

Exam Preparation Guide

ISO 9001 INTERNAL AUDITOR

GENERAL

The objective of the “**PECB Certified ISO 9001 Internal Auditor**” exam is to ensure that the candidate has acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to perform a quality management system (QMS) internal audit by applying widely recognized audit principles, procedures, and techniques. The aim of the exam is to evaluate that the candidate possesses the knowledge and skills to plan and carry out internal audits in compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001 and based on the recommendations of ISO 19011 and other good audit practices.

The ISO 9001 Internal Auditor exam is intended for:

- Auditors seeking to perform and lead quality management system (QMS) internal audits
- Individuals responsible for improving the processes within an organization
- Managers or consultants seeking to master the QMS internal audit process
- Managers or consultants responsible for maintaining conformance with the requirements of ISO 9001
- Technical experts seeking to prepare for a QMS internal audit
- Expert advisors in quality management

The exam covers the following competency domains:

- **Domain 1:** Fundamental principles and concepts of the quality management system (QMS)
- **Domain 2:** Fundamental audit concepts and principles
- **Domain 3:** Preparing and conducting the ISO 9001 internal audit
- **Domain 4:** Managing the ISO 9001 internal audit program
- **Domain 5:** Preparing for the QMS certification audit

The content of the exam is divided as follows:

Domain 1: Fundamental principles and concepts of the quality management system (QMS)

Main objective: Ensure that the ISO 9001 Internal Auditor candidate understands and is able to interpret and illustrate the main concepts of a quality management system based on ISO 9001.

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to define the concepts of quality and quality management 2. Ability to understand and explain the operations of the ISO and the development of ISO 9001 3. Ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the quality management compliance requirements for an organization 4. Ability to comprehend understand the ISO 9001 structure, terms, and definitions which are specific to the quality management system standard 5. Ability to understand the concept of the risk-based thinking and how it affects the quality management system 6. Ability to understand the quality management tools and techniques. 7. Ability to explain and illustrate the main concepts of quality management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the ISO 9000 family of standards. 2. Knowledge of the importance of the good quality and consequences of poor quality of products and services 3. Knowledge of the main standards in quality management 4. Knowledge of the application of the seven ISO quality management principles. 5. Knowledge of laws, regulations, international and industry standards, contracts, market practices, internal policies, etc., an organization must comply with 6. Knowledge of the main concepts and terminology of ISO 9001 7. Knowledge of the process approach, and the concepts that it incorporates: the PDCA cycle and risk-based thinking 8. Knowledge of the principal characteristics of an integrated management system

Domain 2: Fundamental audit concepts and principles

Main objective: Ensure that the ISO 9001 Internal Auditor candidate understands, is able to interpret, and apply the main concepts and principles related to the QMS internal audit

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to distinguish between the accreditation bodies, certification bodies, personnel certification bodies, and training organizations 2. Ability to understand, explain, and illustrate the application of the audit principles in the context of a QMS internal audit 3. Ability to identify and judge situations that would discredit the professionalism of the internal auditor and violate the PECB Code of Ethics 4. Ability to identify and judge ethical issues considering the obligations to the audit client, auditee, law enforcement, and regulatory authorities 5. Ability to develop clear and concise audit objectives 6. Ability to determine and evaluate the level of materiality and apply the risk-based approach throughout the different stages of the QMS internal audit 7. Ability to judge the appropriate level of reasonable assurance needed for a specific ISO 9001 audit mission 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the certification process. 2. Knowledge of the main audit concepts and terminology as described in ISO 19011 3. Knowledge of the differences between first, second, and third party audits 4. Knowledge of the audit principles as defined by ISO 19011: integrity, fair presentation, due professional care, professional judgment, professional skepticism, confidentiality, independence, and risk-based approach 5. Knowledge of the professional responsibility of an internal auditor and the PECB Code of Ethics 6. Knowledge of the requirements for developing appropriate audit objectives 7. Knowledge of the evidence-based approach in an audit 8. Knowledge of the different types of evidence: physical, mathematical, confirmative, technical, analytical, documentary, and verbal 9. Knowledge of the application of risk-based approach in an audit and the different types of risks related to audit activities 10. Knowledge of the concept of materiality and its application to QMS audits 11. Knowledge of the concept of reasonable assurance and its application in audits

Domain 3: Preparing and conducting the ISO 9001 internal audit

Main objective: Ensure that the ISO 9001 Internal Auditor candidate has the ability to prepare and conduct a QMS internal audit based on the requirements of ISO 9001 and other good audit practices

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to use techniques for determining the context of an organization 2. Ability to define the organizational structure and to understand the responsibilities of various functions within an organization 3. Ability to understand and explain the steps and activities to prepare the QMS internal audit 4. Ability to understand and explain the roles and responsibilities of each audit team member and technical expert involved in the QMS internal audit 5. Ability to explain, illustrate, and apply the evidence-based approach in the context of an ISO 9001 internal audit 6. Ability to explain and compare the types and characteristics of audit evidences 7. Ability to conduct a QMS internal audit by taking into account the documentation review conditions and criteria 8. Ability to explain, illustrate, and apply statistical techniques and main audit sampling methods 9. Ability to gather appropriate evidence from the available sources of information during the internal audit and evaluate it objectively. 10. Ability to apply audit methods 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the approaches and techniques used for determining the context of the organization 2. Knowledge of the main responsibilities of the audit team leader, audit team members, and technical experts involved in the QMS internal audit 3. Knowledge of the main responsibilities of other functions within the organization 4. Knowledge of the preparation process of an audit plan 5. Knowledge of the objectives and the content of the opening meeting of an internal audit 6. Knowledge of the different types of audit evidence. 7. Knowledge of the main factors that influence the evidence reliability 8. Knowledge of the requirements for documented information as stated in ISO 9001 9. Knowledge of the best communication practices during an internal audit 10. Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of guides and observers during an audit 11. Knowledge of the conflict resolution techniques 12. Knowledge of the evidence collection procedures: observation, documentation review, interviews, analysis, and technical verification 13. Knowledge of evidence analysis procedures: corroboration and evaluation 14. Knowledge of the main audit sampling methods and their characteristics 15. Knowledge of the types and the application of the audit methods

Domain 4: Managing the ISO 9001 internal audit program

Main objective: Ensure that the ISO 9001 Internal Auditor candidate understands how to establish and manage the QMS internal audit program

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to understand and explain the establishment of an internal audit program and the application of the PDCA cycle 2. Ability to understand and explain the implementation of internal audit program 3. Ability to plan the internal audit activities 4. Ability to understand and explain the importance of maintaining the independence, objectivity, and impartiality of the internal audit function 5. Ability to draft and issue nonconformity reports 6. Ability to develop complete, accurate, and concise audit reports 7. Ability to understand the evaluation of the efficiency of the internal audit program by monitoring the performance of each audit team member 8. Ability to demonstrate the application of the personal attributes and behaviors associated with professional auditors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the application of the PDCA cycle in the management of an internal audit program 2. Knowledge of the requirements, guidelines, and best practices regarding audit resources, procedures, and policies 3. Knowledge of the main internal audit services and activities 4. Knowledge of the types of tools used by professional auditors 5. Knowledge of the requirements, guidelines, and best practices regarding the management and maintenance of the audit program records 6. Knowledge of the application of the concept of continual improvement to the management of an internal audit program 7. Knowledge of the particularities of the implementation and management of an internal audit program 8. Knowledge of the considerations for nonconformity reports 9. Knowledge of the elements that need to be included in an audit report 10. Knowledge of the competency concept and its application to internal auditors 11. Knowledge of the personal attributes and behaviors of a professional internal auditor

Domain 5: Preparing for the QMS certification audit

Main objective: Ensure that the ISO 9001 Internal Auditor candidate is able to prepare and assist an organization in the formal certification process of the QMS

Competencies	Knowledge statements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to understand the main steps, processes, and activities related to an ISO 9001 certification audit 2. Ability to understand, explain, and illustrate the evidence-based approach in the QMS audit 3. Ability to counsel an organization to identify and select a certification body that meets their needs 4. Ability to review the readiness of an organization for an ISO 9001 certification audit 5. Ability to coach and prepare an organization's personnel for an ISO 9001 certification audit 6. Ability to discuss the audit findings and conclusions with external auditors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of the evidence-based approach in the QMS certification audit 2. Knowledge of the differences between stage 1 and stage 2 audit 3. Knowledge of stage 1 audit requirements, steps, and activities 4. Knowledge of the documentation review criteria. 5. Knowledge of stage 2 audit requirements, steps, and activities 6. Knowledge of follow-up audit requirements, steps, and activities 7. Knowledge of the requirements, guidelines, and best practices to develop action plans following an ISO 9001 certification audit

Based on the above mentioned domains and their relevance, 7 questions are included in the exam, as summarized in the following table:

		Level of Understanding (Cognitive/Taxonomy) Required		Number of questions per competency domain	% of test devoted to each competency domain	Number of points per competency domain	% of points per competency domain	
		Questions that measure comprehension, application and analysis	Questions that measure synthesis and evaluation					
Competency domains	Fundamental principles and concepts of a quality management system (QMS)	5	X	1	14.28	5	10	
	Fundamental audit concepts and principles	5	X	2	28.58	10	20	
		5						X
	Preparing and conducting an ISO 9001 internal audit	10		X	2	28.58	20	40
		10	X					
	Managing an ISO 9001 internal audit program	10	X		1	14.28	10	20
	Preparing for a QMS certification audit	5		X	1	14.28	5	10
	Total points	50						
	Number of questions per level of understanding			4	3			
	% of test devoted to each level of understanding (cognitive/taxonomy)			57.14	42.86			

The passing score is **70%**.

After successfully passing the exam, candidates will be able to apply for the “PECB Certified ISO 9001 Internal Auditor” credential, depending on their level of experience.

TAKE THE EXAM

Candidates will be required to arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the certification exam. Candidates arriving late will not be given additional time to compensate for the late arrival and may be denied entry to the exam.

All candidates are required to present a valid identity card such as a national ID card, driver's license, or passport to the invigilator.

The exam duration is two hours. Non-native speakers will receive an additional 20 minutes.

The exam contains essay type questions: This type of format was selected as a means of determining whether an examinee can clearly answer training-related questions, by assessing problem-solving techniques, and formulating arguments supported with reasoning and evidence. The exam is set to be "open book," and does not measure the recall of data or information. The examination evaluates the candidate's comprehension, application and analyzing skills. Therefore, candidates will have to justify their answers by providing concrete explanations as to demonstrate that they have been capable of understanding the training concepts. At the end of this document, you will find samples of exam questions and potential answers.

As the exam is "open book," candidates are authorized to use:

- A copy of the **ISO 9001** standard
- Course notes from the Participant Handout
- Any personal notes made by the candidate during the training course
- A hard copy dictionary

The use of electronic devices, such as laptops, smartphones, etc., is not allowed.

Any attempts to copy, collude or otherwise cheat during the exam will automatically lead to the failure of the exam.

PECB exams are available in English. For availability of the exam in a language other than English, please contact examination@pecb.com.

Receive Your Exam Results

Results will be communicated via email within a period of six to eight weeks from the exam date. The candidate will be provided with only two possible exam results: pass or fail, rather than an exact grade.

In case of exam failure, the results will be accompanied with the list of domains in which the candidate has failed to fully answer the question(s). This can help the candidate better prepare for a retake exam. Candidates who disagree with the exam results may file a complaint by writing to examination@pecb.com.

Exam Retake Policy

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate may retake an exam. However, there are some limitations in terms of the allowed time frame in between exam retakes, such as:

- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the first attempt, the candidate must wait 15 days (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (first retake). The retake fee applies.

Note: Candidates who have completed the full training course but failed the written exam are eligible to retake the exam once for free within a 12-month period from the initial date of the exam.

- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the second attempt, the candidate must wait three months (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (second retake). The retake fee applies.
- If a candidate does not pass the exam on the third attempt, the candidate must wait six months (from the initial date of the exam) for the next attempt (third retake). The retake fee applies.
- After the fourth attempt, a waiting period of 12 months from the last session date is required, in order for the candidate to retake the same exam. The regular fee applies.

For the candidates that fail the exam in the second retake, PECB recommends to attend an official training course in order to be better prepared for the exam.

To arrange exam retakes (date, time, place, costs), the candidate needs to contact the PECB partner who has initially organized the training course session.

Closing a Case

If a candidate does not apply for the certificate within three years, their case will be closed. Even though the certification period expires, the candidate has the right to reopen their case. However, PECB will no longer be responsible for any changes regarding the conditions, standards, policies, candidate handbook, or exam preparation guide that were applicable before the case was closed. A candidate requesting their case to reopen must do so in writing and pay the required fees.

Exam Security

A significant component of a successful and respected professional certification credential is maintaining the security and confidentiality of the examination. PECB relies upon the ethical behavior of certificate holders and applicants to maintain the security and confidentiality of PECB examinations. When someone who holds PECB credentials reveals information about PECB examination content, he or she violates the PECB Code of Ethics. PECB will take action against individuals who violate PECB Policies and the Code of Ethics. Actions taken may include permanently barring individuals from pursuing PECB credentials and revoking certifications from those who have been awarded the credential. PECB will also pursue legal action against individuals or organizations who infringe upon its copyrights, proprietary rights, and intellectual property.

SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Question 1:

Provide an action plan with at least two actions that would be acceptable to ensure conformity to the requirements of the respective clause of ISO 9001.

Clause 5.5.2 Communication of the quality policy

Possible answer:

- *Organize awareness sessions to communicate the quality policy and its importance to all employees within the organization*
- *Develop a communication strategy and maintain it as documented information*

Question 2:

Having received a corrective action plan for review, you need to evaluate the adequacy of the proposed corrective actions. If you agree with the proposed corrective actions, explain why. If you disagree with them, explain why and propose an alternative that you consider as more adequate.

- *Nonconformity: A nonconformity has been issued because the Human Resources department was not aware of a procedure that requires them to record the education, training, and experience of all employees*
- *Corrective action: Inform (Timeframe: immediately) and train (Timeframe: within six months) the Human Resources team with regard to this procedure and require each employee of the department to follow it*

Possible answer:

I agree with the proposed corrective action. This solves the problem regarding the lack of awareness about the existence of the procedure. In order to verify the validity and effectiveness of this corrective action and to ensure that the procedure is being followed appropriately, I would select a sample during the next internal audit and evaluate it objectively. to find out whether the procedure is being followed as required.

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