AS 9100 Series Certification:

Everything you need to know.

AS 9120

AS 9110

EASA

AS 9100

Qualitation

THE BRITISH QUALITY CENTRE

The AS 9100 Series

The AS 9100 Series is made up of three separate standards, similar in type but focused on different activities, together with EASA Parts 145 and 21 with relevant Category/ Sub-parts.

AS 9100	Manufacturers	The standard for manufacturers of components and finished products in the aviation, space and defence industries with specific emphasis on sourcing and subcontractors.
AS 9110	Maintenance	The standard for those organisations supplying a maintenance service to aviation, space and defence industries. Based on AS 9100, but adapted to focus on those aspects where maintenance activities differ or require more attention (training, records, subcontractors, cross checking etc).
AS 9120	Distribution	The standard for those organisations that stock and/or distribute components for the aviation, space and defence industries. Based on AS 9100, but adapted to focus on those aspects where control of components (storage, tracking, quality, obsolescence etc) require more attention.
EASA Part 145	Category C: Repair & Overhaul	The European Aviation Safety Agency requirements for repair capabilities and controls.
EASA Part 21	Subpart G	The European Aviation Safety Agency requirements for airworthiness approval.
EASA Part 21	Subpart J	The European Aviation Safety Agency requirements for design approval

AS 9100 Series Certification:
Everything you need to know.

While the AS standards remain the same for all organisations, every business is unique. The downside of this is that what's involved in implementing an AS System can seem difficult to pin down - as it depends on the scale of your business and demands of customers and evolutions of the standard.

However, the many common elements to this system bring together the best from operations the world over. Here we help demystify the entire process. We begin with the most basic of questions - why should you go for certification in the first place?

Why should you get an AS 9100 Series Standard?

To allow your organisation to grow.

Without losing control of all the intricate operational processes that have made it successful so far. This is especially the case if those processes have been created and delegated by one person, usually the founder.

To increase your chances of winning tenders.

To make it clear - achieving AS certification will not guarantee that you will win all tenders you bid for. However, in the aviation, defence and space industries, holding an AS standard is often a pre-requisite for being able to submit a tender and will work in your favour.

To demonstrate good working practices.

Industry specific certification sends a clear message that your organisation has the expertise required to work to a globally accepted level in your field.

EASA requirements may be pre-requisites to operate in the industry. The AS System incorporates the ISO 9001 standard so Quality is automatically built in.

To unify different parts of your organisation.

If your organisation has grown through mergers and acquisitions, you'll likely be running different systems across a range of sites. This is inefficient and can even present a barrier to teams working together. An AS system will ensure commonality across all part of your business, both now and as you expand further.

To operate at a world-class level.

The systems you'll use to run your business will help you reduce waste, boost profit and increase staff morale and customer retention. You'll be able to expand more efficiently and increase your return to your shareholders or company owners. You'll also be able to advertise that you've obtained a third party audited, globally recognised, label of excellence that will raise your profile within your industry and further afield. EASA qualifications are also globally recognised.

What's involved and how you get there.

Implementing an AS 9100 Series system and achieving certification will require you to look at every area of your operations. It's comprehensive and robust - and like all projects can be broken down into smaller steps. Here's a list of how you get from here to there.

1 Decide on your ideal operational strategy.

This is the opportunity for you to implement the procedures you've always wanted and change the ones that aren't working. Remember to take account of how your business may develop in the future.

You'll need to consider:

- Legislation + Customer Requirements
- Organisational structure
- Procedures + Training
- Financial and ethical targets
- Operating profit
- Suppliers and outsourcing partners

The result can be mapped any way you like - as a description or a flow chart - as long as it works for your business and everyone understands the outcome.

2 Make clear the stance you will take in key areas.

Create relevant policy documents for each of these areas.

This may include:

- Quality
- Environment
- Health and safety
- Treatment of staff
- Customer satisfaction
- Complaints ethical issues.

This list is by no means complete and you may need additional key areas that fit your organisation.

3 Create specific tasks from the documented strategy.

Now you should have a set of policy documents plus an overview of your company structure and strategy. From this you can list specific objectives. These should be laid out clearly with target dates and person responsible noted. Of course the person responsible should be senior enough to complete the task, and someone should be given overall responsibility so all the tasks on the list get done.

It's worth noting that the above three steps are essential for any and all organisations to maintain control of their activities.

The AS 9100 Series requires that procedures follow a particular approach - for example, activities need to be allocated to specific people, recorded appropriately and reviewed periodically within the organisation by internal audit and senior level management review. It's this senior level management review that will trigger change, development and continuous improvement and, ultimately, produce the results that an AS 9100 Series system can achieve.

With that in mind, the following steps ensure that everyone understands the system and the company continues to develop as a whole:

4 **Agree a standard reporting approach.**

There needs a be a co-ordinated documentation control procedure for writing, editing, reviewing and releasing new procedures, policies and other corporate decision and evidence recording documents.

5 **Make staff training a key part of their development.**

Each employee needs to be given the skills they need to do their job now, and in the future as responsibilities change. This needs to be managed as part of the staff review programme and refresher courses given where necessary.

6 **Act on your strengths and weaknesses.**

You'll need to set up a complaints / compliments system to ensure that all feedback is:

a) recorded

b) reacted to appropriately

c) followed up to gauge outcome at a later date

The outcomes feed into the management review so trends can be identified - both positive and negative - and changes at a procedural level can be made accordingly.

7 **Walk the walk.**

The new processes and procedures generated need to become how your business operates. Staff, and even your customers, need to understand and follow your own procedures. Clearly this is how these procedures actually produce results for your business, but also removes the perception that the AS 9100 Series system is merely 'added bureaucracy' because the resultant systems are not 'added' – they are just how you work.

8 **Teach your staff to love audits.**

Internal and external auditing is part of maintaining an AS 9100 Series standard - and with good reason. Your staff will need training in how to carry out an internal audit and why this is important for your business. Auditing is about catching people doing things right (and giving them praise as a result) - not about catching them out or finding fault.

Assessment

With the above in place, you're ready for the actual assessment by an external auditor that is able to grant certification should all the requirements be met. The process for assessment for EASA requirements differs and may depend on circumstances.

The assessment is carried out in two stages:

Stage 1

The assessors review the systems and documentation as written, against the demands and the requirements of the standard in question. If this stage is passed, then you're ready to operate in accordance with the accepted procedures.

Stage 2

Following operation for at least three months, together with internal auditing and management review, the second stage assessment takes place. This is really to determine whether you have been following your own systems that were approved in Stage 1. If you have then you'll be assessed as having passed and will gain your certification.

List of documentation you might need:

- Policies, objectives and targets.
- Procedures.
- Organigram and related responsibilities.
- Process description or flow chart.
- Schedules for internal auditing, training, review of customer feedback, management reviews etc.
- Templates for reports and forms.
- Registers of applicable legislation and standards of operation.

What an AS 9100 Series system can (and can't) do for your business.
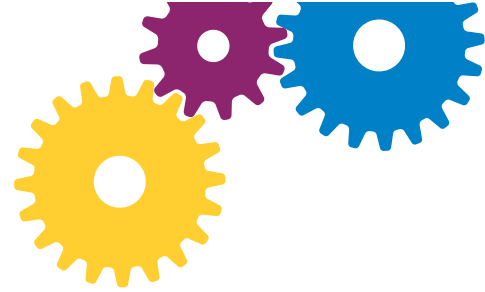
Implementation of an AS 9100 Series system standard has shown the following benefits to many organisations:

✓ Meets requirements for many tenders and for certain organisational pre-business specifications - and in the case of EASA requirements may even be an effective pre-requisite to operate in the industry.

✓ Generates a complete and robust system across an organisation, encompassing continuous improvement and training.

✓ Increases financial returns, enhances efficiency, raises corporate profiles and reduces the use of resources.

✓ Helps to remove unnecessary duplication and the associated paperwork.

✓ Engenders an internal sense of pride in achieving and maintaining the standard for annual assessments.

✓ Adds a strategic level to the corporate offering through an improved profile and competitive advantage.

✓ Increases customer confidence.

✓ Attains recognition of achievement by external parties – locally and further afield.

✓ Reduces the cost of environmental permits and lowers insurance premiums.

However, there are things it can't do, namely:

✗ It won't deliver improvements to your business unless you actually implement the processes into your daily operations.

✗ It doesn't automatically guarantee that you'll win every tender or close every sale you go after.

✗ It doesn't maintain itself – someone will have to make sure you're adhering to the process, by holding the required management reviews, and liaise with the assessors.

✗ It won't turn a fundamentally flawed product or business model into a profitable one.

✗ It will never, ever deliver the results possible if your senior management doesn't wholeheartedly buy into it.

The Qualitation Guarantee:

We've been helping companies achieve AS 9100 Series certification for over 20 years. In this time we've achieved 100% first time success in attaining every single AS 9100 Series standard that our clients are seeking. We commit to doing what it takes to ensure that this record is maintained.

How long will it take?

This varies according to your own organisation and depends on the scale and scope of the operations to be included, the standard chosen, the amount of time you have to dedicate to the project, external events and simply when an assessor is available.

However, we promised to demystify the process, so here are some basic guidelines to timeframe that will help to give you an idea of how long the process may take in your own organisation:

- For an organisation to carry out an AS 9100 series installation would typically take 15-25 days of our time over a 5-18 month timeframe.

- The time required to meet the EASA requirements varies so substantially that is not possible to estimate this without knowledge of the circumstances - but a good rough idea should be possible over the telephone.
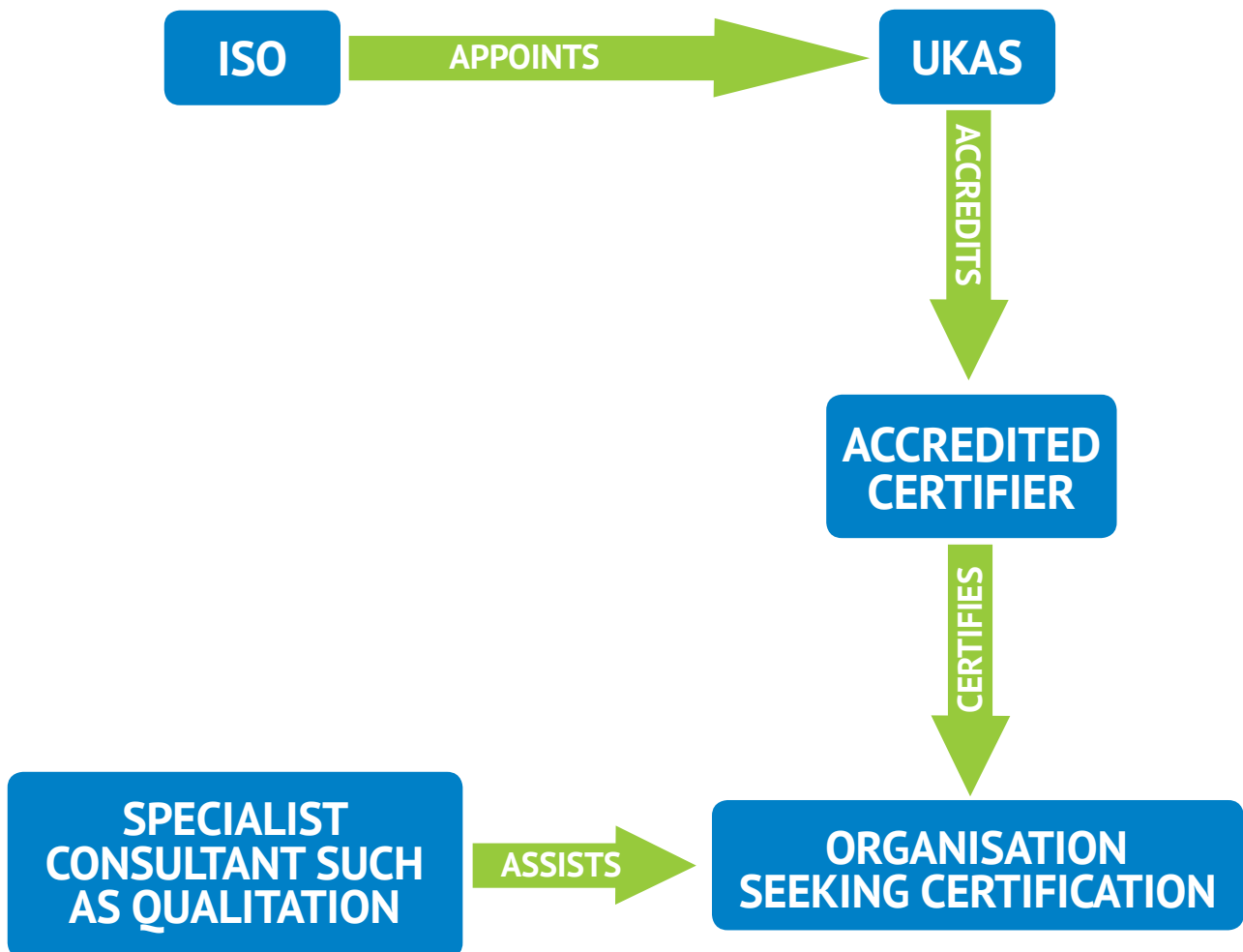
Larger organisations, additional standards, and complex or unique processes may lengthen the certification time and usually result in more specialist expertise needed.

Multiple sites can be very different in their timescales: often this depends on whether they choose to have the standard(s) installed across all sites at the same time, or tackle each one in series.

What is the normal AS 9100 Standard process?

ISO —APPOINTS→ **UKAS**

UKAS —ACCREDITS→ **ACCREDITED CERTIFIER**

ACCREDITED CERTIFIER —CERTIFIES→ **ORGANISATION SEEKING CERTIFICATION**

SPECIALIST CONSULTANT SUCH AS QUALITATION —ASSISTS→ **ORGANISATION SEEKING CERTIFICATION**

Is there a grant for AS 9100 Series standards?

There are almost always a range of options. There are grants available, depending on which standard you need to get. It also depends on where you are within the UK.

Most grants are match funded to between 30% and 50% - meaning that the grant will be for a third to a half of the cost and you'll provide the rest of the funds. Many are restricted by the size of your organisation or what field you are operating in.

We can talk you through what's available. It's in our interest to help you get any financial help you can as we can then provide our services at less of a cost to your own business.

Taking it further.

We hope that many of your AS 9100 Series questions have been answered through the information presented in this guide. If you'd like to discuss your own requirements further including getting an individually costed proposal, then call us on: **0345 600 6975** or email: **enquiries@qualitation.co.uk** and we'd be happy to help.

> *It's been a very long and hard process and a huge, huge effort by everyone involved in the process but throughout our Qualitator has provided an enormous amount of expertise, motivation and drive to see us reach success.*
>
> *The driving force behind all this work was getting more orders and we are in a good place now to realise this potential. Already we've been working on some highly reputable pieces of work, such as the Aga Khan's yacht and new Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier.*
>
> *I would recommend Qualitation without hesitation.*

Alison Shortman
Director, Milspares Ltd.

Qualitation
THE BRITISH QUALITY CENTRE

www.qualitation.co.uk

0345 600 6975 | enquiries@qualitation.co.uk