

## **ISO/IEC 20000 certification of individuals**

This chapter focuses on the importance of certification of individuals in the area of Service Quality Management based on ISO/IEC 20000. One might wonder why we need yet another standard to measure the quality of the Service Management processes of the IT department, and why training and certification of individuals is crucial.

This chapter addresses these questions. The first paragraph briefly explains the major reasons for companies to have ISO/IEC 20000 certified staff. The second paragraph will provide facts and details of the currently existing ISO/IEC 20000 examination programs. The third paragraph provides a perspective for the individual with an interest in ISO/IEC 20000 certification as part of their career path with some examples to illustrate the career development possibilities this certification can support.

### **§1 Certification of staff in the interest of the company**

Once a company considers the possibility of becoming ISO/IEC 20000 certified, the need for involving skilled staff into the decision making process and the Service Quality Management processes becomes clear. This becomes even more important when the company decides to actually prepare for certification. Of course it is crucial that staff with the right competencies remain involved once certification is granted. Adopting the norm and compliance with the requirements involves more than just keeping the certificate on the wall.

Customers will have more confidence in service providers which are certified in ISO/IEC 20000. Therefore working according to ISO/IEC 20000 will raise customer satisfaction for IT Service Management.

The IT Management, all individuals involved in IT Service Management and Quality Management should learn about the content and the impact of the ISO/IEC 20000 norm. This includes the specifications, the code of practice and also some general Quality Management issues. Applying for this certification involves effort for the company in terms of managing the necessary changes to fulfill the requirements of the norm. Staff has to be motivated to accept changes in procedures, working methods and sometimes in the structure of the organization. The goal of ISO/IEC 20000 certification has to be clear for the company. It is more than just obtaining the certificate and hanging it on the wall. In the end the certification should represent the corporate vision with a focus on excellent IT service provision and optimal support of the business in combination with a higher productivity. An independent certificate will guarantee quality towards the ISO/IEC 20000 standard. It is an excellent match with other already existing quality systems.

Interested companies can be internal or external IT service providers. When a company decides to outsource, the ISO/IEC 20000 certification will consequently affect external service providers as well. Companies mainly acting as an external service provider will have an even greater interest in ISO/IEC 20000 certification as it might be a strong recommendation for their potential clients. Working according to ISO/IEC 20000 and being certified will become increasingly important for IT service providers to be able to maintain their competitive edge. The scenarios just sketched illustrate that not only does the management level of an organization need to have knowledge of the standard but also the staff and consultants involved should have a basic understanding of ISO/IEC 20000.

In order to successfully use or implement ISO/IEC 20000, the key elements which need to be present are the awareness, training and motivation of all staff members involved. Certification of individuals will support the company's desire not only to comply with the norm, but also to have the right people with the proper skills, and to ensure that motivation and knowledge are available to improve and enhance the actual service delivery.

The next paragraph will provide information on the certification program and available examinations with corresponding target groups of staff, consultants and auditors.

## §2 The examination possibilities

Both itSMF UK and EXIN offer ISO/IEC 20000 examinations.

itSMF UK is the British chapter of the IT Service Management Forum (itSMF), an independent and internationally-recognized forum for IT Service Management professionals worldwide. itSMF is a prominent player in the on-going development and promotion of IT Service Management "best practice", standards and qualifications.

EXIN, the Examination Institute for Information Science, is a global, independent IT examination provider. It is EXIN's mission to guarantee the quality of the IT sector and the IT professionals working in this sector by means of independent testing and certification.

### 2.1 itSMF UK examinations

The two certificates recognized by the itSMF are the Auditor Certificate and the Consultant Certificate. Course providers and tutors have to be accredited. A sample exam and a syllabus are available for both exams.

#### 2.1.1 The ISO/IEC 20000 Auditor Certificate

*Examination format:*

A one hour, 25 question, multiple-choice examination paper

*Pass mark:*

18 or more questions correct

*Content Auditor Certificate:*

- Identify the objectives and major content of IT Service Management processes, within the scope of ISO/IEC 20000
- Identify the core processes of the ISO/IEC 20000 standard
- Describe the key activities and requirements of each of the processes involved
- Identify the requirements of the overall Service Management System and plan

#### 2.1.2 The ISO/IEC 20000 Consultant Certificate

*Examination format:*

- A one hour, 25 question, multiple-choice examination paper
- A one hour written assignment

*Pass mark:*

A score of at least 50% in each of the elements with a combined total of 65% or higher.

*Content Consultant Certificate:*

- Identify the objectives and major content of IT Service Management processes, within the scope of ISO/IEC 20000
- Identify the core processes of the ISO/IEC 20000 standard
- Describe the key activities and requirements of each of the processes involved
- Identify the requirements of the overall Service Management System and plan
- Describe the key principles of best practice as defined in Part 2 of ISO/IEC 20000
- Prepare and implement plans and improvement projects for achieving ISO/IEC 20000 certification

## 2.2 EXIN examinations

EXIN has two examinations on Service Quality Management based on ISO/IEC 20000, one on the Foundation level and one on the Advanced level. Currently course providers and tutors do not have to be accredited. Guidelines for course development are available for course providers. For both exams, sample questions and a service document including the exam requirements are available.

### 2.2.1 Service Quality Management Foundation (SQMF) based on ISO/IEC 20000

*Examination format:*

One hour, 40 question, multiple-choice examination, paper and computer based availability

*Pass mark:*

A score of at least 65%

*Prerequisite:*

ITIL Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management

*Content SQMF:*

- Understanding the importance of Quality in IT Service Management
- The Quality specifications for IT Service Management
- The code of practice for IT Service Management

20% of the content is about Quality Management in general.

### 2.2.2 Service Quality Management Advanced (SQMA) based on ISO/IEC 20000

*Examination format:*

Ninety minutes, 40 question multiple-choice examination, paper and computer based availability

*Pass mark*

A score of at least 65%

*Prerequisite:*

SQM Foundation

*Content SQMA:*

- The positioning of ISO/IEC 20000 within the IT Management domain
- The implementation of IT Service Management based upon ISO/IEC 20000
- The maintenance and improvement of IT Service Management based upon ISO/IEC 20000
- The evaluation of IT Service Management based upon ISO/IEC 20000

### 2.2.3 Service Quality Management Track for an ISO/IEC 20000 Consultant

The building blocks to become an ISO/IEC 20000 Consultant consist of ITIL Foundation, SQM Foundation, SQM Advanced and the ITIL Manager's Certificate.

EXIN's ISO/IEC 20000 certification continues building on the IT Service Management certification, adding certificates for knowledge and understanding specific for Quality Management in this area. The SQM certification is supplementary to the IT Service Management certification based on ITIL.

More specific information can be found on the websites of the itSMF [www.isoiec20000certification.com](http://www.isoiec20000certification.com) and of EXIN [www.exin-exams.com](http://www.exin-exams.com)

### **§3 Why IT professionals should become certified in the area of ISO/IEC 20000**

The standard does not elaborate on the definition of qualified staff; in the introduction we find the following statement:

*It is assumed that the execution of the provisions of this part of ISO/IEC 20000 is entrusted to appropriately qualified and competent people.*

Should we assume or should we know this is the case, and what does appropriately qualified and competent mean? Without proper metrics, a shared generic terminology and job descriptions it will be hard to effectively control and manage adaptation of the standard. The qualification programs (like those of itSMF UK and EXIN), with clear definitions and requirements for individuals, will help to bridge this gap.

Many IT professionals have already discovered or will soon discover ISO/IEC 20000 as the standard for IT Service Management. Depending on their role and job description, they will have to learn about this standard. Of course there will be a different demand depending on the responsibilities within the organization. The target group for the Foundation certificate is quite broad compared to the more confined target group of auditors. Regardless of the level of the training program, the certification provides new opportunities for people getting involved in ISO/IEC 20000. They have the possibility to distinguish themselves by becoming certified. And so this certification can become an important step in the career paths of several kinds of professionals.

Below you will find some examples of the target groups for ISO/IEC 20000 certification.

- IT Management

IT Management will at least need a basic understanding of the ISO/IEC 20000 norm to decide on adopting the standard and to be able to share the benefits with the staff. Creating awareness is part of preparing the company's ISO/IEC 20000 certification.

- IT Service Managers

IT Service Managers will benefit from ISO/IEC 20000 training since it demonstrates the dedication to embrace the concept of continuous professional education. It will challenge them to extend their knowledge and skills in the domain of IT Service Management and Quality Management.

- IT Service Management staff

IT Service Management staff will have to learn about the norm because it may affect their future jobs. They will need to work with new requirements to improve the quality of their daily tasks, and their output needs to become more measurable.

- All those who need an overview and introduction to ISO/IEC 20000

In addition to the above mentioned groups there is the category of other professionals who need an overview and some basic understanding. Especially in large companies, there are many employees who will in some way become involved as soon as the decision has been made to implement the ISO/IEC 20000 quality system.

- Consultants

IT Service Management consultants who would like to manage ISO/IEC 20000 implementation projects, or even to be able to advise on adopting the standard, need a high level of knowledge and skills in the area of ISO/IEC 20000, in addition to their IT Service Management competencies.

- Project Managers

Project managers need to know what ISO/IEC 20000 is about, in order to correctly define the goals of an ISO/IEC 20000 project and to determine which steps are necessary to reach these goals.

- External service providers

This part of the target group refers to IT service providers to whom IT services within organizations are outsourced. By nature external service providers are competing with each other to gain the contract. Being certified for ISO/IEC 20000 will act as an important differentiator and therefore provide external service providers with a competitive edge.

- Professionals on the client side dealing with external service providers

These are the counterparts of the former group. In organizations that have outsourced or are planning to outsource IT services they have to steer and oversee the activities of the supplier, as well as to manage the contract.

- Quality Management consultants

Knowledge on ISO/IEC 20000 will enrich the work of a Quality Management consultant in the IT Service Management area because it will often involve an advisory role with respect to the relationship of ISO/IEC 20000 with other Quality Management systems and norms that are in place within a company.

- Internal auditors

Internal auditors assess their own organization's progress towards achieving ISO/IEC 20000 certification. They need training and certification on a high level to carry out the proper internal audits. They will also need specific auditor skills.

- External auditors

External auditors and assessors work on behalf of Registered Certification Bodies. These people must have specific auditor skills, such as interview techniques. They equally need excellent knowledge on Quality Management in general. In order to be able to effectively audit ISO/IEC 20000 compliance, they must have a clear understanding of the norm.

The examples above show that many professionals can benefit from ISO/IEC 20000 certification. Since IT Service Management will continue to be a strong combination with Quality Management, this should be a priority for companies and people who want to make it to the top.