The publication of the Draft International Standard (DIS) of the International Quality Management System (QMS) by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) – signifies the first time all current and future users can access and review the proposed changes to ISO 9001. Lloyd’s Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) helps SHEQ MANAGEMENT to make sense of it all.

The first thing organisations should be doing is to obtain a copy of the DIS. The introduction of Annexure SL – which establishes a consistent structure featuring ten clauses, as well as common terminology and definitions applicable to all ISO Management System Standards (MSS) – is the biggest change contained within the ISO/DIS 9001:2014 document.

“Research and read the communications from ISO and your certification body to understand the stage of development and the proposed transition guidance. ISO is intending to publish further transition guidance, and also guidance for the interpretation and implementation of ISO 9001:2015. There is still more than a year to go before the proposed publication of the fully revised standard, which ISO currently states will be September 2015.

“However, we recommend that you start to understand some of the new and significantly revised areas of ISO/DIS 9001:2014. Then look at how your organisation already manages these areas and how this relates to your quality or integrated management system. Begin thinking about an outline plan and timing for when and how you will review your management system. This will provide an initial view of how well it relates to these new areas,” advises LRQA.

“Think about training for yourself and your key people involved in the management system, and about how their knowledge and skills may need to be developed to help your organisation through any changes.”

LRQA adds that the potential organisational impact of the ISO 9001 revision is dependent upon the organisation and its individual QMS. Factors such as the maturity and complexity of the existing ISO 9001:2008, the existence of other management systems and the organisation’s current evaluation and management of risk, will all heavily influence the degree of change that an organisation will need to undertake in order to meet these future requirements of ISO.
Current information from ISO shows that organisations will have three years from publication to transition to the new standard, so they can choose to transition at any point within this period. Some may choose their next certification cycle, although many will want to be among the first to do so, given the increased functionality that ISO 9001:2015 will deliver, along with the bonus of a clear commitment to best practice being demonstrated to their interested parties.

LRQA concludes: “Starting the transition planning early, including setting and communicating a transition date, will enable you and your organisation to proactively manage the transition at your own pace.

“Ensure that your certification body not only understands the DIS, but, more importantly, understands what the DIS means to your QMS and wider organisation. Engage your certification body to find out how a gap analysis and training on specific areas of ISO 9001:2015 can benefit you personally, as well as your organisation. Begin formalising a transition plan and process and ensure that top management is involved from the start.”