

Course Specification

Internal Environmental Management System
(EMS) Auditor
v3.0



Contents

1. ABOUT US	3
2. BACKGROUND	3
3. COURSE DURATION	3
4. WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?	3
5. MATERIALS AND CERTIFICATION	4
6. ASSESSMENT	4
7. TRAINER REQUIREMENTS	5
8. LEARNING OUTCOMES	5
9. PROGRESSION AFTER THIS COURSE	11
10. CONTACT US	11

1. ABOUT US

IEMA is the membership body for more than 21,000 environment and sustainability professionals worldwide. We support individuals and organisations in setting and achieving globally recognised standards for sustainable practice, in turn driving the development and uptake of sustainability skills.

We add value for our members by providing the knowledge, connections and recognition necessary to lead change within organisations at all levels.

We are independent and international. We apply the combined expertise of our members to provide evidence and influence decision-making, working towards our vision of transforming the world to sustainability.

2. BACKGROUND

The Internal Environmental Management System (EMS) Auditor course has been developed to meet the demand for employees with auditing knowledge. The course content has been structured in accordance with the guidance on auditing principles and practices in ISO 19011 and in line with ISO 14001:2015; therefore it will be of particular use to those individuals responsible for the effectiveness and continual improvement of their organisation's EMS.

For those organisations planning to certify or register their EMS against a formal EMS standard, such as ISO 14001, training of in-house employees offers potential benefits. ISO 17021 Part 1:2015, the standard establishing requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems, stipulates that external audits of management systems must include an assessment of internal auditing arrangements. This applies at initial certification and during subsequent external surveillance auditing.

Having competent internal auditors is key to organisation's ability to conduct effective audits, to satisfy the requirements of ISO 14001. Effective audits add value, not only by meeting these expectations, but also providing the organisation, and potentially its stakeholders, with confidence that its EMS is delivering continual improvement.

This course offers real benefit to the learner's organisation because it will equip the learner with the ability to participate in an audit of the organisation's EMS to establish:

- Whether it is efficient and effective;
- Whether it delivers the organisation's objectives and adequately addresses its risks and opportunities, environmental aspects & compliance obligations;
- Whether it is consistent with the commitments in the organisation's environmental policy;
- Whether and how the EMS can be improved.

3. COURSE DURATION

The Guided Learning Hours for the Internal EMS Auditor course is a minimum of 24 hours (excluding breaks and assessment); which can include pre-course reading, or guided homework as well as teaching delivery. This will normally be delivered over a period of three consecutive days, but can be split over a reasonable period, with IEMA approval.

When courses are delivered remotely, the daily schedules shall include adequate breaks, to minimise attendee fatigue and encourage effective participation.

4. WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

The course is aimed at those individuals within organisations who are responsible for the auditing of an EMS. It is designed to equip individuals with a working understanding of the EMS audit process and how it should be applied to their own organisation's EMS. The course will be practical and interactive to facilitate the learner's learning experience and allow them to exercise their newly acquired skills.

Learners are not expected to possess a detailed level of knowledge of EMS and auditing prior to the course but should have basic knowledge of environmental issues relevant to the company.

As the audience for this course may vary widely, the course provider shall provide relevant pre-course work and/or information to each learner, to ensure the learner is aware of

the standards required on the course, and to try to ensure no one is at a disadvantage during the course.

Typically, learners should be required to familiarise themselves with ISO 14001 prior to attending the course. This may be achieved by reading the standard, or carrying out pre-course exercises requiring the use of the standard.

After successful course completion, learners will be considered able to undertake internal environmental audits. Learners will have developed sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to lead environmental audits, although they may benefit from gaining experience of auditing before leading larger audit teams.

5. MATERIALS AND CERTIFICATION

There are no IEMA materials available for this course and course providers must develop materials for approval by IEMA. Course providers must ensure that their materials are maintained adequately to take account of evolving environmental and related sustainability issues, environmental management practices and techniques for auditing.

When developing course materials, the Internal Audit Process should be explained to the learners in a practical way, coupled with examples of the obstacles and issues arising at each stage of the audit process. This approach will give the learners 'hands-on' experience in conducting an audit, which they can then apply successfully to their organisation's EMS.

If the course is being delivered internally for an organisation, rather than as a public course, whenever possible, exercises should use systems and background of the host organisation (see Section 8 for details of requirements).

The course provider is also encouraged to allow learners to learn from each other's experiences, for example by drawing on the experiences of learners who:

- Have been involved in other forms of audits, or
- Have assisted or observed other audits – for example accompanying external auditors during an audit of their organisation's management system, or

- Have completed environmental aspect and impact analyses of their organisations

NOTE: A practical approach to this course is regarded by IEMA as essential in preparing the learner for the role of an Internal EMS Auditor.

This course is an IEMA Certified course and certificates are provided by IEMA to learners who have successfully completed the course. Dual branding of certificates to include training partner logos is available as an option.

Please contact training@iema.net for further details.

6. ASSESSMENT

The course provider should develop a methodology for assessing learners and include this in their submission to IEMA for approval. The course provider has the option of providing an examination at the end of the course, and/or a post course project, which is evaluated.

Examination

The option of the written examination will assess how learners have retained and understood the subject matter of the course. The exam, based on the contents of the course syllabus, should be approximately 1 - 1.5 hours in duration and should normally comprise at least two parts:

- a) Multiple choice or short answer questions.
- b) Written essay style questions.

The exam should be a test of understanding, not memory, and may be either:

- 'open book' under exam conditions (learners may have the supplied course notes, standards and their own course notes); or
- 'closed book' (learners may have only the standards).

The course provider should mark the exam papers. An IEMA external assessor will monitor marking and results during IEMA quality assurance visits.

Post Course Project

The option of the post course project will be based on a learner undertaking and reporting on an internal audit for their own organisation, building on the knowledge gained during the course. Alternatively, the project may be based on an organisation that the course provider knows of, and allocates to the individual.

Assistance should be given to the learners on what to include in the project report through the use of a pro-forma document containing key headings on what is expected in the finished project. The finished project must be completed within 30 days of the end of the course and should include:

- Brief description of the organisation with particular focus on its context and interested parties in relation to the EMS; risks and opportunities; pertinent aspects and impacts and relevant compliance obligations. It should include a copy of the organisation's environmental policy, related objectives and relevant compliance obligations.
- The context for the internal audit and links to any other relevant management systems
- Annotated organogram to show the roles and responsibilities of the internal audit team, top management, roles with EMS responsibilities and links to key organisational functions
- A timetabled internal audit plan with particular emphasis on the learner's audit responsibilities
- 2 examples of audit checklists and associated audit findings that the learner has been directly involved in
- 2 examples of nonconformance recording and procedure to follow these through to close out
- A section of an audit report that the learner has either compiled or has had input to

- A discourse on how the audit findings will be used to enhance the EMS and address issues of continual improvement

7. TRAINER REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the trainer requirements set out in the policy manual, *Guide to becoming an IEMA Training Centre*, trainers are required to be a Full Member of IEMA, or as a minimum have equivalent knowledge and experience that has been assessed against the IEMA Sustainability Skills Map at the managerial level.

Trainers must also have proven experience of internal auditing, evaluating environmental issues and participating in or managing an EMS.

8. LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are seven Learning Outcomes for this course which are as follows:

1. Understand the basics and background to EMS auditing
2. Understand and be able to describe the relationship and differences between a range of audit types
3. Understand the principles of auditing (BS EN ISO 19011)
4. Understand the internal audit process
5. Identify key compliance obligations with environment related content
6. Identify and explain environmental aspects/impacts and their significance; and evaluate their broader role in determination of organisational/business risks and opportunities, and the processes established to manage them
7. Be able to identify other sources of information and advice

The learning outcomes for the Internal EMS Auditor course are generic; therefore, course providers may weight sections appropriately to satisfy the needs of a particular audience. The course provider may submit one or more versions of the following courses for assessment:

- Generic Internal EMS Auditor course
- Internal EMS Auditor course for Quality, Health and Safety, or other management system professionals
- Internal EMS Auditor course for Environmental professionals

This choice allows the course provider to cater for a variety of audiences from different backgrounds. For example, quality professionals should receive a course based on the generic syllabus with the emphasis being placed on environmental aspects and impacts, whilst environmental professionals should receive a course where the emphasis should be placed on audit principles and processes.

If a course provider makes one course submission, they can deliver another tailored course at some future occasion as long as they submit to IEMA the new sections for assessment and explain the background of the target audience. By adopting a flexible approach to the course structure, a wide variety of individuals and organisations can be successfully catered for.

In-house courses

In-house courses may be of two kinds: a generic course from the course provider, or a course 'tailored' to the client's needs, using specific examples from the site(s) and systems.

Course providers delivering tailored in-house courses, must spend at least one day on-site assessing the organisation prior to the course beginning, looking at those specific client elements which will be incorporated into the course sequence (this one day is not intended to include any time required to change the course text).

Detailed assessment criteria and scope for each learning outcome are provided below.

Note 1: Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 are key components for those familiar with environmental issues but who have little or no auditing experience. On completion of these units a learner will have a clear understanding of the principles and practice of auditing, the internal audit process and the role and responsibilities of the internal auditor.

Note 2: Learning Outcome 5 only requires a brief overview.

Note 3: Learning Outcome 6 is a key component for those familiar with auditing but have limited environmental experience.

Note 4: The Learning Outcome Table is detailed. In developing and delivering their courses, training providers should consider how much detail is of benefit to the audience.

LEARNING OUTCOME (THE LEARNER WILL...)	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (THE LEARNER CAN...)	PRESCRIBED CONTENT (THE LEARNER WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH...)
1. Understand the basics and background to EMS auditing	<p>1.1 Explain the relevance of sustainability and environmental management to business practices and governance</p> <p>1.2 Explain the aims and objectives of EMS auditing as part of the overall EMS, as part of internal control, and as a key driver for continual improvement and compliance with obligations</p> <p>1.3 Describe the background and current practice of environmental management system (EMS) auditing from an organisational perspective</p>	<p>Relevance of sustainability and environmental management – societal expectations for sustainability, drivers for business, customer expectations, operational efficiency and cost, opportunities for innovation, relationship with business strategy</p> <p>Aims and objectives of EMS auditing – auditing gives assurance that the EMS is effective, important for business management and reassuring stakeholders. Importance of auditing in identifying opportunities for continual improvement and nonconformity against requirements, including EMS processes and compliance obligations</p> <p>Current practice of EMS auditing – Introduction to requirements of ISO 14001 and 19011. Relationship with external EMS auditing. Can be part of integrated management system auditing. Scope of audits and sampling to provide sufficient evidence. Role of remote methods</p>
2. Understand and be able to describe the relationship and differences between a range of audit types	<p>2.1 Explain the differences between the three levels of EMS auditing</p> <p>2.2 Explain the range of environmental audits which might comprise an internal audit programme</p> <p>2.3 Explain the EMS internal auditing requirements within the applicable management system standards, ISO 14001, and EMAS (for courses in the EU only)</p> <p>2.4 Explain the roles and responsibilities of the auditor, auditee and other key personnel</p> <p>2.5 Explain the relationship between the auditor and top management (and its delegated representative(s))</p>	<p>Three levels of EMS auditing - 1st party (internal and links to 3rd party); 2nd party; 3rd party audits. The emphasis should be on internal auditing, with references to the different approaches in 2nd and 3rd party auditing</p> <p>Range of environmental audits – including compliance (legal and other obligations); technical; single issue (e.g. energy), EMS elements and integrated management system audits</p> <p>Internal auditing requirements – focus on ISO 14001 clause 9.2 requirements for auditing the organisation’s own requirements as well as auditing against 14001, the audit programme and the role of internal audits in environmental governance and performance improvement.</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities – in addition to those involved in conducting individual audits, there are also responsibilities for managing the organisation’s overall arrangements for auditing (the audit programme), etc. Also roles in other audit types</p> <p>Top management – senior accountable persons who direct and control the organisation with responsibilities for leading, enabling and providing resources for performance management and compliance with obligations. Top management may delegate authority</p>

LEARNING OUTCOME (THE LEARNER WILL...)	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (THE LEARNER CAN...)	PRESCRIBED CONTENT (THE LEARNER WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH...)
3. Understand the principles of auditing (BS EN ISO 19011)	3.1 Describe the use of BS EN ISO 19011 ('Guidelines for management systems auditing') 3.2 Use appropriate terms, definitions and principles in BS EN ISO 19011 and ISO 14001 3.3 Explain the key audit stages 3.4 Describe why, and how to achieve, reliable audit findings and conclusions 3.5 Explain the purpose of reporting	Use of BS EN ISO 19011 – overview of 19011, including the links to QMS and other system audits (and IMS); and EMS Certification requirements relating to the internal audit (in accordance with the latest national accreditation body, IAF and EAC guidelines) Terms, definitions and principles – key terms and definitions needed to be able to understand the subject, key principles related to auditing practices and processes (including independence, impartiality, objectivity) Key audit stages – the principle tasks in initiating, preparing for, conducting, reporting, completing and follow-up, explaining that organisations will develop their own practices Reliable audit findings – including traceable evidence, audit trails; raising nonconformities and positive findings Purpose of reporting – including reporting to Top Management on the implications of non-compliance with obligations, failure to meet objectives, etc.
4. Understand the internal audit process	4.1 Explain the importance of the audit programme in establish the arrangements for internal EMS auditing 4.2 Explain and apply the process for audit preparation , including initiation and planning using the case study as a basis 4.3 Explain and apply the process for conducting an internal audit using the case study as a basis 4.4 Describe and apply key auditor skills 4.5 Explain and apply the process of reporting	The importance of the audit programme – including establishing audit objectives, scope and appropriate audit criteria; developing an audit programme based on environmental and organisational risk; selecting audit methods, etc. Process for audit preparation – including initiating the audit; preparing and planning the audit; preparing and communicating an audit plan; developing audit checklist(s). Importance of a risk-based approach, to focus on key issues and ensuring an effective audit outcome. Process for conducting an internal audit – and protocols; carrying out the audit (opening meeting/ collecting relevant and reliable evidence/ developing useful findings/ prioritising issues/closing meeting). This includes the use of remote methods, their benefits and potential risks Key auditor skills – interviewing, listening, observing, reviewing documentation, analysing data/information Process of reporting – providing appropriate information on the effectiveness and

LEARNING OUTCOME (THE LEARNER WILL...)	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (THE LEARNER CAN...)	PRESCRIBED CONTENT (THE LEARNER WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH...)
		status of an EMS, including evidence and records, in order to facilitate decisions for changes and improvements; audit report content; completion and follow up to close out issues and non-conformities
5. Identify key compliance obligations with environment related content	<p>5.1 Explain the context of relevant national and international legislation</p> <p>5.2 Give an overview of the roles and responsibilities of relevant regulatory authorities and further details of any other relevant bodies responsible for enforcement of environmental law</p> <p>5.3 Understand what can comprise non-legislative 'compliance obligations', explain the circumstances under which such requirements become compliance obligations within the context of an EMS, and how to evaluate them</p> <p>5.4 Explain the legal aspects/responsibilities for auditors</p>	<p>Context - what is it, where has it come from, its societal purpose</p> <p>Relevant – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and energy • Planning Law (conditions and consents, Environmental Impact Assessment) • Air, Water, Land • Waste • Natural resources and resource efficiency • Biodiversity • Hazardous substances • Environmental assessment/review (if required) • Eco - labelling (if required) • Environmental permitting and associated climate obligations • Non-financial accounting and reporting (e.g. GHG, EPIs etc) <p>Relevant regulatory authorities – including all national/devolved environmental regulatory agencies; local government and regional planning authorities; environmental health and water regulatory authorities.</p> <p>Requirements – requirements that an organisation has to or chooses to comply with, including voluntary commitments (needs and expectations of interested parties) - customer/ supply chain requirements, tender and contractual requirements etc.</p> <p>Legal aspects/responsibilities for auditors – depending on audit type: certification auditors do not determine compliance, but evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's processes for delivering compliance. The role of first and second party auditors will depend on the organisation's auditing processes and responsibilities</p>
6. Identify and explain Environmental aspects/impacts and their significance; and evaluate their broader role in determination of organisational/business risks and	<p>6.1 Explain how to identify and evaluate the environmental context of an organisation</p> <p>6.2 Describe how to take account of the needs and expectations of interested parties, community relations, reputation</p>	<p>Environmental context – including potential impacts on the organisation of emerging mega-trends in a changing environment; and the importance of climate change (the ISO London Declaration – requirements to determine if climate change is a relevant issue), biodiversity and resource efficiency to organisations. Emphasise that these are strategic level issues.</p>

LEARNING OUTCOME (THE LEARNER WILL...)	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (THE LEARNER CAN...)	PRESCRIBED CONTENT (THE LEARNER WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH...)
<p>opportunities, and the processes established to manage them</p>	<p>6.3 Explain the relationship between context and the policy and objectives of the EMS</p> <p>6.4 Provide an overview of how to identify the environmental aspects/ impacts of an operation based on the activities, processes, products, services and materials to include a life cycle perspective</p> <p>6.5 Explain how to determine which aspects and impacts are significant using appropriate opportunity and risk assessment methods and tools</p> <p>6.6 Explain how significant aspects and impacts should be incorporated within the EMS as part of implementation and operation of the system e.g. through objectives, operational controls, emergency preparedness, etc.</p>	<p>Needs and expectations of interested parties - who they are, their relevance to the organisation and its compliance obligations</p> <p>Context and the policy and objectives – the need to consider context and interested parties in establishing policies, key commitments and objectives, and input to organisational strategy</p> <p>Identify the environmental aspects/impacts - including those arising from abnormal and emergency situations; to include all potential categories of aspects/impacts, ranging from pollutant emissions, climate change, energy and resource consumption, nuisance, biodiversity, etc. Address business consequences of aspects (risks and opportunities).</p> <p>Life cycle perspective – from design and materials specification, through production to final disposal after end use</p> <p>Risk assessment method and tools – including probability, failure mode and effect analysis etc; and taking account of environmental impact parameters such as spatial (local, regional, national) and temporal (past legacies, future liabilities). The potential to include other assessment criteria including compliance obligations, reputation, etc. Related risks and opportunities</p> <p>How significant environmental aspects and impacts should be incorporated – context and needs and expectations of interested parties are likely to influence significance, which in turn has implications for planning action and the development of EMS processes and through measures incorporated into the organisation’s wider business management processes (e.g. procurement, HR, design). The auditor should determine if operational controls and emergency preparedness measures are appropriate and applied effectively.</p>
<p>7. Be able to identify other sources of information and advice</p>	<p>7.1 Describe other sources of information and advice available to assist with the planning and delivery of internal audits; and to understand emerging and future developments</p>	<p>Other sources – including legislation, regulator guidance; environmental references such as technical publications, journals and on-line sources of help; sector specific guidance; trade associations; professional bodies; international protocols and schemes, registration schemes; other competent personnel; formal training and/or qualifications</p>

9. PROGRESSION AFTER THIS COURSE

All learners who have successfully completed this IEMA Certified course will gain credit towards an Application to the IEMA Environmental Auditor Registration. Those gaining more than 70% gain six points towards an Environmental Auditor Registration.

10. CONTACT US

IEMA, Fenland House, 15 B Hostmoor Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX

Tel: 01522 540 069

Email: training@iema.net

Web: www.iema.net/training

Created August 2024

Thinking about quality training that focuses on environmental and sustainable solutions? IEMA provides IEMA Certified and Approved courses through our Training Centres. Whether you're looking for individual training or global business solutions, our team is on hand to help.

[Visit iema.net/training](http://www.iema.net/training)

IEMA – Transforming the world to sustainability

© World Copyright 2024.

IEMA

IEMA