



# Quality Management 2024

## ISO 9000:2015

### Project A - President

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# 1 Introduction

The ISO 9001 standard is a globally recognized framework for Quality Management Systems (QMS), designed to help organizations consistently meet customer and regulatory requirements while fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Rooted in the principles of leadership, customer focus, and evidence-based decision-making, ISO 9001 provides a systematic approach to enhancing operational efficiency and quality [1].

In academic institutions like Reykjavik University, implementing ISO 9001 standards ensures alignment between institutional goals and operational processes, enhancing educational quality, research outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction. By adopting these standards, universities can build a robust framework for achieving their strategic objectives while meeting the expectations of students, faculty, and external partners.

This report examines the critical role of the President in leading Reykjavik University's journey toward ISO 9001 certification. It explores the President's responsibilities in implementing and sustaining a QMS, draws parallels with similar roles in private-sector organizations, and outlines the potential changes in responsibilities post-certification. Through this analysis, the report aims to provide actionable insights for fostering a culture of quality and achieving operational excellence in higher education.

## 2 President compared to the role in private sector

In relation to the Reykjavik University (RU), the president is the head of all parts of the University administration. The president has responsibilities mainly in the "Plan", "Check" and "Act" parts of the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), the check, in this case, would be mainly in overseeing that checking is done, checking on nonconformities and the results from audits and information/overview meetings. In the context of ISO 9001, the president would be responsible for supervising the performance of the Quality (Systems) Manager and ensuring that the Quality Management System (QMS) aligns with the university's strategic goals. The president's responsibilities include: Setting and monitoring measurable quality objectives, supervising the quality manager in order to ensure effective integration and maintenance of the QMS, participating in Quality Management meetings to maintain the effectiveness of quality systems and processes and delegating responsibilities to the departments and staff to address nonconformities since the Quality Manager usually does not have authority to enforce changes. This delegation and supervision is likened to a CEO in a private company, underlining the president's accountability over quality and compliance with the ISO 9001 standards.

According to the latest organization chart that involves Quality Management as seen in figure 1, it is also suggested that since operations and relations (which are both the quality managers supervisors currently) can both save money by reducing quality, the role of the Quality Manager is made independent of both of them (and all aspects of school operation) so that money is not saved by a department by reducing quality.

In an ISO 9001-certified company, the role most similar to the President would be the Chief Executive Officer, which has the role of ensuring the continual improvement of the company's Quality Management System (QMS) along with ensuring that roles, responsibilities and authorities are understood and defined clearly. The ISO 9001, section 5.1.1 lists the top management responsibilities listed as a)-j) in section 3. The CEO is mostly involved in the Plan and Check and Act part of the PDCA cycle (plan-do-check-act). This would involve having quality objectives measurable, reviewing the alignment of QMS strategic goals with organizational goals along with ensuring adequate resources for quality control initiatives. An additional role of the CEO would be to address stakeholder expectations and maintain a strong focus on customer satisfaction. The planning would mostly be done by the Quality Manager and approved by the executive board or CEO in order to foster continual improvement across all departments. The checking part on the CEO's part would mainly involve a decision on whether the Quality Systems Manager's finding should be acted on (delegated to other parties).

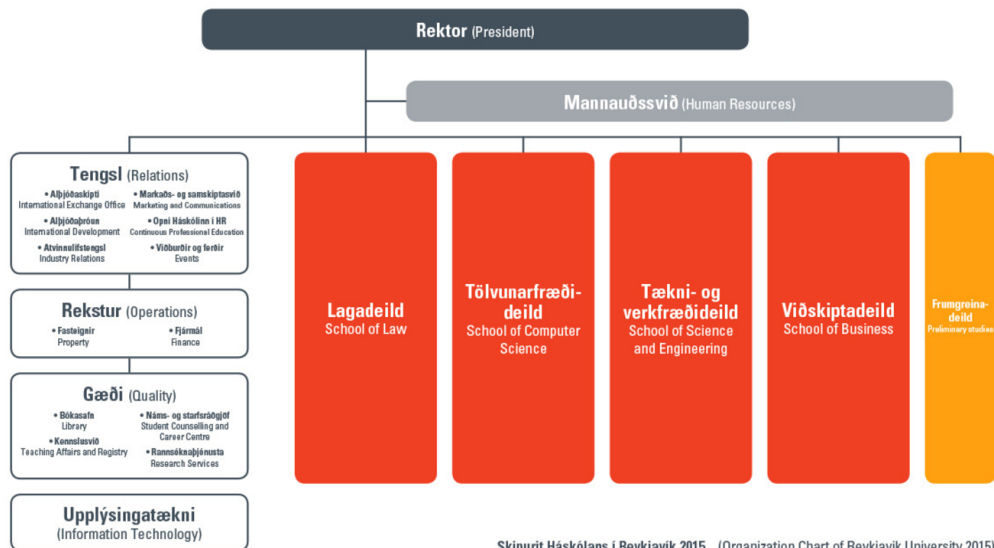


Figure 1: Reykjavík Organization chart 2015 (later charts do not have quality as part of the organization)[2]

3 (ISO 9001, 5.1.1 a)-j))Top management shall demonstrate leadership and commitment with respect to the quality management system by:

a) Taking accountability for the effectiveness of the quality management system

The president should demonstrate and ensure active involvement in the quality management system by participating in management reviews and engaging in quality performance reports

audit findings and customer feedback. It is essential that the president ensures cooperation and support for the quality manager and the staff responsible for the quality management process. The president should ensure human, financial, and technological resources for the maintenance and improvement of the Quality Management System. The president is responsible for fostering a Quality Culture by emphasizing the importance of quality and continuous improvement across the organization, making sure that key performance indicators (KPI's) are used to track QMS performance and acting on nonconformities and risks by ensuring effective corrective action is taken.

### **b) Ensuring that the quality policy and quality objectives are established for the quality management system and are compatible with the context and strategic direction of the organization**

The President should clearly communicate the university's strategic direction and ensure that the quality policy aligns seamlessly with it. This can be achieved by approving and regularly reviewing the quality objectives to ensure they reflect the university's vision. Additionally, engaging key stakeholders is essential for aligning academic, research and operational goals with the ISO standard.

### **c) Ensuring the integration of the quality management system requirements into the organization's business processes**

The President must ensure that the principles of quality management are deeply embedded in the university's core processes, including all departments, research and administration. This can be achieved by collaborating with the quality manager to map ISO 9001 requirements to existing academic and operational workflows. Additionally, encouraging heads of department managers to integrate quality improvement activities into their daily operations is crucial for sustaining excellence.

### **d) Promoting the use of the process approach and risk-based thinking**

The President must foster a culture that prioritizes data-driven decision-making and proactively anticipates potential risks. This can be achieved by organizing training sessions for staff and faculty on process optimization and risk assessment, equipping them with the skills needed to make informed, strategic choices. Additionally, the President should take a leading role in addressing critical strategic risks, including securing sustainable funding, ensuring regulatory compliance and enhancing student satisfaction. By driving these initiatives forward, the President reinforces a commitment to continuous improvement and institutional resilience.

#### **e) Ensuring that the resources needed for the quality management system are available**

The President must ensure the allocation of sufficient financial, human and technological resources to effectively implement and sustain the quality management system. This includes integrating the cost of quality management into the university's budgeting process to ensure its prioritization. Additionally, the President should provide funding for essential tools, training programs and staffing dedicated to quality-related efforts. By securing these resources, the university can foster continuous improvement, enhance operational efficiency and uphold its commitment to high standards in education and research.

#### **f) Communicating the importance of effective quality management and conforming to the quality management system requirements**

It is important for the university president to communicate effective quality management across all levels, which can be done, for example, through staff meetings in which he delivers clear messages on how the QMS supports the university's mission.

#### **g) Ensuring that the quality management system achieves its intended results**

A significant factor in QMS is making sure that results are met and achieved. A clear and measurable goal must be created, ensuring results are met; this can be done by defining a metric such as improving student retention and graduation rate. It can also be assessed with data-driven metrics such as feedback from students and faculty performance evaluations. The president must ensure that each department is met with the essential resources to fulfill its needs.

#### **h) Engaging, directing and supporting persons to contribute to the effectiveness of the quality management system**

The president's role also expands into engaging, directing and supporting staff members and students in contributing to the QMS effectiveness. This can be done by creating a task group between departments, which enhances the QMS within the university.

#### **i) Promoting improvement**

The president's responsibility is to seek and promote improvements where they are needed. Improvements are necessary to ensure a high and fast-changing environment. These improvements can be implemented by the president, for example, to encourage innovation and encourage

staff to explore and implement new academic programs. Another idea would be to look into implementing hybrid teaching models, which could significantly boost students efficiency and experience.

## **j) Supporting the other relevant management roles to demonstrate their leadership as it applies to their areas of responsibility**

As the highest authority, the President must delegate leadership responsibilities effectively and ensure that key managers (e.g., deans, directors, department heads) understand and fulfill their roles in achieving quality objectives. This involves equipping leaders with the necessary tools, resources and autonomy, alongside training in risk-based thinking and process-oriented approaches. These foundations foster accountability and enable leaders to contribute confidently.

A vital part of the President's role is to promote collaboration and communication across management levels. Initiatives like interdepartmental meetings and cross-functional projects create opportunities for managers to align their efforts with RU's mission while addressing shared challenges. This approach strengthens the interconnectedness of leadership responsibilities and promotes a unified focus on quality management.

The President ensures that leadership aligns with RU's strategic direction and quality objectives, offering clear guidance on how individual roles contribute to the QMS. Whether it involves integrating quality principles into academic processes or enhancing operational efficiencies, leaders are empowered to act decisively and strategically within their domains.

Monitoring and recognizing leadership contributions is essential. Through performance reviews and feedback, the President evaluates alignment with QMS objectives and motivates improvement by rewarding exemplary leadership. Additionally, workshops, mentorship programs and resources address leadership challenges, reinforcing RU's leadership culture and advancing the university's mission of excellence and global competitiveness.

## **4 What possibly changes after the implementation as far as the responsibilities and the specific roles after the certification of the QMS has occurred?**

After the certification of a Quality Management System (QMS) under ISO 9001, several changes typically occur in the responsibilities and specific roles within the organization. These changes are designed to ensure the system remains effective and aligns with the principles of continual improvement outlined in the ISO 9001 framework.

Top management as the president of RU assumes a critical role post-certification, with increased accountability to sustain their commitment by continually demonstrating leadership.

This involves ensuring the QMS remains integrated into the organization's strategic direction and operational processes. Regular reviews of the system's effectiveness, promoting customer focus and leading improvement initiatives become central to their responsibilities.

The role of a Quality Management Representative evolves, even though ISO 9001 no longer mandates this specific title. Responsibilities tied to QMS oversight typically expand to include coordinating internal audits, ensuring corrective actions are implemented promptly and preparing for external audits.

For operational staff, responsibilities shift to emphasize adherence to defined processes and active participation in maintaining the QMS. Employees are often trained to understand their roles in ensuring system effectiveness and are encouraged to adopt risk-based thinking.

Document control and record maintenance become more structured. Individuals tasked with this role are responsible for keeping records updated to meet ISO standards, managing evidence of compliance and ensuring all relevant documents are accessible and properly distributed.

Performance monitoring and reporting also take on greater importance. Personnel responsible for this area must track key performance indicators (KPIs) and analyze data to provide actionable insights. Regular reporting to management ensures that the system's performance is effectively reviewed and opportunities for improvement are identified.

The work of internal audit teams becomes more systematic, focusing on regular assessments of compliance with QMS requirements. This ensures readiness for certification bodies to conduct surveillance audits and helps maintain the QMS's integrity.

Training and competence development gain prominence as well. Post-certification, there is a stronger focus on ensuring all personnel remain competent in their roles, with ongoing education and training to adapt to updates in the QMS or changes in organizational goals.

The management of customer feedback becomes more defined, with responsibilities centered around tracking customer satisfaction, analyzing feedback and addressing issues promptly to align with ISO 9001's customer-focused approach.

Continual improvement teams or roles may emerge, tasked with identifying and implementing opportunities for system enhancements. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of corrective and preventive actions and ensuring alignment with the organization's strategic objectives.

In some cases, certification leads to a broader alignment of the QMS with other standards, such as ISO 14001 or ISO 45001. This integration often requires additional responsibilities for individuals managing these systems, emphasizing a unified approach to compliance.

Through these adjustments, the organization transitions into a culture where quality is a continuous priority. These changes ensure long-term compliance with ISO 9001 and foster sustained business improvements.

## 5 Conclusion

Leadership is the cornerstone of embedding a quality-driven culture within Reykjavik University. The President's role, akin to that of a CEO in a private organization, is pivotal in aligning strategic goals with the principles of ISO 9001, fostering continuous improvement, and ensuring sustained operational excellence. By taking accountability for the effectiveness of the Quality Management System (QMS), promoting stakeholder engagement, and championing resource allocation, the President sets the foundation for a transformative quality culture.

The President's role is primarily focused on the **Plan**, **Check**, and **Act** phases of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. In the **Plan** phase, the President sets measurable quality objectives, ensures they align with the university's strategic goals, and allocates necessary resources for implementation. During the **Check** phase, the President oversees the monitoring of performance metrics by have a look at the results of internal audits and doing management reviews to ensure the QMS is achieving its intended outcomes. In the **Act** phase, the President leads efforts to implement corrective actions, drive continual improvement, and reinforce a quality culture across the institution.

However, leadership alone cannot achieve these outcomes. A collaborative approach involving faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders is essential to sustain QMS practices and drive innovation. Cross-functional teamwork, regular training, and open channels of communication must be prioritized to adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities.

As Reykjavik University continues its commitment to quality, the next step involves deepening engagement with all stakeholders to ensure the QMS remains a dynamic and integral part of institutional processes. This includes hosting regular forums for feedback, strengthening internal audits, and encouraging active participation in quality initiatives. Together, these efforts will solidify the university's reputation for excellence and ensure its continued success in meeting the highest international standards.



## References

- [1] International Organization for Standardization (ISO). IST EN ISO 9001:2015 | Staðlaráð Íslands, December 2015.
- [2] Háskóli Reykjavíkur. Skipurit Háskóla Reykjavíkur 2015, February 2015.