



PREPARING FOR YOUR REMOTE AUDIT WITH NQA

What is a remote audit?

A remote audit is one that is conducted partially or completely off site. The audit will cover everything that is usually covered on site but uses technology to support the Assessor when a site visit is not possible / appropriate.

What should I expect?

The remote audit will typically be the same duration as your onsite audit. You will need to be available at all times and will be dialled into a conference call for most of the audit duration.

Remote audits are also best delivered using screen share. This reduces the amount of data and information transferred between your organisation and NQA.

You may be asked to email documents to the Assessor for review. Any information you send us will be managed in accordance to our confidentiality and data privacy policies, which are available on our website and within the NQA Rules Related to Registration.

Logistics - What do I need to make sure I am ready?

As you would expect, remote auditing is heavily reliant on technology. There are a few simple logistical points you need to make sure of to be ready for your remote audit:

- A system which will allow an online conference call (with video where possible) such as GoTo Meeting, Teams, Google Hangouts or Skype;
- If you do not have access to a system like this, then your NQA Assessor will send you a meeting invitation via Skype;
- If online connectivity is not possible, the Assessor may ask you to send them information via email and follow up with a telephone call;
- Please ensure you are familiar with the technology prior to your audit to avoid unnecessary delays.

What do I need to make available for the remote audit?

1. Personnel

- a. The person responsible will need to be available for the entirety of the audit;
- b. Any key personnel will need to be available for the relevant parts of the audit. They can either dial in separately or from the same point as other personnel where possible;
- c. Leadership individuals will need to be available during the leadership part of the audit (if part of the audit plan) as well as the opening and closing meetings.

2. Documentation

- a. We will review as much of the management system as possible remotely. This can be done via screen share or by sending the information to your Assessor via email;
- b. Be aware of any information security processes you have internally.

3. Site tours

- a. For standards and certifications that require a site tour or specific processes to be followed on the “shop floor” where possible you should show the Assessor around using a webcam or video call from a mobile;
- b. If this is not possible due to technology, health and safety or the closure of a location, then this will be followed up on site in a subsequent special audit or at the next audit. This will be determined by your Assessor and will be based on your unique circumstances. This is also subject to the type of audit, your business activities and the standard against which you are certified.

What happens if connectivity doesn't work on the day?

The Assessor will try to continue with the audit wherever possible. If there are issues with connectivity during your remote audit, then your Assessor will attempt to complete the audit over the phone.

If this is the case, then be prepared to email over key documents for the Assessor to review and ensure you are located in an area of good signal / phone coverage.

Typical documents to email your Assessor include:

- Internal audit records
- Internal audit plan
- Management review minutes and actions
- Complaints log
- Corrective actions
- Improvement documentation
- Risk register
- Documentation supporting core business processes (if possible)

What happens if the remote audit cannot cover everything on my audit, or my audit is a stage 2 or recertification audit?

We will try to complete as much of the audit remotely as possible. Where we cannot fully verify the effectiveness of your management system and therefore are unable to complete your entire audit remotely (this is more likely on a recertification audit), then NQA will arrange to complete the onsite activities at a later date.

In these circumstances, NQA may choose to temporarily extend your certificate validity by a maximum of six (6) months subject to a successful remote audit. NQA will then follow this up with an on-site audit within the six (6) months and prior to the cert expiry to cover the remaining elements. Where possible NQA will utilise your existing audit duration for this.

Please note that all remote audits are subject to risk review by NQA. Previous performance of your management system may affect your suitability for a full remote audit.



TIMEFRAMES FOR PREPARATION

Minimum 2 weeks prior to audit start

You will receive a call from your Assessor to agree the logistics for the audit, the audit plan and timescales, and the personnel, records and evidence required.

Prior to start of audit

Prepare any documents and personnel in advance of the remote audit.

Submission of any documents to your NQA Assessor if agreed in prior call.

Day 1 of your audit - 9am

Conference call begins using technology as agreed in your call 2 weeks previously.



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