

THE 2026 EVOLUTION

A Strategic Preview of the ISO 9001 Revision

What quality managers, operations directors, and business owners need to know before September 2026 — and what to do about it now.

ISO 9001:2026	Climate Change	2026 Transition	Free Supplement
Strategy Guide	Already In Force	Sept 2029 Deadline	Included in All Packs

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Quality Managers and Management Representatives preparing for the 2026 changes, Operations Directors evaluating the impact on supply chain owners currently certified to ISO 9001:2015 or planning for the future, and those who want to understand the 2026 changes without wading through the full standard.

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Introduction — A Decade in the Making

ISO 9001:2015 was a significant revision. It introduced risk-based thinking, replaced prescriptive requirements with outcome-focused ones, and brought quality management into alignment with modern business reality. For a decade, it has been the global benchmark for quality management systems — with over one million organisations certified worldwide.

ISO 9001:2026 is not a revolution. It is an evolutionary update — targeted, proportionate, and designed to address three realities that have emerged since 2015: the growing importance of climate considerations in organisational context, the need for explicit quality culture and ethical behaviour, and the structural refinement of how risks and opportunities are managed.

For most organisations, the transition will be manageable — provided they understand what is actually changing, what is not, and what needs to be done before their next certification audit.

ISO 9001:2026 does not rebuild your quality system. It refines it. Organisations with a 2015 system have a small number of targeted additions to their system. Organisations with a paper-only 2015 system face the same challenge they always have: making the system more visible.

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Revision Timeline — What to Expect and When

Date	Milestone	Action Required
Feb 2024 ✓ DONE	Climate change amendment (Amd 1:2024) in force	Update Clause 4.1/4.2 context analysis NOW — already being checked in audits
Dec 2025 ✓ DONE	Draft International Standard approved (97% approval rate)	Monitor — no action required
Jun 2026	Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) expected	Review final requirements when published
Sept 2026	ISO 9001:2026 published	Begin planned transition review and update programme
Sept 2026	3-year transition period begins	No emergency — implement systematically and thoroughly
Sept 2029	Transition deadline — all certificates must be on 2026	Full certification audit against ISO 9001:2026 required

Your ISO 9001:2015 certification remains fully valid until September 2029. There is no need to rush — but the climate change assessment is the exception. That is already in force.

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Pillar 1 — Climate Change & Sustainability

ired Now

ISO 9001:2015/Amd 1:2024 came into force in February 2024. for this in scheduled surveillance and recertification audits. This requirement that many organisations have not yet addressed.

What Changed

Amendment 1:2024 added specific requirements to two clauses:

- Clause 4.1 now requires organisations to determine whether climate change is a relevant external issue for their context.
- Clause 4.2 adds a note that relevant interested parties may have climate-related requirements or expectations.

What This Means in Practice

The requirement is not to become a climate activist or conduct complex carbon modelling. It is to make a considered, documented assessment of whether climate change affects your organisation — and to record that assessment, whatever the conclusion.

An organisation that concludes climate change is not relevant to its scope is fully compliant — provided it has documented why it reached that conclusion. An organisation that has simply not considered the question at all is non-compliant, regardless of its actual climate exposure.

The Fix — What to Add to Your QMS

Add a climate change assessment section to your context analysis document (the document covering Clause 4.1). It should cover:

- Whether climate change is relevant to your operating context
- The basis for your assessment
- Whether any interested parties have climate-related requirements
- The date of assessment and responsible reviewer
- The review frequency (typically at each management review)

All NuCo QMS packs include a FREE ISO 9001:2026 Transitional climate change assessment text for your context analysis document.

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Pillar 2 — Quality Culture & Ethical Behaviour

What Changed

ISO 9001:2026 Clause 5.1.1 adds an explicit requirement for top management to promote a quality culture and ethical behaviour throughout the organisation, with demonstrable evidence of how this is being done.

What This Means in Practice

Quality culture has always been implicit in ISO 9001 — the 2026 revision makes it explicit. Auditors will look for evidence that leadership is actively creating an environment where quality is a genuine value, not a compliance exercise.

Evidence auditors will look for includes:

- Quality Policy communicated and understood at all levels
- Personnel awareness of their contribution to quality objectives
- An environment where quality concerns can be raised without fear
- Quality culture reviewed at management review
- Behaviours that support quality recognised and reinforced

The Fix — What to Add to Your QMS

- Add a quality culture and ethical behaviour paragraph to your Quality Policy document
- Add "Quality culture and ethical behaviour" as a standing management review agenda item
- Ensure personnel awareness records demonstrate genuine understanding, not just signatures

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Pillar 3 — Supply Chain Resilience (Clause 8.4)

Clause 8.4 (Control of Externally Provided Processes, Products and Services) is unchanged in the ISO 9001:2026 revision in terms of its core requirements. However, the expanded Annex A guidance provides significantly more direction on how organisations should think about supply chain risk — particularly relevant for manufacturing, engineering, and global procurement businesses.

What Progressive Organisations Are Doing

The most resilient organisations are using the 2026 transition as an opportunity to strengthen their supplier control frameworks beyond minimum compliance. This includes:

- Risk-stratifying suppliers by criticality, single-source dependency, and geographic exposure
- Moving from reactive supplier monitoring to proactive performance tracking
- Documenting supplier capability not just at approval, but continuously through the relationship
- Building climate-related supply chain risk into Clause 4.1 and 8.4 considerations
- Aligning purchasing information to clearly defined acceptance criteria

Clause 8.4 is frequently the weakest area in certified QMS systems. Supplier monitoring is often perfunctory. The 2026 revision — while not explicitly demanding more, signals an auditing community that will scrutinise supply chain risk. Addressing this is before the transition audit, not during it.

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Pillar 4 — Risks & Opportunities — Structural Alignment

What Changed

ISO 9001:2026 restructures Clause 6.1 into two explicit sub-clauses:

- Clause 6.1.2 — Actions to address risks
- Clause 6.1.3 — Actions to address opportunities

What This Means in Practice

This is primarily a structural clarification. The substantive requirement — to identify and address both risks and opportunities — is unchanged. For organisations with a well-maintained risk register that already separates risks from opportunities, the transition is a straightforward relabelling exercise.

For organisations whose risk documentation treats risks and opportunities as a single undifferentiated list, more restructuring is needed. This is an opportunity to review the quality of risk thinking, not just the document structure.

The Fix

- Relabel Risk Register sections: "6.1.2 — Risks" and "6.1.3 — Opportunities"
- Add a note to your Risk & Opportunity Management procedure referencing the sub-clause split
- Review quality of risk content — not just structure

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Gap Analysis — Initial Steps for Quality Managers

The following gap analysis framework provides an initial assessment structure for quality managers beginning their ISO 9001:2026 transition planning.

Requirement	Current State	Gap?	Priority
Climate change assessed (Cl. 4.1/4.2)	Document shows explicit assessment and conclusion	Yes / No	IMMEDIATE
Quality Policy communicates culture & ethics (Cl. 5.1.1)	Policy includes quality culture statement	Yes / No	Before 2026
Management review includes climate & culture agenda items	Standing agenda items defined in template	Yes / No	Before 2026
Risks and opportunities documented separately (Cl. 6.1.2 / 6.1.3)	Risk register has distinct Risks and Opportunities sections	Yes / No	Before 2026
Supplier monitoring active and evidenced (Cl. 8.4)	Performance records exist beyond initial approval	Yes / No	Ongoing
Personnel awareness genuinely demonstrated (Cl. 7.3)	Records show understanding, not just signatures	Yes / No	Ongoing

This table is a starting point. A full gap analysis should be conducted against the complete ISO 9001:2026 standard once the FDIS is published in June 2026.

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Preparation Roadmap

The following roadmap integrates 2026 readiness into your current 2015 system without disrupting certification status or operational effectiveness.

Address the climate change amendment. This is the only assessment to your context analysis document. Add the revision template. Done in under an hour with the NuCo Transition Support

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Prepare for the FDIS publication in June 2026. Add quality culture to Quality Policy. Restructure your Risk Register to separate 6 monitoring evidence quality.

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Review the published ISO 9001:2026 standard against your context specifically against the 2026 requirements. Update all documents. Prepare evidence pack for Stage 1 audit against 2026.

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Schedule recertification audit against ISO 9001:2026 with your time — certification bodies will be busy as the deadline approaches. There will have more auditor availability and less time pressure.

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How NuCo Systems Can Help

NuCo Systems builds lean, practical ISO 9001 quality management systems for real-world businesses. Built from 30+ years of combined experience across manufacturing, engineering, supply chain, and product development in the UK, Taiwan, and China.

Ready-Made Packs	Bespoke Systems	Configured Packs
Complete ISO 9001:2015 QMS pack — 35 or 42 documents. Audit-ready from day one. Includes FREE 2026 Transition Supplement.	Custom procedures built around your specific workflows, suppliers, and industry. From £299.	Your existing NuCo pack configured with your logo, terminology, and processes. From £299.
<p style="text-align: center;">Pack 1 from £49 Pack 2 from £79</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From £299</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From £299</p>

Ready to Get Ahead of the 2026 Transition?

Download a ready-made pack, commission a bespoke system, or contact us for a customised gap analysis and transition plan tailored to your business.

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This pamphlet reflects confirmed information from the approved ISO 9001:2026 Draft International Standard (December 2025) and Amendment 1:2024. Content will be updated upon final publication of ISO 9001:2026 (target September 2026). © 2026 NuCo Systems. All rights reserved.