

Improved guidelines on implementing ISO 9001 in education sector

by **Rafael A. de Arrascaeta Farrando**

In May 2007, ISO published updated guidelines to facilitate the implementation of quality management systems in educational organizations: IWA 2:2007, *Quality management systems – Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001:2000 in education*.

A conventional view would describe education as the mere transmission of knowledge. But that concept is changing rapidly, as it must. A more appropriate 21st century credo would be: “Education is the construction of sustainable integration processes based on individual needs and capacities.”

Failing to meet this need for a new mindset regarding education could make our communities unlivable within a generation, as vast sectors of the population find themselves excluded from full participation in civil society.

The alternative could be a future gravely undermined by failure to invest in the best available education. Police and fences will not be enough to protect us if our societies lack shared ethics built upon universal education. Effective implementation of ISO 9001 qual-

ity standards by educational institutions can play a key role in addressing this challenge.

The past as guide

As long ago as the late 19th century, integration of immigrants into the educational system was the cornerstone of broader social assimilation. Today’s needs are not substantially changed. We must now undertake to employ education as a central tool in the integration of a new kind of immigrants: educationally disadvantaged.



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Expressed in somewhat crass terms, the message to actors in the educational marketplace might be: if social responsibility or quality principles are not reason enough to improve your processes, then do it out of fear.

Good news and bad

Most educational organizations take their responsibilities seriously as they pursue competent educators, appropriate planning and curricula, the best available methodologies and processes, and outstanding materials and infrastructure.

Nonetheless, educational organizations often fail to provide an adequate educational experience, or ultimately do not satisfy “learner expectations”.

This apparent paradox is possible because improving individual elements does not guarantee a programme’s success if corresponding synergies are absent. Implementation of a quality management system (QMS) for the educational organization can create the required synergies.

Why adopt ISO 9001:2000?

The ISO 9000 family is an international reference for quality management requirements in business-to-business dealings and has earned a worldwide reputation as a “generic management system standard”.

Generic means that the same standards can be applied to any organization and any product. In this context, the term “product” may include services in any sector, business enterprises, public administration, or governmental entity. No matter what the organization is or does, the ISO 9000 family spells out essential features of a quality management system.

Management system refers to a systematic approach to managing processes and/or activities, people, resources and infrastructure.

Quality management refers to activities aimed at meeting customer demands and applicable regulatory requirements, as well as efforts to continually improve the organization’s performance. Included here are steps taken to minimize the effects of product deficiencies and to continually improve product performance.

ISO 9001:2000 defines minimum requirements for a QMS. The standard specifies activities that need to be considered during implementation of the system. The requirements are applicable to all organizations. Continual improvement of the organization’s quality management system is a further requirement of the standard.

Why do we need IWA 2?

ISO 9001:2000 the best option for any organization – including educational institutions – seeking to establish

What is an IWA?

An International Workshop Agreement (IWA) is one of several ISO alternatives to International Standards for cases where swift development and publication takes priority. Compared to the usual ISO process of developing International Standards through its technical committee structure, IWAs are developed in open workshops and organized by a national standards institute. The documents are approved by consensus among participants in these workshops.

a QMS that provides confidence in the conformity of a product or service to specified requirements. But as a generic standard, the Product Realization section of ISO 9001 must be tailored to meet specific operational needs. Some educational organizations have run into difficulties adapting ISO 9001 requirements to their needs, and IWA 2 has been developed to address these issues

The guidelines contained in IWA 2:2007 do not add, change or otherwise modify the requirements of ISO 9001:2000, and are not intended for use in contracts for conformity assessment nor for certification.

Added value from IWA 2:2007

IWA 2:2007 adds value to a QMS based on ISO 9001:2000 for educational institutions in several ways:

IWA 2 was written by education experts for educational professionals. It uses terminology broadly accepted in the sector, including: educational organization, educational services, education provider, learner, education design, education delivery, assessment of learning, and more.

The eight quality management principles listed in ISO 9000:2005 are described using education sector language.

Four additional principles are suggested to sustain success in educational organizations:

- creating learner value;
- focusing on social value;
- agility;
- autonomy.

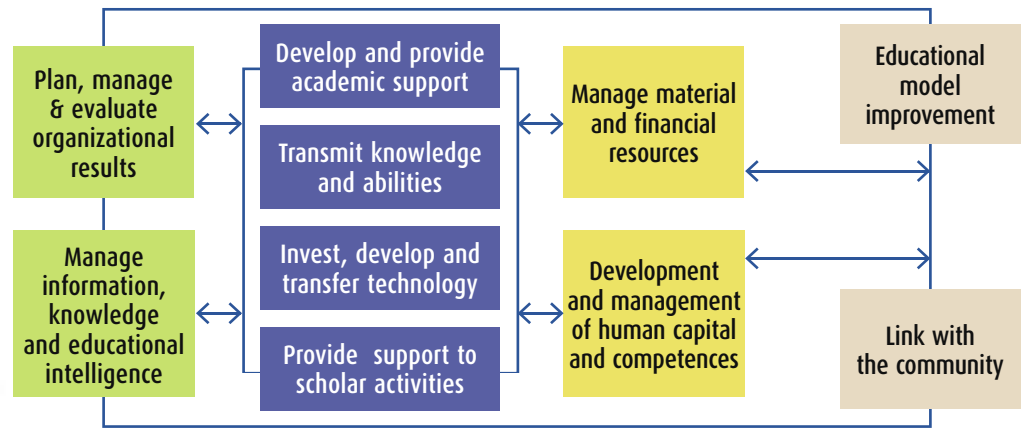
The Requirement chapters of ISO 9001:2000 are amended using educational sector language:

- quality management system in the educational organization;
- management responsibility;
- resource management;
- realization;
- measurement, analysis and improvement.

Each corresponding chapter of IWA 2:2007 contains practical recommendations for its application in an educational organization. →

ISO 9001:2000 QMS, process model for a university

Example of an ISO 9001:2000 process model for a university, developed by the author using IWA 2:2007 as a guide.



→ IWA 2:2007 includes two practical annexes:

- *Annex A* is a self-assessment for educational organizations, with instructions for application, scoring and results interpretation.
- *Annex B* contains examples of: most common educational processes, suggested measures for educational processes, educational organization records, frequent applicable tools for analysis, and improvement of the educational processes

The first IWA 2 document was approved at a workshop held in Acapulco, Mexico in October 2002; the current IWA 2:2007 (revision to IWA 2:2003) was approved at a workshop held in Busan, Korea in November 2006.

The main changes of were to make it a more friendly and useful document to people working in the education sector, as described above. •





Managing with management system standards

The author shows through examples drawn from his experience with ExxonMobil how management system standards can be used to achieve a superior performance through effective leadership, full integration across an organization and effective assessment by line managers.

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by **John D. Symonds**

A management system in an organization is like the nervous system in the human body. They both transmit instructions from the controlling mind to the various component parts, which undertake well rehearsed, coordinated actions in response. Neither has to be good, just deployed well enough for survival. But for outstanding performance, average is not enough.

Standards have to be set and achieved.

The purpose of this article is to show how management system standards can be used to achieve a superior performance, provided there is effective leadership, full integration across an organization and effective monitoring and assessment. This final point is important, given society's understandable desire for reassurance that the system is delivering the expected performance.

Leadership role in setting and achieving standards

The role of management commitment is well recognised as a primary requirement in standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. But how many times have we heard workers

Photo: ExxonMobil

