2. Transition Timeline

The transition is governed by the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (Global ACI) document Transition Requirements for ISO 9001:2026 (Global ACI-TECH-3-TR, Issue 04 September 2026, version 1.0).

It applies to accreditation bodies (ABs) and to the accredited certification bodies (CBs) that certify your QMS; the Global ACI document calls CBs conformity assessment bodies (CABs). ISO 9001:2026 was published in September 2026, and the transition period is three years.

Key dates and what they mean for you

Date	What happens (Global ACI)	What it means for a certified organization
September 2026	ISO 9001:2026 published; the three-year transition period starts.	You can start converting your QMS now. Your ISO 9001:2015 certificate remains valid during the transition period.
31 March 2027	ABs ready to assess to ISO 9001:2026 and to announce their transition process.	Your CB will be working through its ABs arrangements. Ask your CB how and when it plans to transition its clients.
30 June 2027	CBs submit their transition declaration to their AB. A CB that does not intend to transition must tell its affected clients in writing by this date.	If your CB has told you it will not transition, plan a move to another accredited CB well before your next audit.
30 September 2027	AB transition decisions on CBs completed.	A CB can issue accredited ISO 9001:2026 certificates only after its own accreditation has transitioned. Confirm with your CB when it can certify to the 2026 edition.
31 March 2028	New and initial certifications are to ISO 9001:2026 only.	No effect on your existing certificate. It matters if part of your organization is seeking initial certification.
30 September 2029	End of the transition period. Certified clients must have been transitioned, including the issue of the new certificate, by this date.	ISO 9001:2015 certificates are no longer valid after this date. Your transition audit, any follow-up, and the issue of your 2026 certificate must all be complete before it.

What the transition audit covers

Your CB carries out a transition audit. It may be combined with a scheduled surveillance or recertification audit, or carried out as a separate special audit. As a minimum, it reviews:

The transition audit reviews	How this guide helps
The changed requirements of ISO 9001:2026 compared with the 2015 edition	Sections 3, 5 and 6; GA003-02 Delta Gap Checklist
Changes to your organization's context	Step 1 of the method; the 4.1 and 4.2 guidance in section 5

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4. The Conversion Method

Convert the QMS in six steps. Steps 1 and 2 establish what needs to change and plan it. Step 3 changes the documents. Steps 4 to 6 make the changes work in practice and produce the evidence the CB will look for. The effort figures in each step are indicative only, for a single-site manufacturer with an established QMS; adjust them to your own size and the gaps you find.

Step	Main kit files	Lead	Example timing
1 Gap review	GA003-02, G0001-11	Quality Manager with process owners	Weeks 1 to 2
2 Plan	GA003-01	Quality Manager; approved by top management	Week 3
3 Update documents	GA003-03; folders 3.0 to 6.0	Document owners	Weeks 3 to 10
4 Brief and raise awareness	T0100-03, T0723-01, F0723-06	Quality Manager; top management	Weeks 8 to 11
5 Internal audit	F0920-03, F0920-01, F0920-05, F0920-02	Internal auditors	Weeks 11 to 13
6 Management review, then CB audit	F0930-01, F0930-02, F0930-03	Top management	Week 14, then the agreed CB audit date

Example only: the timings above show one way to fit the steps into about 14 weeks. Set your own timings in GA003-01 and work back from the transition audit date agreed with your CB.

Step 1 — Gap review

Element	Detail
Purpose	Find out which parts of your current QMS do not yet meet the changed requirements, and which of your documents are affected.
Inputs	GA003-02 Delta Gap Checklist; G0001-11; your quality manual, procedures, forms and registers; your latest management review minutes and internal audit results.
Actions	1. Work through GA003-02 with each process owner and record the current position and the evidence for each item. 2. Mark each item as met, partly met, or not met, and note the documents and records it affects. 3. Review changes to your context and interested parties since your last management review, because the transition audit looks at them too. 4. Use section 6 of this guide to check the minor and note-only changes quickly.
Outputs and evidence	Completed GA003-02; a list of gaps and of the documents to update.
Typical effort (indicative)	1 to 3 days.

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