

1. Request an Client Information Form for certification, from Alpha Certification Services or download the PDF and/or Word document from the website. An electronic form is also available on the website. Complete the form and return to Alpha Certification Services. The form can be by hand-delivered, posted, e-mailed or faxed. Alpha will then generate a Quotation (Service Level Agreement) for a three-year certification cycle. This SLA will be accompanied by our Conditions for Certification, which should be read carefully to ensure full understanding of requirements. Any queries may be discussed and resolved by contacting our personnel by telephone or e-mail.
2. To accept our Service Level Agreement, merely sign and date on Page 3 of the document (Op form 09) as indicated and return to our offices. A confirmation letter of receipt and acceptance will be sent to you via e-mail.
3. A Lead Auditor will be allocated to process your certification. He/she will contact you to arrange for the 1st Stage certification audit and to assist with any queries.
4. On the day of the on-site 1st Stage audit the Lead Auditor will review your documents against the requirements of the ISO 9001 Standard (including checking whether Internal Audits and a Management Review has been conducted). Most potential problems with documentation can be identified at this stage. A formal report is issued, identifying the problems or queries for you to address prior to the on-site 2nd Stage certification audit. An invoice, covering the 1st Stage certification audit fee, will be sent via e-mail at least one weeks prior to the agreed 2nd Stage certification date (refer point 12 below).
5. The Lead Auditor will discuss and confirm the date for the on-site 2nd Stage certification audit with you. This will be determined considering any time needed for you to make changes to documents, arising from deficiencies identified during the 1st Stage Audit. An invoice, covering the 2nd Stage certification audit fee, will be sent via e-mail at least 1 weeks prior to the agreed 2nd Stage certification date (refer point 12 below).
6. Together with the invoice, Alpha Certification Services will send you the 2nd Stage Audit Plan via e-mail. This will provide an outline of the audit, identify the audit team (if more than one Auditor), and provide information on the Agenda for the opening and closing meetings. If you have any objections to any members of the audit team, you may contact the Alpha Certification Services offices and discuss the issue. Auditors can be changed if valid reasons are given.
7. All audits commence with an opening meeting. During this meeting the conduct of the audit will be explained, the programme confirmed and any questions you have, answered. This meeting may be attended by whomever you wish to attend, but it is recommended that senior management be present.
8. All audits are conducted by sampling objective evidence – records, observation of working practice, and discussion with personnel at all levels of your organisation. If the audit requires more than one calendar day to complete, at the close of each day there will be a brief feedback on the progress so far.
9. Should the Lead Auditor decide, at any stage of the audit, that there is a complete breakdown of the system which will require substantial changes, he/she will call an immediate meeting with you to decide whether to abort the remainder of the audit or to follow the audit to its conclusion.

10. At the end of the on-site 2nd Stage Certification Audit, a closing meeting will be held to provide an overview of the audit, identify the deficiencies noted and advise the decision of the Lead Auditor regarding recommendation and confirmation of your scope of certification.

Deficiencies identified will be noted on an Observation Form, or a Corrective Action Request form. Where Corrective Action Requests are classified as minor, only a written indication of the action to be taken to address the deficiency is required before the certificate can be issued. Where a Major Corrective Action Request is identified, this requires completion of the corrective action and acceptance by the Lead Auditor before the certificate can be issued. Where possible, this will be by submission of written evidence.

11. Upon receipt of the Corrective Actions, the Lead Auditor will review and approve the action/s taken. Once these have been accepted, the Lead Auditor will finalise the audit report and submit all the relevant certification audit documents through to the Alpha Certification Services offices for a final, independent review by the Approbator/s. This would normally take two weeks. This is to ensure continued impartiality and objectivity.
12. After approval has been received from the Approbator/s the certificate can only then be issued by Alpha Certification Services office. The certificate is normally issued within one week of receiving the approval. **However, it is a condition of certification that no certificate or approved report may be issued unless payment has been received.**

The certificate, approved report and rules for use of your certification logo are e-mailed to the client followed by the originals being couriered to your premises.

13. Surveillance audits will be scheduled to take place on a twelve-monthly basis from the date of the Certification audit and will be quoted on such a basis. However, an option exists for nine-monthly Surveillance audits for those clients who prefer a more frequent visit programme and can be requested prior to the issue of the Service Level Agreement, or at a later date. It should be noted however that a change in audit frequency after acceptance of the Service Level Agreement will require a revised Service Level Agreement to be issued.

Where clients fail to effectively maintain their Management System, Alpha Certification Services reserves the right to move the client to a more frequent visit programme until confidence is returned.

The month of each Surveillance audit is confirmed at the closing meeting of the preceding on-site audit. However, you will be contacted in the month prior to the scheduled audit to mutually agree and confirm the actual audit date by the Lead Auditor assigned. While some flexibility is allowed, audits must take place within plus/minus one month of the original scheduled month.

14. A re-quote and re-audit will be required at the end of each three-year registration cycle in accordance with ISO 17021 accreditation rules, although the man-days required are generally slightly less than for the initial certification audit.

If you have any further queries or require clarification on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact us at office@alphacs.co.za