

11 Quality standards

A Standards and certification



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The International Organization for Standardization is based in Geneva. It is a network of national standards institutes from over 145 countries working in partnership with international organizations, governments, industry, business and consumer representatives.

ISO has developed more than 14,000 International Standards, which it says are "documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria and guidelines to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are **fit for their purpose**".

There are two series of standards for management systems: the ISO 9000 series on quality management and the ISO 14000 series on environmental management. Organizations can apply for certification to ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:1996.

(For more on environmental standards, see Unit 43.)

Note: Singular: criterion, plural: criteria

B ISO 9000

The 2000 version of the ISO 9000 standards put particular importance on:

- a **the role of top management** in setting policies for quality
Top managers have to be seen to be involved in quality issues, not leaving this to middle management
- b **statutory and regulatory requirements** – for example, the car industry has to pay particular attention to safety and environmental laws and standards in relation to the components that they use
- c **measurable objectives** – we have to be able to measure quality and by how much it is improving
- d **resource management** – how we manage the inputs to our products, for example in human resources and materials
- e **monitoring customer satisfaction** – customers are the ultimate judges of quality and we have to constantly check and improve the 'score' that they give us
- f **training effectiveness** – the training of our staff is an investment and we have to measure how effective it is in terms of our future profitability
- g **continual improvement** – 100 per cent quality is never achieved – there is always room for improvement. (See Unit 12)

- 11.1 Complete the table with words from A opposite. Put a stress mark in front of the stressed syllable in each word. (The first one has been done for you.)

	Verb	Noun	Adjective
1	'certify/certifi'cate	cert'i'ficate/certific'a'tion	'certified/cert'ificated
2	apply		
3		standard/standardization	

Now complete each sentence (1–3) with the correct form of the word from the table with the same number.

- ISO will give us more credibility with our clients and so we've asked to be by them.
- They told us to bring in ISO-approved consultants to check our operations and make our through them.
- Now we can put the ISO 9000 logo on all our literature. We've all our documentation so that it's clearly visible. Our clients feel reassured – in fact, they love it!

- 11.2 Look at these examples of work on quality at a company producing car components. Match each one to an aspect of quality (a–g) in B opposite.

- All the people in the call centre were sent on a course to develop their sense of team work, and this increased sales by 15 per cent.
- The senior managers invited a well-known quality expert to do a consultancy project on production quality.
- The production manager looked at the latest regulations on car safety on a government Ministry of Transport website.
- Employees are always paid bonuses for suggesting improvements, however small.
- The company developed new software to analyze quality data more closely.
- They have checked the quality procedures in place at all of their suppliers.
- The car firms who buy the company's components are totally satisfied.



A call centre

Over to you



Find out about an organization (perhaps your own or one of its suppliers) that has adopted standards such as ISO 9000. How have they changed the way that the company works?