

Certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process

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1. Purpose

This document provides clear guidance for the reduction, suspension, or withdrawal of certification in line with the requirements of ISO17021-1:2015.

2. Scope

This document is to be used by all personnel carrying out decision making certification activities on behalf of KQC - Evaluator Certification Authority.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the KQC Quality Manual (M001) Annex 01 for the current definitions that relate to KQC Management System.

4. Responsibility and authority

Responsibility	
Director	The Director has ultimate responsibility for the certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process policy.
Operations and Technical Manager	The Operations and Technical Manager has the responsibility coordinating the implementation of the certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process
Authority	
Director	The Director has ultimate authority for the Certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process. This authority may be delegated to the Operations and Technical Manager as required.
Evaluator Certification Authority	Approved evaluators have ultimate authority for the implementation of the Certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process.

5. Reference documents

Document number	Document title
ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015	Conformity audit - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems Part 1: Requirements
ISO/IEC 17011: 2017	Conformity audit - Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity audit bodies
ISO 19011:2018	Guidelines for auditing management systems

6. Introduction

Following an unsuccessful audit of an Organizations management system to the relevant IEC/ISO standard, a previously issued certificate may be suspended, withdrawn, or reduced as described in more detail below.

6.1 Reducing Scope of Certification

Certification may be reduced to exclude the parts of scope not meeting the requirements, when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification, such as.

- failure to close non- conformities
- significant changes to the activities and operation of the organisation
- failure to comply with the requirements of the standard
- or at the request of the client

Any reduction of scope will be in line with the requirements of the IEC/ISO standard used for certification.

KQ Certification will inform the client, in writing, of any decision regarding a reduction in certification, outlining the justifications for the action being taken.

Following a reduction of scope or a change in the clients' activity or operation the audit programme for the client will be reviewed, and if appropriate, revised.

If KQ Certification decides the scope of certification should be reduced, KQ Certification will make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information (certified client register and website information), authorisation for use of marks, etc., in order to ensure it provides no indication that the certification is still valid.

The client may appeal against the reduction in scope through SP506 Complaints, Disputes, and appeals process.

KQ Certification will restore the reduced scope if the issue that has resulted in the reduced scope is satisfactorily resolved. Re-instatement, following reduction of the scope, will require reassessment of the Organization's systems. A review will be necessary to determine/verify the scope of assessment required.

6.2 Withdrawal of Certification

A certificate may be withdrawn due to continuing failure to comply with the certification process, or a breach of certification agreement. Decisions to withdraw a certificate, either partially or in total, will be made by KQ Certification on the basis of a recommendation made by the Evaluator Certification Authority.

Following a withdrawal of certification or a change in the clients' activity or operation the audit schedule for the client will be reviewed, and if appropriate, revised.

If the KQ Certification decides certification should be withdrawn, we will make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information (certified client register and website information), authorisation for use of marks, etc, in order to ensure it provides no indication that the certification is still valid.

The client may appeal against the withdrawal of certification through SP506 Complaints, Disputes, and appeals process.

If, following withdrawal of a certificate and subsequent removal from the certified client's lists, the client continues to use the marks in literature, KQ Certification may take appropriate legal action.

KQ Certification will restore the withdrawn certification if the issue that has resulted in the withdrawal is satisfactorily resolved. Re-instatement, following withdrawal of the certification, will require reassessment of the Organization’s systems. A review will be necessary to determine/verify the scope of assessment required.

6.3 Suspension of Certification

KQ Certification will suspend certification in cases when, for example:

- the client’s certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.
- the certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies.
- the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension.
- Breach of client responsibilities outlined in KQ Certification’s Certification agreement.

If KQ Certification decides certification should be suspended we will make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information (certified client register and website information), authorisation for use of marks, etc, in order to ensure it provides no indication that the certification is still valid.

The client will be informed of the decision in writing, stating the decision and reasons behind making it. The contractual requirements of returning certification (if required) and conditions for displaying marks and logos will be pointed out as well as the right of appeal through the KQC Complaints, disputes, and appeals process.

The client may appeal against the suspension of certification through SP506 Complaints, Disputes, and appeals.

If, following suspension a certificate and subsequent removal from the certified client’s lists, the client continues to use the marks in literature, KQ Certification may take appropriate legal action.

Under suspension, the client’s management system certification is temporarily invalid.

KQ Certification will restore the suspended certification if the issue that has resulted in the suspension is satisfactorily resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by KQ Certification shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

If certification is reinstated after suspension, KQ Certification will make all necessary modifications to formal certification documents, public information (certified client register and website information), authorisation for use of marks.

7. Records

Records in relation to the Certification scope reduction, suspension, or withdrawal process are maintained for a minimum of 7 years, in accordance with P023 control of records policy.

Revision Log		
Version #	Description of Change	Release Date
0.1	Initial draft	29 th January 2025
1.0	Initial release with update to titles	5 th February 2025
1.1	Updated for clarity	11 th February 2026