JOB DESCRIPTION

ESS Executive - ISO 9001:2026 Auditor

Engagement Model: Project-Based | Contract-Based | Internal Audit | Supplier Audit | Independent Audit Assignments | Certification-Body Assignments (where authorized)

Location: Global | USA | Vietnam | Hybrid, Remote & On-site Opportunities

About the Role

ESS Executive is seeking experienced ISO 9001:2026 Auditors to evaluate the conformity, implementation, effectiveness, and continual improvement of quality management systems (QMS) across diverse industries and organizational settings.

Auditors may support first-party internal audits, second-party supplier or customer audits, independent readiness assessments, transition audits, and - where separately qualified, approved, and assigned by an authorized certification body - third-party certification audits. The role requires strong standards knowledge, disciplined audit methodology, evidence-based judgment, professional skepticism, clear communication, and strict impartiality.

ISO 9001:2026 is the current edition of the ISO 9001 quality management systems standard. Audit work should be planned and performed using the current applicable standards, guidance, client requirements, accreditation rules, and certification-body procedures in force at the time of the assignment.

Areas of Expertise

We welcome auditors with strong capability in one or more of the following areas:

ISO 9001:2026 QMS Auditing

- Evaluate QMS conformity against ISO 9001:2026 requirements, approved organizational criteria, and applicable customer or contractual requirements.
- Assess whether processes are effectively implemented, controlled, monitored, and improved - not merely documented.
- Evaluate organizational context, leadership, planning, support, operations, performance evaluation, and improvement as an integrated management system.
- Assess quality culture, leadership accountability, risks and opportunities, customer focus, process performance, and continual improvement in line with the revised standard.

Audit Planning & Program Management

- Define audit objectives, scope, criteria, methods, sampling approaches, resources, duration, interfaces, and reporting requirements.
- Prepare risk-based audit plans that prioritize significant processes, changes, performance issues, customer risks, previous findings, and strategic priorities.
- Coordinate audit teams, process owners, site contacts, translators, technical experts, and remote participants where applicable.
- Manage audit schedules, evidence requests, opening and closing meetings, follow-up activities, and completion records.

Process-Based & Risk-Based Auditing

• Audit end-to-end processes, interactions, controls, responsibilities, inputs, outputs, measures, risks, and customer outcomes.

• Trace audit evidence across functions rather than relying only on clause-by-clause document checks.

• Use sampling and professional judgment appropriate to the organization, audit scope, process risk, and available evidence.

• Evaluate how risks and opportunities are identified, addressed, monitored, and linked to organizational objectives and QMS performance.

Evidence, Findings & Audit Conclusions

• Collect objective evidence through interviews, observation, records, data, process tracing, sampling, and document review.

• Distinguish clearly between conformity, nonconformity, observation, opportunity for improvement, and auditor commentary according to the applicable audit scheme.

• Write findings that are factual, traceable, understandable, and supported by specific evidence and audit criteria.

• Form balanced audit conclusions based on the totality of evidence, identified limitations, sampling constraints, and audit objectives.

Nonconformity & Corrective-Action Follow-Up

• Evaluate correction, root-cause analysis, corrective action, implementation evidence, and effectiveness verification.

• Assess whether responses address systemic causes rather than only isolated symptoms.

• Follow up open findings according to agreed timelines, audit-program requirements, or certification-body procedures.

• Escalate significant or recurring issues through the appropriate audit governance route.

Supplier, Multi-Site & Remote Auditing

• Conduct supplier and second-party audits covering QMS controls, process capability, quality performance, change management, and contractual requirements.

• Support multi-site audit planning using consistent criteria while considering site-specific risks, processes, and responsibilities.

• Use remote or hybrid audit methods when suitable, maintaining evidence quality, confidentiality, information security, and audit integrity.

• Coordinate cross-border and multilingual audits where competence, logistics, and client requirements allow.

Ideal Candidate Profile

Quality & Audit Experience

• Typically 7+ years of progressive experience in quality management, QMS, auditing, operations, process improvement, compliance, supplier quality, or related disciplines.

- Demonstrated hands-on experience conducting ISO 9001 internal, supplier, readiness, transition, or certification audits appropriate to the assignments sought.
- Strong practical knowledge of ISO 9001:2015 and current working knowledge of ISO 9001:2026, including transition implications for organizations and audit programs.
- Experience evaluating both conformity and management-system effectiveness across multiple functions and levels of an organization.
- Experience interviewing senior leaders, process owners, employees, suppliers, and technical specialists while maintaining professional objectivity.

Technical Competencies

- ISO 9001:2026 requirements and quality management principles
- ISO 19011 auditing principles, audit-program management, and auditor competence guidance
- Process-based and risk-based auditing
- Audit planning, sampling, interviewing, evidence evaluation, and report writing
- Nonconformity classification and corrective-action verification
- Process mapping, KPI evaluation, customer feedback, and performance analysis
- Root-cause analysis and continual improvement
- Documented information, change control, supplier controls, and operational quality assurance
- Remote and hybrid audit methods where appropriate

Auditor Behaviors & Professional Capabilities

- Integrity, fairness, confidentiality, independence, due professional care, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Strong listening, interviewing, analytical, observation, note-taking, and report-writing skills.
- Ability to challenge respectfully, test assumptions, and pursue evidence without becoming adversarial.
- Clear executive communication and confidence presenting findings to senior management and audit committees.
- Ability to manage time, audit trails, multiple sites, complex schedules, and difficult conversations.
- Cultural awareness and ability to work effectively across industries, geographies, organizational levels, and business environments.

Educational Background & Professional Credentials

- Bachelor's degree or higher in Quality Management, Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Operations Management, Business Administration, Supply Chain, Science, or a related discipline.
- ISO 9001 Lead Auditor or Auditor training from a recognized training provider is strongly preferred for lead-auditor assignments.
- Internal Auditor training may be acceptable for appropriately scoped first-party assignments, subject to client requirements and demonstrated competence.
- Credentials such as ASQ CQA, CQE, CMQ/OE, Lean Six Sigma, supplier-quality, or comparable professional certifications are advantageous where relevant.

• For third-party certification audits, the auditor must additionally meet the competence, sector-code, impartiality, approval, and authorization requirements of the relevant certification body and applicable accreditation scheme.

Key Audit Responsibilities

• Review audit briefs, previous reports, organization profiles, QMS documentation, performance data, risks, customer issues, changes, and relevant legal or contractual requirements before the audit.

• Prepare and communicate the audit plan, sampling approach, process sequence, interview schedule, and required records.

• Conduct opening meetings and confirm objectives, scope, criteria, communication channels, logistics, confidentiality, safety requirements, and escalation protocols.

• Interview personnel, observe activities, trace processes, examine records, test controls, and gather sufficient objective evidence.

• Evaluate QMS implementation and effectiveness against ISO 9001:2026 and the defined audit criteria.

• Maintain accurate working papers and a clear audit trail showing how evidence supports findings and conclusions.

• Conduct audit-team reviews, classify findings according to the applicable scheme, and prepare concise, evidence-based reports.

• Lead or support closing meetings, explain findings clearly, answer factual questions, and distinguish audit evidence from recommendations or consultancy.

• Review corrective-action responses and verify closure or effectiveness when included in the assignment.

• Protect confidential, proprietary, personal, and commercially sensitive information throughout the engagement.

Typical Audit Assignments Available Through ESS Executive

Internal & First-Party Audits

• ISO 9001:2026 internal QMS audits

• Annual or risk-based internal audit programs

• Process audits and cross-functional system audits

• Pre-management-review audit assessments

Transition & Readiness Audits

• ISO 9001:2015 to ISO 9001:2026 transition audits

• Certification-readiness or mock audits

• Gap verification after implementation or corrective action

• Multi-site transition readiness assessments

Supplier & Second-Party Audits

• Supplier QMS and process audits

• Critical supplier qualification or requalification audits

- Customer-specific quality requirement audits
- Supply-chain quality risk assessments

Independent & Certification-Body Assignments

- Independent conformity or effectiveness assessments
- Audit-team member or lead-auditor assignments
- Third-party certification audits only where the auditor is separately approved and assigned by an authorized certification body
- Surveillance, recertification, or special audits where scheme requirements and auditor authorization are satisfied

Why Join ESS Executive as an ISO 9001:2026 Auditor?

Diverse Audit Opportunities

Participate in quality-management audits across industries, business models, organization sizes, and maturity levels, subject to demonstrated competence and client requirements.

Flexible Engagement Models

Access project-based, contract-based, internal, supplier, transition, remote, hybrid, and on-site assignments depending on scope, geography, availability, and authorization.

Professional Exposure

Work with quality leaders, operations teams, executives, suppliers, process owners, certification professionals, and transformation stakeholders across domestic and international settings.

Long-Term Audit & Quality Pathways

Remain connected to future audit, quality transformation, supplier quality, operational excellence, training, and executive advisory opportunities through ESS Executive.

Standards Currency & Audit Framework Note

ISO 9001:2026 was published on 16 September 2026 and is the current edition of ISO 9001. Auditors should maintain current competence in the 2026 requirements and use the latest applicable audit guidance and scheme rules. ISO 19011:2026 provides guidance for auditing management systems. Third-party certification assignments may also be governed by applicable conformity-assessment, accreditation, sector, and certification-body requirements.

Professional Independence, Impartiality & Certification Integrity

Auditors must protect impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest. Audit conclusions must be based on objective evidence and the defined audit criteria. An ESS Executive assignment does not itself authorize an auditor to issue an accredited ISO 9001 certificate or make a certification decision. Third-party certification authority remains with the responsible certification body under its applicable accreditation and governance requirements.

Where an individual has provided QMS consultancy to an organization, suitability for subsequent third-party certification auditing must be assessed under the applicable certification-body and impartiality requirements before any assignment is accepted.

Apply / Join the Auditor Network

Qualified professionals are invited to submit an updated CV or executive profile, ISO 9001 auditor or lead-auditor training credentials, audit log or summary of audit experience, industry-sector experience, relevant professional certifications, languages, geographic availability, and examples of QMS audit assignments.

Selected auditors may be considered for suitable internal, supplier, transition, readiness, independent, or authorized certification-body assignments based on project scope, client requirements, sector competence, audit experience, credentials, geography, availability, and demonstrated professional integrity.

OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE. INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. TRUSTED QUALITY ASSURANCE.

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