

Your guide to certification

What to expect during the next 12 months



Welcome

We're here to help you through the certification process and make the whole journey easier for you. You may well already have everything you need in place, but it's always worth checking.

You can use the following checklist and project planning template to help keep you on track and stay in control.

Certification checklist

- ✓ **A clear statement of benefits** – Write down what your organization will gain from certification
- ✓ **Employee motivation** – Keep them involved and informed at all times with regular communications and updates
- ✓ **Objectives, scope and resources** – List them. It's critical they are in place
- ✓ **Teamwork** – Your key staff across all departments need to know how to work together, and their responsibilities
- ✓ **Project Plan** – This should detail activities and key timescales for implementation of the system
- ✓ **Customer and supplier feedback** – A great way to get input to shape your thinking and action plan for improvements
- ✓ **Systems, policies, procedures and processes** – How do your current ones compare to the standard?
- ✓ **Staff training** – If your own people carry out internal audits, you'll get early sight of any potential problems or possible improvements

Application process



Being prepared for Stage 1 is important

A pre-certification assessment could help save you time later on

We can carry out an optional Gap Analysis - also called a pre-certification assessment. It looks at the existing processes and procedures that you have in place and compares these with the requirements of the standard. Any potential oversights or weaknesses are spotted so you can take action now. It's also a good dry run for your team before the formal stages begin.


Here's some other useful BSI tools that could give you a head start

Entropy™ Software

If your document handling could be better or if there are shortcomings in your understanding and measurement of KPIs, then the tools in our Business Improvement Software - Powered by BSI Entropy could be the perfect solution. Users report that its features allow them to shorten the time it takes to reach certification by up to 50%.

Training courses

Your people are crucial to the success of your business. Having them trained and on board when adopting any new management system is key. We have a full range of courses and our fully trained tutors can even include a real life audit to bring the sessions to life and give better results.



Tip - Use our helpful project planning guide

Stage 1 Your first assessment

Let's check where you are

By now you've embedded your new management system. When we visit, expect to be challenged by your Client Manager. This will be done in a constructive and positive way to ensure you get the most from your management system. We may leave you with some additional work to do, but don't worry; the aim is to get you in good shape for Stage 2 and we'll work through these challenges with you.

Your first assessment will need to be completed within 12 months of your application. Many organizations choose to do this within the first six months though. We'll visit your site, summarize our findings in a report and make a plan for the Stage 2 assessment.

Your BSI Client Manager will support you by:

- ✓ Checking all your documents
- ✓ Talking to your employees and inspecting your site
- ✓ Making sure that you understand the standard, what it requires and the overall operation of your management system
- ✓ Reviewing your scope, and ensuring it includes statutory and regulatory aspects, as well as highlighting any associated risks
- ✓ Comparing the performance of your management system and site operations to ensure you are ready for Stage 2.

Before they leave, they will discuss and summarize their findings in a report so you have a good understanding of what is and isn't working. This may mean there are some elements of your system which need some additional work. Collectively, we call these non-conformities or NCRs and they are a normal part of the process and should not worry you.

The standard time frame between Stage 1 and 2 is four months; however, this can vary with certain standards. You can discuss this with your Customer Care Advisor.



	Client Manager	Assessment date	BSI Report (SMO) number
Stage 1 assessment reminder			

Stage 1 - Non-conformance reports

A non-conformance report (NCR) will outline any areas that don't match the standard and we group these into two categories: minor and major.

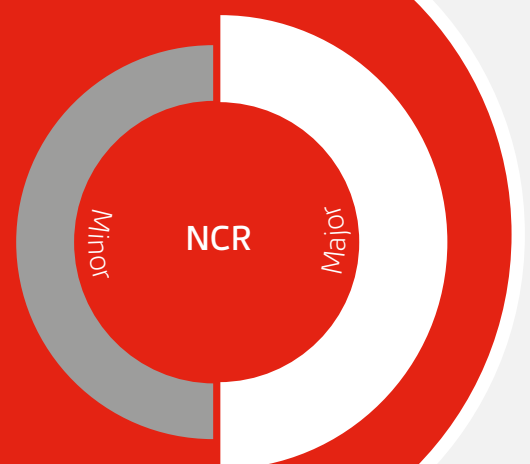
Minor non-conformities

These are not seen as serious. You must simply develop, follow and complete your own internal corrective action plan (CAP) before Stage 2. There is no need to send us a corrective action plan for minor non-conformities at Stage 1.

Major non-conformities

These are more serious and you'll need to produce a CAP for BSI with actions to complete before Stage 2. You will need to submit your CAP to us in advance of your Stage 2 and we will pay particular attention to it at our next visit.

Send your CAP to: MSUK.caps@bsigroup.com and include your BSI report number (SMO) in the subject line.



Tip: Use our NCR tracker to help you stay on top of actions

Document your corrective action plans associated with the NCR.

Stage 2 Gaining approval

The official assessment

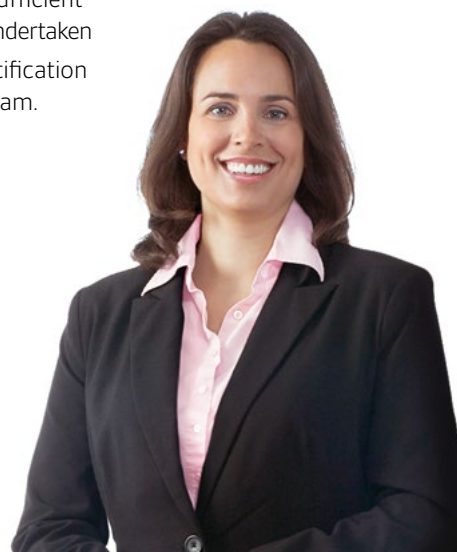
This is the final and more formal assessment. You've successfully completed Stage 1 and are ready for full assessment. Stage 2 confirms your management system is fully aligned to the standard and is fully operational within your organization. We'll evaluate the implementation and its effectiveness, and make a recommendation for your formal certification.

Your BSI Client Manager will:

- ✓ Evidence that you align to the requirements of the standard
- ✓ Ask you to demonstrate clear monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing of your system against key performance objectives
- ✓ Check that your management system complies with appropriate legal requirements
- ✓ Evaluate the operational control of your processes
- ✓ Ensure that internal audits and sufficient management reviews have been undertaken
- ✓ Make a recommendation for certification for review by BSI's compliance team.

When your Stage 2 is complete, there may be the need for some final improvements. At this stage, additional NCRs may be highlighted. These will need to be resolved with new corrective action procedures. As with Stage 1, these are nothing to worry about and should be seen as a positive way of improving your management system.

The good news is that provided you have a corrective action procedure for any minor NCRs in place, this will not delay your certificate. The more serious ones will need to be addressed before a certificate can be issued and we will come back to visit you within 30 days to check your progress.



	Client Manager	Assessment date	BSI Report (SMO) number
Stage 2 assessment reminder			

Stage 2 - Non-conformance reports

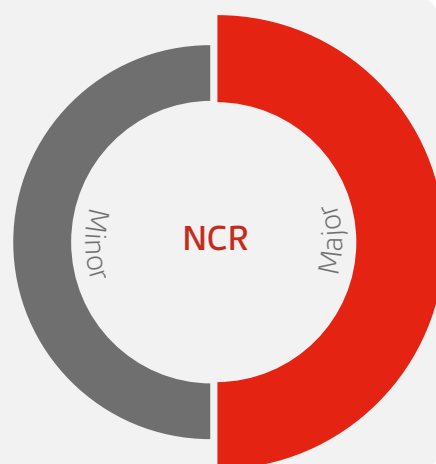
A non-conformance report (NCR) will outline any areas that don't match the standard and we group these into two categories: minor and major.

Minor non-conformities

- Unlike at Stage 1, this time a written corrective action plan (CAP) must be sent to BSI at Stage 2 as this is when a certification decision is made
- The CAP will be reviewed by your Client Manager and must detail the NCR, the cause, the proposed corrective action, who is responsible and the date the action will be implemented. You will have five working days to do this.

Major non-conformities

- If a major NCR is raised, an additional visit will need to be booked. This is to confirm the implementation of the effective CAP
- This additional visit will take place after 30 days; however you can request to have the visit earlier
- These NCRs must be addressed within six months of the assessment and prior to issue of the certificate.



Send your CAP to - MSUK.caps@bsigroup.com and include your BSI report number (SMO) in the subject line.

The next three years with BSI

Getting even more from your certification

Celebrate your success and promote yourself

Once you have achieved certification, it's essential you get the message out there to everyone that matters. Promote your achievement to clients - put out a press release, communicate the significance internally and update your corporate stationery and website with the certification marks.

BSI will work with you to promote your success and recognize the achievement that you've gained. Over the three years after certification, we will work with you to ensure you get the most out of your investment and continue to improve your business with standards.



The 'continuing assessment visit' or CAV is a regular event that may be completed in stages, typically every six months. CAVs are planned over a three-year period and will ensure that all elements of the organization covered in the assessment at Stage 2 are re-assessed. They give you the reassurance that all your systems and processes are doing exactly what you originally planned for them to do. The first visit will be four months after your Stage 2, and then six monthly after that.

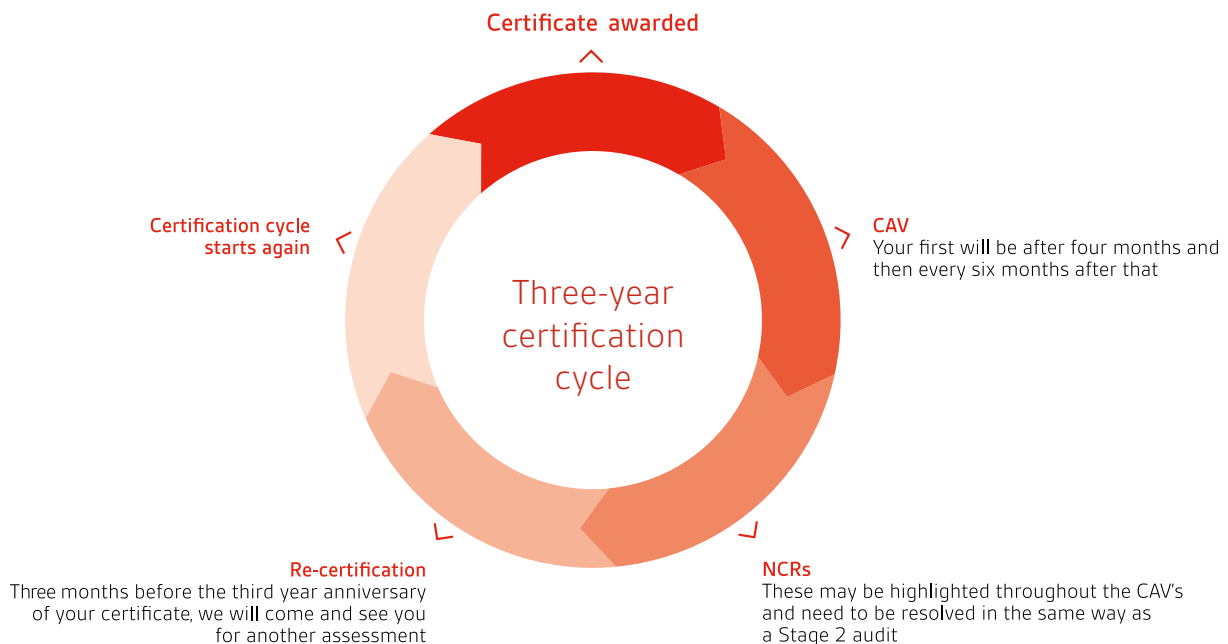
These assessments will always cover the following areas:

- System maintenance
- Effectiveness of internal audits and follow up actions
- Management reviews
- Preventive actions
- Corrective action processes
- Customer complaints
- Changes to the documented system.

And at each CAV the following will be audited:

- A review of actions relating to any previous NCRs
- How effective your management system is performing compared to your objectives
- The progress of any new and planned activities aimed at continual improvement
- Results from any previous internal audits
- The use of marks and any other reference to certification
- Records and processes relating to any complaint about the client that has been referred to BSI.

Not only will they help you check that you are getting the benefits you wanted from certifications, but they will also help get you ready for the re-certification audits which are planned at the end of each three-year certification cycle.



Achieving excellence

Your questions answered

We understand you may have some questions for us. With this in mind, we have compiled a list of those we are asked most frequently to assist with:

FAQs

Q How long is my application valid for?

A Your Stage 1 assessment will need to be completed within 12 months of submitting your application and your assessments are agreed on mutually convenient dates. If you decide not to progress to assessment within 12 months, you may need to re-apply.

Q When should we book our assessment visits?

A This will depend on the management system structure your organization already has in place, and how aligned to the standard you are. Not sure if you're ready? You can discuss this with your BSI customer care team who will help plan your approach. A GAP analysis day may help. Ask us for details.

Q How can I be sure you will send somebody competent to do my audit?

A BSI is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). Accreditation is essential for certification bodies such as BSI in order to demonstrate competence and impartiality in auditing and certifying organizations which conform to management system standards.

Q Am I going to see a different person every audit?

A You will be allocated a Client Manager who has knowledge of your industry, and where possible, not too far from your site. To demonstrate impartiality, we may make a change from time to time, but we appreciate that familiarity generally creates a more constructive working relationship.

Q Can BSI help me with consultancy style advice to embed the standard?

A For some organizations, commitment to continual improvement may be hindered by resources, time or in-house expertise. As we are acting as your auditor, we are not allowed to offer consultancy advice ourselves, but that is where BSI's Associate Consultant Programme (ACP) can help. It gives you access to a network of independent consultants who can offer support. We do not represent, recommend or certify these consultants, but we do know that our 200 members across the UK have extensive experience of working with certified management systems. Ask us and we will put you in touch with a selection of them.

Q When will I receive the plan for my assessments?

A Once a visit is booked, you will receive a detailed assessment plan confirming the plan for the assessment day/s.

Q How do I change the date of an assessment?

A Call or email us as soon as you can to change your date and we will do our best to accommodate your request. Please note, however, that if you postpone an assessment within 30 days of its scheduled date, you will need to pay for the assessment.

Q What time can we expect our assessor to arrive?

A Based on a full day's assessment, we would expect your Client Manager to arrive for 9am.

Common terms we use

We realize some of the assessment terminology can be somewhat confusing at first, so here are a few definitions to help:

Certification – This means that you have been successfully assessed against the requirements of a management system standard. We will issue you with a certificate and an approval mark that you can use to promote your achievement. You can then say you are 'approved', 'registered' or 'certified'.

Non –conformity report (NCR) – The failure to conform to part of the standard and can be described as minor or major. Minor non-conformities, are generally nothing to worry about and should be viewed as an opportunity to develop and add maturity to your management system. Major non-conformities however, may delay your application for certification, but remedying them will really help your organization improve. Your Client Manager will be there to support you through the corrective action process.

Accreditation – Your achievement with BSI does not mean you are 'accredited'. It's BSI that is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). This means we have the expertise and professionalism to carry out independent assessments. Accredited certification holds greater commercial value and integrity than non-accredited approval.

Corrective action and preventive action (CAP/CAPA) - (CAPA, also called corrective action / preventative action or simply actions). These are improvements to an organization's processes taken to eliminate causes of non-conformities. They focus on the root causes of non-conformities to prevent their recurrence.

Extra support exclusively for BSI clients

With BSI you'll get extra tools to help you make the most of your certification.

Excellerator report

Our unique Excellerator report looks at how your management system is performing and provides you with a detailed analysis. It will tell you how well your management system is working, and benchmark your performance against other organizations in your sector.

With this knowledge, you can make decisions to prevent and reduce these risks. You can also change things in areas where you may not be performing as well as you could – or recognize where you are excelling so you can ensure you stay that way.

Secure customer website

Our password protected customer website is one of the best ways to be kept up-to-date and ensure you get the most from your certification. Log on and you'll be able to: Download your eCertificate and certification marks, as well as receive guidance on how to display the newly achieved mark.



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