources for it to take place. However, it is the effort and capability of the learner that ultimately determines the success of the educational process.

Who can benefit from ISO 21001?

Although learners and educational organizations worldwide are the main beneficiaries of this new management system standard, all stakeholders (i.e. everyone) will benefit from the output of standardized management systems in educational organizations.

Educational organizations that will benefit from the standard include pre-school, primary, elementary, middle schools and high schools, colleges, universities, adult education, special education schools, vocational education and training, tutoring or coaching centres, training organizations, education/training departments, consultants, and non-formal educational service providers. This is true regardless of the funding source, which can be public (subsidized), private (commercial), self-sufficient (internally generated revenue) or not for profit (sponsored).

Finally, all interested parties involved in determining requirements will benefit from this International Standard (teachers, parents, government, NGOs, trade unions, etc.).

What benefits can ISO 21001 provide?

The potential benefits to an organization of implementing an EOMS based on this International Standard are:

- Better alignment of objectives and activities with policy
- Enhanced social responsibility by providing inclusive and equitable quality education for all
- More personalized learning and effective response to all learners, in particular those with special education needs and distance learners
- Consistent processes and evaluation tools to demonstrate and increase effectiveness and efficiency
- Increased credibility of the educational organization
- Ability to demonstrate commitment to effective quality management practices
- Development of a culture for organizational improvement
- Harmonization of regional, national, open and proprietary standards within an international framework
- Widened participation of interested parties
- Stimulation of excellence and innovation



ISO 21001 principles

Implementing an EOMS draws on the following principles :

- Focus on learners and other beneficiaries
- Visionary leadership
- Engagement of people
- Process approach
- Continual improvement
- Evidence-based decisions
- Relationship management
- Social responsibility
- Accessibility and equity
- Ethical conduct
- Data security and protection

Who developed ISO 21001?

ISO 21001 was developed by an international cross-sectoral group of experts (WG 1) working under project committee ISO/PC 288, *Educational organizations management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*. Eighty-six experts from 39 national standardization bodies were involved in developing the standard, with the added participation of stakeholder organizations from various educational sectors.

More information at www.iso.org/committee/4960304.html.

International Organization for Standardization

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