SEPTEMBER BRIEFING

# ISO 9001:2026 is published

**The new edition arrived on 16 September 2026. This issue turns publication day into a practical transition programme for certified organisations.**

## This month at a glance

ISO 9001:2026 is now the current edition of the world’s most widely used quality management standard. The revision is evolutionary rather than a wholesale redesign: the process approach, PDCA cycle and risk-based thinking remain central, while expectations around quality culture, ethical behaviour, change and organisational context are clearer.

## What UniCert clients should do now

Do not rush to rewrite every procedure. Appoint a transition owner, obtain an authorised copy of the standard, brief top management, and run a clause-by-clause gap review. Keep the current system operating while changes are evaluated and evidenced.

## Also inside

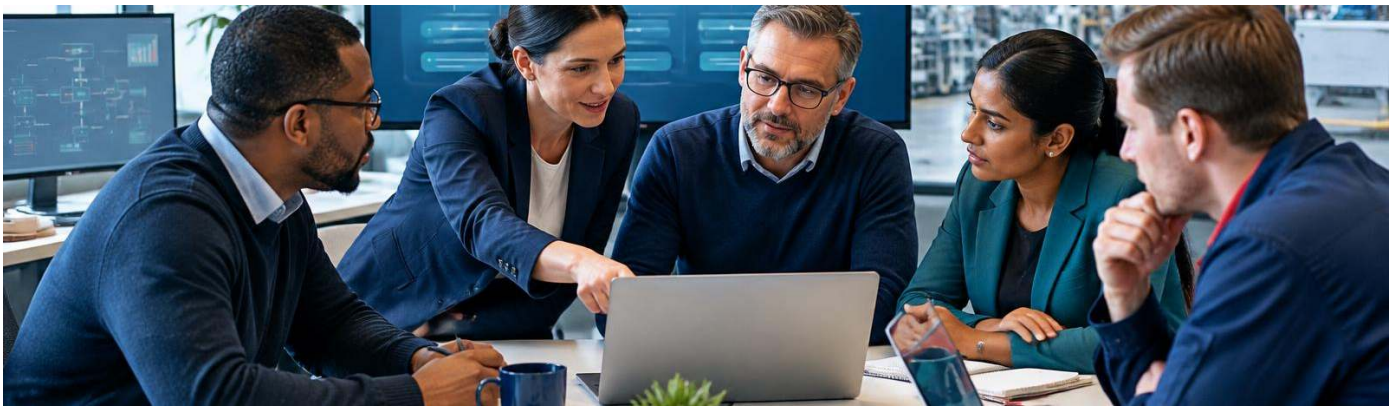
ISO 14001:2026 transition planning; ISO 19011:2026 and modern audit practice; ISO/IEC 27001 and AI governance; Global ACI accreditation developments; and a 90-day action plan for management teams.

**Research cut-off: 19 September 2026. Confirmed facts are separated from implementation guidance.**

Source: ISO/TC 176/SC 2; ISO.org

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

# ISO 9001:2026 — what changed



**The sixth edition keeps the familiar management-system architecture, allowing organisations to improve the system they already have rather than start again.**

## Leadership and culture

Leadership is expected to shape a culture that supports quality and ethical behaviour. Auditors are likely to look beyond policy wording and test whether objectives, decisions, incentives and daily behaviours consistently support customer and statutory requirements.

## Risks, opportunities and change

The revision gives organisations clearer prompts to distinguish risks from opportunities and to plan changes in a controlled way. Useful evidence includes decision records, ownership, resource assessments, risk treatment, communication and checks that the intended result was achieved.

## Context and climate

The 2024 climate-change amendment is incorporated into the new edition. Organisations should determine whether climate change is relevant to their context and whether interested parties have climate-related requirements. A generic “not relevant” statement without analysis is unlikely to be persuasive.

## What remains stable

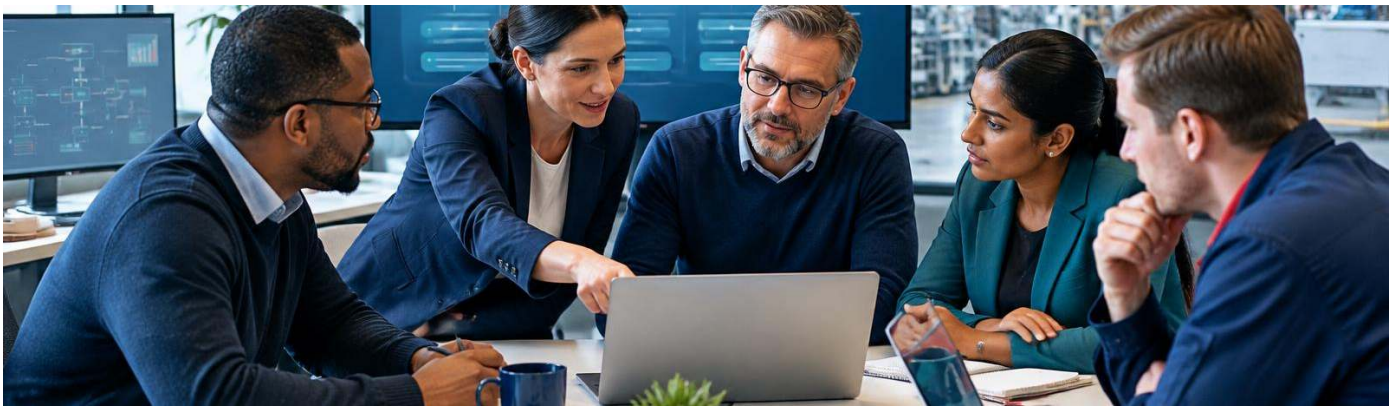
The process approach, customer focus, performance evaluation, internal audit, management review and continual improvement remain the backbone. Existing effective processes and records should be retained unless the gap assessment identifies a real need to change them.

**Use the published text as the authority; summaries are implementation guidance, not a substitute for the standard.**

Source: ISO 9001:2026; ISO/TC 176/SC 2 publication update

TRANSITION ROADMAP

# Your first 90 days after publication



**A disciplined start reduces rework and prevents the transition from becoming a documentation exercise.**

### Days 1–30 · Mobilise

Name an executive sponsor and transition lead. Purchase the authorised standard. Brief process owners and internal auditors. Map the changed clauses against existing procedures, objectives, risks, competence and records. Agree how transition decisions will be controlled.

### Days 31–60 · Assess

Complete a documented gap analysis. Sample operational evidence, not only manuals. Review the organisation’s context, interested parties, climate relevance, quality culture, ethical behaviour, risks and opportunities, planned changes and management-review inputs.

### Days 61–90 · Implement

Prioritise gaps by customer, compliance and process risk. Update only the controls that need changing. Train affected people, revise the internal-audit programme and schedule a management review focused on transition readiness. Start collecting objective evidence.

### Certification planning

Discuss timing with UniCert before fixing internal deadlines. A transition audit may be combined with a surveillance or recertification visit where allowed, but additional audit time may be needed. Formal transition rules and the final deadline should follow the applicable accreditation decision.

**Avoid an automatic “three-year deadline” claim until the applicable formal transition arrangement is confirmed.**

Source: ISO guidance and UniCert transition methodology

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

# ISO 14001:2026 — transition in motion

**Published on 15 April 2026, the environmental management revision now requires organisations to convert awareness into an evidence-based transition programme.**

## Priority changes

The revised text strengthens consideration of environmental conditions, including climate, biodiversity, pollution and natural-resource availability. It clarifies the lifecycle perspective, separates risks and opportunities more clearly, and adds explicit planning-of-change requirements in Clause 6.3.

## Evidence auditors will expect

Show how environmental conditions influence context, interested parties, significant aspects, compliance obligations and operational controls. For planned changes, retain the purpose, potential consequences, resources, responsibilities and effectiveness checks.

## Client action

Complete the gap analysis early, update competence where roles have changed, and test new controls through internal audit before the transition assessment. Integrate ISO 14001 work with ISO 9001 where context, risk, change, competence and management review share a common process.

## Timing

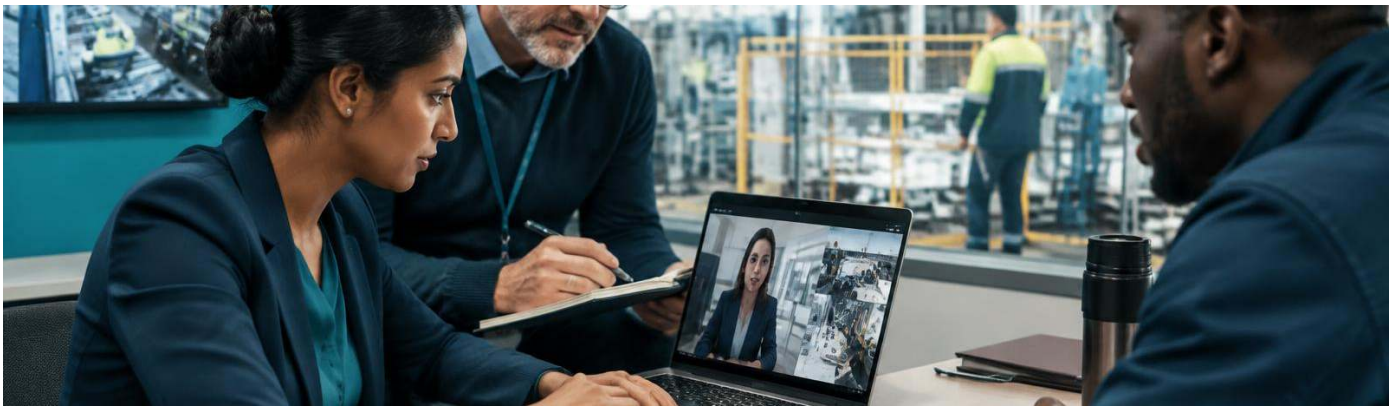
The transition programme runs to 30 April 2029 under the technical transition information used by UniCert. Agree the assessment schedule early enough to resolve findings before the existing certificate reaches the end of the permitted transition period.

**Download UniCert’s free ISO 14001:2026 Transition and Implementation Guide from the homepage.**

Source: ISO 14001:2026; transition technical information reviewed by UniCert

AUDITING

# ISO 19011:2026 changes audit practice



**The fourth edition, released in May 2026, updates guidance for auditing management systems in digital, remote and rapidly changing environments.**

### Risk-based audit programmes

Audit programmes should allocate attention and competence according to risk, change and organisational context. A fixed annual checklist is rarely enough where technology, suppliers, regulation or operating models move quickly.

### Remote and hybrid methods

Remote interviews, screen sharing, digital evidence and connected devices can improve coverage, but suitability must be assessed. Auditors should consider confidentiality, identity, connectivity, evidence integrity and whether remote access can genuinely demonstrate operational control.

### Auditor competence

Teams increasingly need digital literacy, information-security awareness and the ability to evaluate AI-assisted processes. Technology can support sampling and analysis, but professional judgement, traceability and responsibility stay with the auditor.

### Important distinction

ISO 19011 is guidance, not a certifiable management-system standard. There is no certificate “to ISO 19011”. Organisations use it to strengthen internal audit programmes and the competence of people who plan, conduct and report audits.

**Review audit methods now; no formal certification transition period applies to ISO 19011.**

Source: ISO/TC 176 release notice; BS EN ISO 19011:2026

DIGITAL TRUST

# Cyber security and AI governance

**Digital trust increasingly depends on connecting information-security controls with accountable AI governance.**

## ISO/IEC 27001 status

ISO/IEC 27001:2022 remains the current information-security management standard. The transition from the 2013 edition ended on 31 October 2025, so organisations should now focus on control effectiveness, risk treatment and evidence rather than edition migration.

## ISO/IEC 42001 in the UK

BS EN ISO/IEC 42001:2026 is the UK and European adoption of the 2023 AI management-system standard, without technical changes to the international text. It provides a framework for AI policy, impact assessment, risk treatment, lifecycle controls, transparency and continual improvement.

## Practical integration

Use the ISMS to protect AI data, models, access and suppliers; use the AIMS to govern AI purpose, impacts, accountability and monitoring. Shared processes can cover competence, document control, incidents, internal audit and management review, while each standard retains its specific risk lens.

## Board question

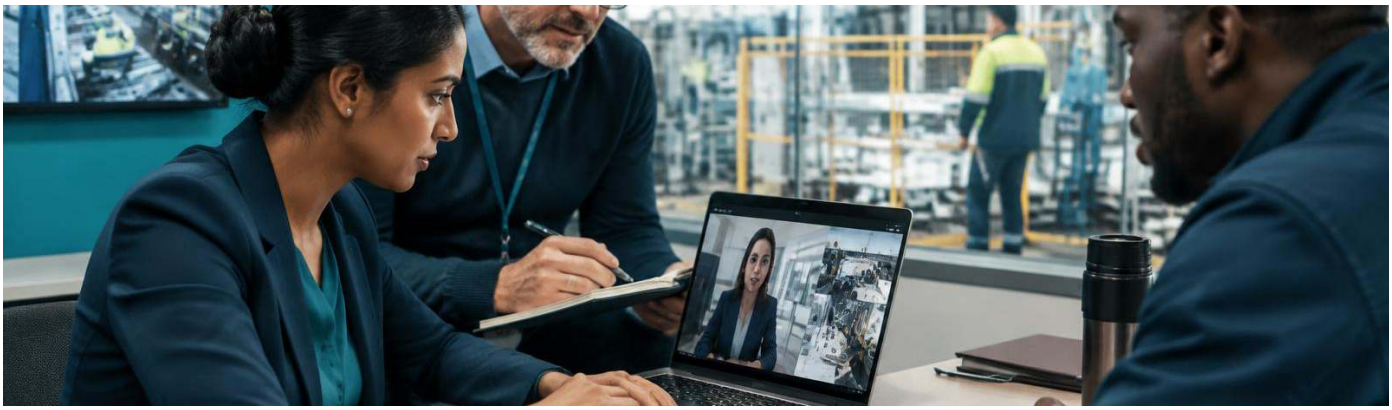
Can management identify every significant AI system, its owner, intended use, affected parties, key risks, approved data sources, monitoring criteria and escalation path? If not, start with an AI inventory before considering certification.

**Certification is not a substitute for compliance with applicable UK data, consumer, equality or sector rules.**

Source: ISO/IEC 27001:2022; BS EN ISO/IEC 42001:2026; UK DSIT cyber governance mapping

ACCREDITATION

# Global ACI — continuity through change



**IAF and ILAC were brought together in Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated from 1 January 2026, creating one international cooperation structure.**

### What changed

The organisational structure and international recognition arrangement are being unified. Accreditation bodies, certification bodies, laboratories, inspection bodies and validation or verification bodies will follow the published transition arrangements for branding and recognition.

### What did not change overnight

The restructuring does not automatically invalidate existing accredited certificates. It does not rewrite ISO requirements or require certified organisations to seek immediate recertification. Existing surveillance and recertification cycles continue under the applicable scheme rules.

### What certificate holders should do

Verify certificate status through the issuing certification body and relevant accreditation channels. Treat unsolicited claims that every certificate must be replaced immediately with caution. Update marks, websites or tender packs only when the responsible body provides formal instructions.

### UniCert approach

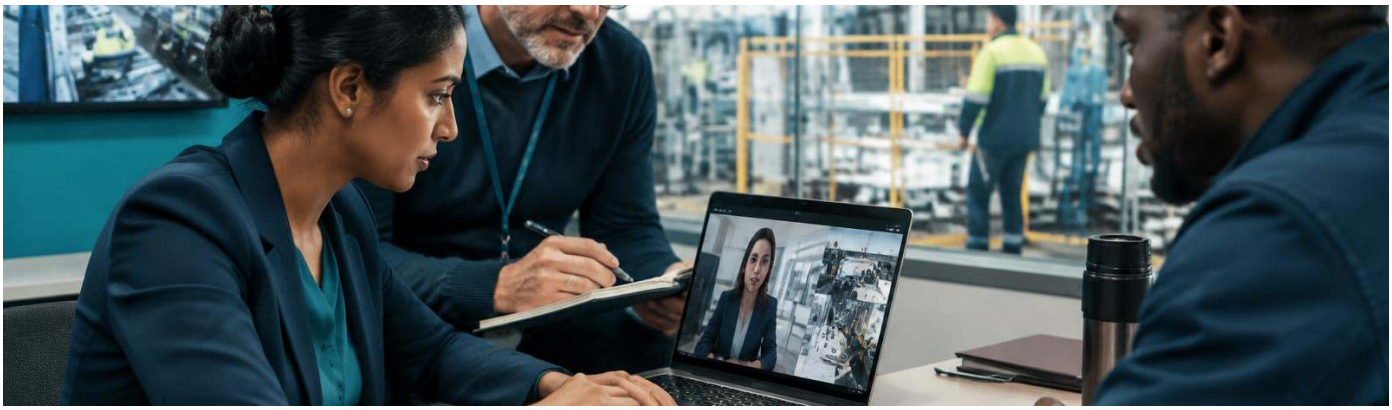
UniCert will communicate any certificate or mark action directly to affected clients, with the applicable date and evidence. Clients should keep their legal name, scope, sites and contact details current to support accurate certificate records.

**Accreditation recognition and ISO certification are related but distinct layers of assurance.**

Source: IAF/ILAC joint Global ACI launch communications

AUDIT READINESS

# Six evidence tests before your next audit



**Strong systems make decisions visible. Use these tests to find weak evidence before an auditor does.**

### 1 · Context

Can you show when internal and external issues were last reviewed, what changed, who decided relevance and how the findings affected the management system?

### 2 · Interested parties

Are customer, regulator, workforce, supplier and climate-related requirements translated into owned controls rather than stored as a static list?

### 3 · Risks and opportunities

Can each priority action be traced from evaluation to owner, deadline, implementation and effectiveness review?

### 4 · Planned change

For significant changes, did the organisation define purpose, consequences, resources, responsibilities, communication and post-change checks?

### 5 · Competence and awareness

Can people explain how their work affects quality or environmental performance, and is competence demonstrated beyond attendance certificates?

### 6 · Improvement

Do complaints, nonconformities, audit findings, data trends and management review produce timely corrective action and learning across similar processes?

**Sample real records from the last quarter and follow each trail across departments.**

Source: UniCert audit-readiness guidance aligned to management-system clauses

INTEGRATED SYSTEMS

# One transition programme, two standards

**Organisations certified to both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 can reduce duplication without weakening standard-specific controls.**

### Combine the common architecture

Use one controlled transition register for context, interested parties, leadership, risks and opportunities, change, competence, documented information, internal audit, management review and improvement. Assign specialist owners where quality and environmental evidence differs.

### Keep the lenses distinct

Quality considers consistent products and services, customer requirements and process performance. Environmental management considers aspects, impacts, compliance obligations, lifecycle perspective and environmental performance. A shared form must not blur these different decisions.

### Coordinate assurance

Build an integrated internal-audit programme around processes and risks rather than separate clause checklists. Management review can be combined if inputs and decisions for each standard remain complete and traceable.

### Plan with the certification body

Share the transition plan, scope changes, site changes and major operational changes early. Coordinated assessments may reduce disruption, but audit time is based on applicable certification rules and the complexity and effectiveness of the integrated system.

**Integration should simplify governance, not remove necessary evidence.**

Source: ISO Harmonized Structure; UniCert integrated-management-system guidance

ACTION & SOURCES

# September checklist and source desk

**Use this page to turn the month’s developments into accountable next steps.**

## Management checklist

1. Obtain ISO 9001:2026 and nominate a transition owner. 2. Book a gap review and agree the certification timetable. 3. Align the ISO 14001:2026 programme with the April 2029 deadline. 4. Update internal-audit methods against ISO 19011:2026. 5. Inventory AI systems and connect AI risks to information security. 6. Wait for formal accreditation mark instructions before changing certificates or artwork.

## Primary references

ISO 9001 publication: committee.iso.org/sites/tc176sc2/home/news/ ISO catalogue: iso.org/standard/9001 ISO 19011 release: committee.iso.org/sites/tc176/home/news/ UKAS ISO 14001 transition: ukas.com/resources/technical-bulletins/ UK cyber governance mapping: gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-governance-mapping

## Speak to UniCert

For transition planning, integrated audits, training or a certification quotation, visit unicertification.co.uk/contact or email info@unicertification.co.uk. Existing clients should include their certificate number and preferred assessment window.

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Source: Research verified 19 September 2026