



Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies

SQF Requirements on the Application of
ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

7th Edition
January 2015

© Safe Quality Food Institute
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22202 USA
202-220-0635
www.sqfi.com

FOREWORD

The authorization and distribution of the SQF Program is the culmination of extensive development and piloting of the system. The developmental process included consultation with the food sector and quality professionals.

The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) acquired the rights to the SQF Program in August 2003 and has established the SQF Institute (SQFI) Division to manage the Program. The SQFI has established a Technical Advisory Council (TAC) to review and recommend changes to the SQF Program.

It is important that users of the SQF Program ensure they are in possession of the latest edition and any amendments.

The Certification Body may not provide an auditing service in accordance with this document unless it has first entered into a license agreement with the SQFI and that it provides the service in accordance with the terms and conditions of its license agreement.

The Certification Body must be accredited as outlined in the license agreement, within twelve (12) months of signing the license agreement, by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Accreditation Body licensed by FMI, as meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 and the requirements set out in this document. The Certification Body shall maintain such Accreditation for the term of the License Agreement and during this term the Certification Body shall provide its auditing service strictly in accordance with its license, this document and the scope of its accreditation.

The SQFI acknowledges the assistance provided by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) in the review of this current edition of the Criteria for Certification Bodies.

Suggestions for improvements to this document and the SQF Program should be submitted in writing and be sent to:

The SQF Senior Technical Director
SQF Institute
(A Division of FMI)
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22202

	Page
FOREWORD	i
CONTENTS	ii
INTRODUCTION - SQF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE	iii
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES OFFERING CERTIFICATION OF SQF SYSTEMS	4
1. Scope	4
2. References	4
3. Definitions	4
4. General Requirements	4
4.1. Legal and Contractual Matters	4
4.2. Management Impartiality	5
4.3. Liability and Financing	5
4.4. Non-Discriminatory Conditions	5
4.5. Confidentiality	6
4.6. Publically Available Information	6
5. Structural Requirements	6
5.1. Organizational Structure and Top Management	6
5.2. Mechanism for Safeguarding Impartiality	6
6. Resource Requirements	6
6.1. Certification Body Personnel	7
6.2. Resources for Evaluation	8
7. Process Requirements	8
7.1. General	8
7.2. Application	8
7.3. Application Review	8
7.4. Evaluation	9
7.5. Review	9
7.6. Certification Decision	10
7.7. Certification Documentation	10
7.8. Directory of Certified Products	10
7.9. Surveillance (i.e. maintaining and certification and recertification)	10
7.10. Changes affecting certification	10
7.11. Termination, Reduction, Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification	11
7.12. Records	11
7.13. Complaints and Appeals	11
8. Management System Requirements	11
8.1. Options	11

INTRODUCTION

SQF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE

The international criteria for the Accreditation of Certification Bodies operating certification of products (products, processes and services) are detailed in ISO/IEC 17065:2012. This mandatory document specifies the requirements that Certification Bodies shall observe when operating third party Certification of Suppliers' SQF Systems.

This document, in respect to the SQF Program, should be considered as sector specific to ISO ISO/IEC 17065:2012. This document describes the requirements for the application of the SQF standard by SQFI licensed Certification Bodies. This document provides the basis for the consistent application of the SQF Program by Certification Bodies. The term "shall" is used throughout this document to indicate mandatory requirements.

It is important to note that these are requirements that shall be met by Certification Bodies. They are not requirements that shall be met by the Supplier that is audited by the Certification Body. The Supplier is required to meet the requirements outlined in the SQF Code, edition 7 and subsequent versions. The Supplier determines how its food safety and quality management system will be arranged to ensure it meets the legislative and customer requirements that apply to its operations.

General Requirements for Certification Bodies Offering Certification of SQF Systems

1.0 Scope

- 1.1.1 The document applies to the Certification of the site, products, processes and services under an SQF System and includes all processes and services used to make the identified final product or products.
The SQF system requires the application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), built upon a sound foundation of Pre-requisite Programs such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) or Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) to document and control critical food safety and quality criteria during production in order to deliver a safe, quality product as specified.
- 1.1.2 The SQF Code, guidance documents, criteria for SQF Systems Training Centers, Registration Criteria for SQF Auditors, Consultants, and Trainers, and audit reporting formats outline the purpose and the minimum requirements of audit by a Certification Body.

2.0 References

- 2.1.1 The following references apply:
HACCP guidelines developed and managed by the CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 3 (1997).
HACCP guidelines developed and managed by the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods (NACMCF). Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles and Application Guidelines, adopted August 14, 1997.
The SQF Code – Published by FMI as amended from time to time.
ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.
ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
ISO/IEC 17000:2004 Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles.
GFSI Guidance document, sixth edition (and subsequent editions)
ISO/IEC 17021:2011, Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
ISO 17020:2012 Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection
ISO 17025:2005 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

3 Definitions

- 3.1.1 The relevant definitions outlined in The SQF Code, edition 7.2, Appendix 2: Glossary and ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 section 3 apply.

4 General Requirements

4.1 Legal and Contractual Matters

- 4.1.1 Legal Responsibility
The Certification Body shall be licensed by the Food Marketing Institute before providing a service to audit and certify an SQF System.
- 4.1.2 Certification agreement
- 4.1.2.1 Once licensed the Certification Body shall be accredited by an Accreditation Body licensed by the Food Marketing Institute and demonstrate compliance with ISO/IEC 17011:2004. The Certification Body shall achieve the accreditation within twelve (12) months after the acquisition of the SQFI license. The Certification Body shall be allowed to execute SQF audits, according to the license agreement, during its initial accreditation cycle to allow for accreditation to the SQF standard only. Once all accreditation witness audits have been completed and accreditation against the SQF program has been achieved, then general SQF audits can be conducted. The scope of accreditation shall cover either:
- activities to certify an individual supplier's SQF system to one or more food sector categories as defined in the GFSI Guidance document, sixth edition, or subsequent editions; or
 - activities to certify an individual supplier's SQF System and a multi-site organization to one or more food sector categories as defined in the GFSI Guidance document, sixth edition, or subsequent editions.
- 4.1.2.2 The Certification Body shall assess suppliers against the requirements, conditions and restrictions contained in the relevant edition of the SQF Code
Where a Certification Body provides a service in territory outside the country in which accreditation was attained it shall be subject to assessment and witness assessments of its activities by the Accreditation Body where it conducts audits:
- of a multi-site organization; or
 - of a high risk supplier; or

iii. more than ten (10) low risk suppliers.

Changes to the certification requirements shall include any new SQF Code edition, or criteria released by the SQFI and any amendments to existing documentation. All changes shall be implemented by the Certification Body within the time frame specified by the SQFI.

The Certification Body shall ensure the audit includes the evaluation and efficacy of the validation and verification of a supplier's food safety plan, and food quality plan at Level 3.

4.1.3 Use of license, certificates and marks of conformity

4.1.3.1 The SQFI has prepared rules for use which outlines the rules that suppliers must follow when using the SQF Quality Shield or SQF logo.

The Certification Body shall approve the supplier's application of the unique certification number in the space allocated on the Quality Shield issued to a supplier before use. Such approvals shall be documented.

The rules for use of the SQF Quality Shield are described in the SQF Code, Appendix 3.

4.1.3.2 Misleading use of the SQF Quality Shield, logo, certificates, marks or incorrect references to the SQF certification shall be dealt with using the criteria outlined in the SQF Code, part A, section 4 and/or Appendix 3.

4.2 Management Impartiality

4.2.1 Accreditation shall only be granted to a body that is a legal entity as referenced in clause 4.1.1 of ISO/IEC 17065 and must be confined to declared food industry scopes and locations. Certification of a SQF System by a Certification Body shall provide confidence that the system meets the specified requirements and that the supplier has implemented and is maintaining and operating the SQF system effectively and in accordance with the scope specified on the certificate.

4.2.3 Risks to impartiality shall be identified and evaluated on an ongoing basis

4.2.4 If any risks to impartiality are identified then control measures shall be put in place to eliminate or minimize said risk.

The Certification Body shall have a process in place to conduct ongoing evaluations to the risk to its impartiality.

4.2.5 Impartiality and independence of the Certification Body shall have top management commitment and be assured at three levels:

- i. Strategy and policy;
- ii. Evaluation; and
- iii. Decision on certification.

4.2.6 SQF auditors shall not audit an SQF system where they have participated in a consulting role involving the supplier in question, or any person related to the supplier, within the last two years (considered to be participating in an active and creative manner in the development of the SQF System to be audited). Consulting includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- i. Involvement in the production or preparation of food safety plans, food quality plans, manuals, handbooks or procedures;
- ii. participating in the decision making process regarding SQF Systems or any other food safety management system
- iii. giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise - toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of an SQF systems or any other food safety management system; and
- iv. delivering or participating in the delivery of an "in-house" training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of food safety plans and SQF systems for eventual certification is provided.

The Certification Body shall ensure contractors retain impartiality when providing an audit service, that they are registered as SQF auditors, and are clearly identified as representing the Certification Body

4.3 Liability and Financing

4.3.1 The Certification Body shall have sufficient general liability and Professional Indemnity insurance as outlined in the Certification Body license agreement, clause 11.4.

4.3.2 The Certification Body shall be able to demonstrate to the Accreditation Body that there are resources available for all conformity assessment activities it conducts and are carried out in a competent and reliable manner.

4.4 Non-Discriminatory Conditions

4.4.1 The Certification Body shall make their services available to all suppliers and in areas in which they have expertise. In so far as the law permits the Certification Body shall limit its services to suppliers operating within the food sector category(s) in which it has technical competence. A Certification Body may use the list of suppliers that it has certified as part of its promotional activities but it shall not publish a list of such certifications.

4.5 Confidentiality

- 4.5.1 SQFI shall ensure that any records, contracts, license agreements or performance data collected or generated by SQFI of a Certification Body performance shall remain confidential and not for public release or access. This data will be utilized only by SQFI and the applicable Accreditation Body for the improvement of Certification Body performance and the improvement of the SQF program.
- 4.5.2 The Certification Body shall have provisions in place to ensure that all records, data, and information received during the execution of an SQF Audit remains confidential and the property of the supplier. Only with the authorization of the supplier can the Certification Body release audit data to any entity other than SQFI, or the Accreditation Body, unless required by law.

4.6 Publicly Available Information

- 4.6.1 The Certification Body shall provide to the supplier:
- i. details of the certification procedure including how an audit is conducted and the audit frequency;
 - ii. reference to the edition of the SQF code that will be audited, and will agree the SQF industry scope and products to be certified.
 - iii. a description of the type of objective evidence that will be collected during the audit and the action taken as a result of any critical, major or minor nonconformity found. The Certification Body shall also provide details of the SQF auditor to be used, including an estimate of all fees and charges that apply, and outline the rights of the supplier to object to an SQF auditor if;
 - iv. a list of the documents that will be required to be reviewed for the document review portion of the certification audit when the document review audit is required; and
 - v. details regarding the management of corrective action responses using the SQF Assessment Database system after the certification audit.
- 4.6.2 The Certification Body shall inform the supplier that details of the supplier's certificate will be made available on the SQFI web site for public display as follows:
- i. Supplier name, country, certificate type and number, accreditation body logo and accreditation number, audit date, date of next audit, date of issue, certification expiry date, food sector category(s), product(s) covered by the certificate
- 4.6.3 The Certification Body shall obtain the suppliers consent to have the following certificate details accessible by their customer(s) via the SQFI web site as follows:
- i. Customer/retailer name, supplier name, country, certificate type and number, certification expiry date, food sector category(s), product(s), company representative name and contact details, audit rating, name of Certification Body, audit frequency, date of last Audit, date of next audit.

5 Structural Requirements

5.1 Organizational Structure and Top Management

- 5.1.1 The activities within the Certification Body shall be organized to ensure impartiality
- 5.1.2 The Certification Body shall ensure through organizational structure that no potential conflict of interest, consulting, or training will occur from auditors contracted or employed by the Certification Body to existing or potential suppliers within the SQF program.
- 5.1.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that all certification activities are separately controlled and managed (including the development of policy and practices) from any consulting activity. It shall preclude any prospective SQF auditor from undertaking any audit in relation to the certification of SQF systems that constitute a conflict of interest as outlined below or any other condition that could lead to a conflict of interest.

5.2 Mechanism for Safeguarding Impartiality

- 5.2.1 The Certification Body shall appoint an impartial and independent committee selected from the Certification Body's stakeholder group and shall represent those interests, and may include primary production, manufacturing, food service and retail sectors of the food industry, to oversee the decision process on certification and the development of policies and principles regarding the content and functioning of the SQF certification system.
- 5.2.2 The Certification Body shall ensure that committees, groups or persons with direct overall responsibility for activities, and decisions including:
- i. overseeing and making decisions on certification;
 - ii. supervision of its implementation policies; and
 - iii. the technical basis for granting certification,

are free from any commercial, financial or other pressure that might influence the results of certification and that they have the appropriate experience to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

6 Resource Requirements

6.1 Certification Body Personnel

6.1.1 General

6.1.1.1 The Certification Body shall be able to conduct all audits using resources under its control and in accordance with its scope of accreditation.

The Certification Body shall ensure that all employees responsible for executing the SQF program, including SQF auditors and SQF contract auditors, employ and retain qualifications, skills and experience necessary to perform their duties.

6.1.2 Management of competence for personnel involved in the certification process

6.1.2.1 The Certification Body shall demonstrate that programs are in place for all employees responsible for executing the SQF program including SQF auditors and contract auditors, technical reviewers, certification managers and administration personnel to undertake the training required maintaining their qualifications and awareness of the SQF program and current food safety and quality issues and how they relate to technical judgments they make.

The Certification Body shall have procedures in place to ensure all employees responsible for executing the SQF program and the certification process including, SQF auditors and contract auditors, technical reviewers, certification managers, and administration personnel are made aware of their role and responsibilities and that they are competent and qualified to schedule audits, report audits in SQFAD, undertake desk audits, certification audits, surveillance audits and re-certification audits, review audit reports and make technical judgments and recommendations as necessary.

The Certification Body shall have established competencies for personnel involved in the certification process that addresses:

- i. The training of personnel involved in certification and SQF program management
- ii. The defined competency including qualifications, experience and monitoring
- iii. Auditor selection and orientation
- iv. Implementation of new auditors into the Certification Body's SQF program including at least 2 witness audits by SQF registered auditors. The first 10 audits of each new auditor shall be supervised audits which is a combination of witness audits and review of audit reports as part of the witness assessment.

Existing SQF auditor calibration program shall include calibration of auditors using existing audit data, on-going auditor training at least annually. The CB shall require all SQF auditors in a CB to be witnessed at least once every 2 years, under any GFSI scheme, with one witness audit being SQF at least every 4 years.

The Certification Body shall ensure that criteria on auditor performance is developed so that corrective action can be taken when performance criteria is not achieved. Corrective action items should be prescribed based on data results from calibration activities.

An SQF Audit report review program that includes a schedule of when a review of internal SQF program audits will be reviewed by the Certification Body

No SQF Auditor shall perform an SQF Audit for the same Supplier for more than 3 consecutive Certification cycles.

The Certification Body shall ensure that each SQF auditor who is assigned to conduct an SQF audit is registered as a SQF auditor and maintains such registration for the term of their employment or engagement.

Auditors who lack the auditing experience necessary to enable them to be registered as SQF auditors can be engaged in audits of products and processes utilizing the Certification Body audit tool to gain experience in second and third party auditing. Only second and third party audit experience that has been achieved within the last 10 years can be utilized by auditors in applying for registration as an SQF auditor.

The Certification Body shall follow their management systems when adding new auditors into conducting SQF audits.

The Certification Body shall ensure SQF auditors do not audit SQF systems that relate to or include food sector categories in which the SQF auditor is not registered to audit, unless accompanied by a Technical Expert. When using a Technical Expert the Certification Body shall adhere to the requirements under the SQF Code, Part A, section 5.6.

6.1.2.2 Records must be maintained for all quality management system activities to verify compliance. Compliance records shall be reported annually and must be available to SQFI on request. The Certification Body shall retain detailed records of all SQF auditor and personnel involved in the certification process qualifications, experience and audit activities (audit log).

6.1.3 Contract with the personnel

The Certification Body shall ensure an SQF auditor and personnel involved in the certification process discloses to it any personal or professional existing, former or proposed link between themselves or their organization and the Supplier.

6.2 Resources for Evaluation

6.2.1 Internal resources

6.2.2.1 The Certification Body shall determine the scope of certification of the supplier in conjunction with the supplier. The scope of certification shall include all the products / processes requested by the supplier in the scope of certification, the site description of the facility including any site limitations, the SQF code edition and level of certification, and the relevant modules from the SQF Code. The scope of certification shall be defined by the Certification Body and the supplier prior to the start of the certification audit. Once the certification audit has begun, the scope of the certification shall not be altered.

When evaluation activities are conducted the Certification Body shall ensure the relevant international standard requirement is followed.

6.2.2 External resources (outsourcing)

6.2.2.1 The Certification Body shall ensure that the outsourcing of any inspection or testing activity is conducted by nationally recognized ISO/IEC 17021 and/or ISO/IEC 17025 accredited or equivalent inspection body and testing laboratories utilizing the services of qualified personnel.

7 Process Requirements

7.1 General

7.1.1 The Certification Body shall demonstrate full control over the audit and shall screen SQF auditors thoroughly before appointment to ensure they meet all requirements for completing audits of SQF systems.

7.1.2 The Certification Body shall and adhere to the requirements outlined in the published edition of the SQF Code.

7.1.3 The use of SQF published Guidance Documents shall follow the requirements in the SQF Code, Part A, section 1.9

7.2 Application

The supplier will register for a certification audit at the www.sqfi.com SQF Assessment Database. The supplier will be required to complete a profile, add contact information and select a Certification Body. Once registered, a company will need to complete re-registration through the SQF assessment re-registration process prior to a re-certification audit. Suppliers must remain registration at all times to retain their certification.

The Certification Body shall provide a contract with the supplier for certification in an official format for completion and endorsement by the supplier before any evaluation commences. The contract shall include:

- i. the scope of certification including the version of the SQF Code, level of certification and module to be applied;
- ii. the supplier/company name, its site address to which the certification will apply and postal address, telephone and fax number and e-mail address;
- iii. the name of the supplier/company representative, their telephone and facsimile numbers and email address;
- iv. the food sector category(s) and product(s) to be covered by the certification;
- v. the estimated date of the certification audit;
- vi. the suppliers consent to have their certification details as outlined in 7.8 displayed on the SQFI website;
- vii. the Certification Bodies appeal process; and
- viii. the requirement that the supplier must notify the Certification Body in the event of a food safety incident (recall) by the supplier at any time during their certification in a timely manner.

7.3 Application Review

The application review shall be determined as outlined in the SQF Code, Part A, Implementing and Maintaining the SQF Code, including section 2.2.

Before commencing an initial on-site facility audit the Certification Body shall complete a comprehensive review of the SQF system as presented at a desk audit to ensure that:

- i. the supplier's SQF system meets the requirements of the relevant SQF Code;

- ii. SQF plans have been derived as required in the relevant SQF Code and that they have been developed, validated and verified by a SQF Practitioner; and
- iii. there is substantiated evidence to show that Food Safety Plans, and Food Quality Plans at Level 3, were derived using the HACCP Method.

A desk audit (documentation audit) shall be conducted by the Certification Body only upon initial certification. Subsequent changes in documentation shall be reviewed as part of the recertification audit.

In addition to its evaluation plan for all SQF System certification activities the Certification Body shall prepare a written site audit plan and make that plan available to the supplier.

The Certification Body shall have a procedure outlining how it provides services in new food sector Categories, what steps it will take if approached to operate in dormant food sector categories and how it will acquire the required knowledge, skills and experience before accepting such applications.

7.4 Evaluation

The certification body shall develop a plan for the evaluation activities as they meet the requirements in the SQF Code, Part A, Implementing and Maintaining the SQF Code.

Where an audit involves more than one type of product or process the report shall clearly identify all the elements important to each product type audited.

The audit report shall be completed by the SQF auditor and include all the requirements and the calculated rating as listed in the SQF audit report explanatory notes described in Part A: Section 3.3 of the SQF Code.

The certification audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the effectiveness of the Supplier's SQF System in its entirety. It shall establish and ensure:

- i. the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System; and
- ii. that the Supplier has demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements.

Certification Bodies shall allow SQF Auditors sufficient time to undertake all activities relating to a Desk Audit, Facility Audit or a Re-certification Audit and shall also monitor all SQF Auditor (including Contract Auditors) activities to ensure they do not take excessive time to conduct an Audit. The time allocated shall be based on factors such as the size, complexity of operations, whether it involves a High Risk Product and/or a High Risk Process, the degree of organization of the Supplier and the number of locations. The Certification Body shall be prepared to justify or substantiate the amount of time spent on any Certification Audit, Surveillance Audit or Re-certification Audit.

The audit duration shall be based on the duration guide in table 2, part A, 2.5 of the SQF Code. Documented justification is required if the Certification body deviates from the guide. by more than 30%

The Certification Body shall ensure that SQF Auditors who are conducting an SQF audit use an interview technique which involves the questioning of key personnel at all levels within the facility on the implementation of the SQF program. The SQF auditor must audit all parts of the site during the facility audit, including processing, storage, packaging and formulation areas, the exterior, amenities, waste holding areas, and record reviews, as well as interviews with key personnel. In recertification and surveillance audits, a review of site documentation, including all changes to documentation, must also be included.

The initial onsite certification audit cannot begin until all major and minor non-conformances from the document review audit have been closed out and approved by the Certification Body. .

During the unannounced recertification audit the auditor is expected to:

- Be prepared to share their identification card and authorization from the Certification Body
- Conduct a tour of the facility within the first 60 minutes of arrival at the facility.
- Review the supplier's schedule to verify the identified blackout dates are valid.

For Certification of a multi-site organization the guidance provided in the SQF Code, module 16 and [Annex 3](#) applies.

The Certification Body will ensure that SQF auditors who conduct SQF audits are aware of the latest updates in audit tools and materials as provided by SQFI. SQF auditors will utilize the SQF standards to conduct SQF Audits, but will not add additional standards, criteria, or interpretation to the SQF audit.

7.5 Review

7.5.1 The Certification Body shall include within its quality management system a program for reviewing SQF audit reports prior to release of results to suppliers. The program shall include a technical as well as a grammatical review and shall include criteria and a schedule for the reviews.

The Certification Body shall ensure that the SQF auditors complete the auditor report and provide the required evidence as directed by SQFI. Comments shall be concise using objective evidence to justify the rating and fully describe the nonconformance when present, or describe why a compliant

rating was achieved by the supplier. Where applicable a section comment describing the observations of the standard element can be utilized.
All mandatory elements of module 2 must be audited and cannot be marked "Exempt" or "N/A".
At least one technical reviewer shall be assigned to review all information and results related to the evaluation. The technical reviewer cannot have been involved in the evaluation process
The Certification Body shall ensure that the audit report shall be available to the supplier within 10 calendar days from the last day of the audit.

7.6 Certification Decision

The Certification Body shall assign a person(s) to make the certificate decision using the information related to the evaluation and review including any other relevant information. This person(s) may be the technical reviewer or another competent technical officer trained in management of the SQF system. This person shall not be involved in the process for evaluation as outlined in 7.4 of this document.

Certification and re-certification of SQF systems shall not be granted unless a "C" audit rating or greater is achieved, all nonconformities have been corrected and those corrections verified by the Certification Body (by site visit or other appropriate means).

7.7 Certification Documentation

Within forty - five (45) calendar days from the last date of the audit, the Certification Body shall complete the Certification Decision. If Certification is granted, the Certification Body will create a certification record in SQF assessment database to provide to the Supplier:

- i. a Certificate in the form approved by SQF; with a unique certification number generated by the SQF assessment database;
- ii. an electronic copy of the relevant SQF Quality Shield which shall include the Certification Body name and certification number for facilities which achieve level 3 certification;
- iii. a statement detailing the duration of the certification and the grounds upon which certification may be suspended or withdrawn;
- iv. the requirements for undertaking surveillance audits and Re-certification audits and their frequency; and
- v. where the scope of certification is changed (i.e. expanded or reduced) as a result of an audit a new Certificate shall be issued and the Certification Body shall notify the SQFI of the change.
- vi. Within ten (10) calendar days of granting certification, the Certification Body shall provide an electronic and/or hard copy of the supplier's certificate to the supplier. The certificate is valid for 75 days from the supplier's anniversary date of the initial certification closest to the next recertification audit date, and shall be in a form approved by SQF.

7.8 Directory of Certified Products

All certified, registered sites will be listed in the SQF Assessment Database, which will display the certification site details and include the supplier's food sector category, product(s), audit rating, and country on the SQFI website: <http://www.sqfi.com/suppliers/SQF> certified suppliers

7.9 Surveillance (i.e. maintaining and certification and recertification)

The Certification Body shall have documented procedures laying out the circumstances and conditions in which certification will be maintained and shall follow the requirements in the SQF Code, Part A, section 4.

The Certification Body shall make available to interested parties all documentation and criteria including (without limitation) written procedures for the Certification Body's implementation of 4.6, and the relevant requirements of the SQF Code.

The Certification Body shall maintain documents and data related to its scope of accreditation and the food industry sectors in which it will operate. Typically the Certification Body shall demonstrate access to reference documentation such as pre-requisite programs, HACCP, appropriate legislation, food additives, chemical registration and MRL's and relevant industry a codes of practice (GAP/GMP/GDP)

Use of the SQF Logo and Quality Shield shall follow the requirements outlined in the SQF Code, Appendix 3.

7.10 Changes Affecting Certification

Changes, or new and revised requirements issued by SQF shall be communicated by the Certification Body to the SQF supplier.

7.11 Termination, Reduction, Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

The Certification Body shall implement procedures for suspending and withdrawing certificates as described in the SQF Code, part A, section 4.6 and 4.7.

In the event that the supplier refuses the unannounced audit to occur the Certification Body shall take the following action:

- Immediately suspend the supplier's SQF Certificate;
- Any subsequent audit to regain certification shall be conducted as an announced recertification audit.
- The supplier shall be required to undergo a surveillance audit during certification cycle.
- The Certification Body shall declare the following certification cycle as the unannounced audit year.

7.12 Records

The Certification Body shall maintain sufficiently detailed records of all audits of suppliers to demonstrate that certification and other actions (such as suspension or withdrawal of certificate, corrective actions and disputes resolution) have been effectively carried out. Records shall be kept for a minimum of five years, or as required by law whichever is the greater. Records of application process, certification audits, review, decision and all procedures and quality manual shall be reported to SQFI on an annual basis.

7.13 Complaints and Appeals

This clause is for complaints received by the Certification Body.

The Certification Body shall document its procedure for handling and resolving appeals and complaints about its activities and decisions made by a supplier (including the activities and decisions of its SQF auditors and contract auditors).

- i. Appeals regarding decisions on the suspension and/or withdrawal of the SQF certification by a Certification Body shall not delay the decision to suspend or withdraw the certification.
- ii. Complaints received by a Certification Body from a certified supplier shall be investigated and resolved without delay.

The Certification Body shall document its procedure for handling and resolving appeals and complaints made by other parties about a supplier.

Complaints include concerns, comments, questions or anything that questions the Certification Body's management system.

- i. Complaints received by a Certification Body from other parties about a supplier shall be investigated and resolved without delay.

Where upon investigation of a complaint in 7.2 it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a supplier's SQF System or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Code and/or other supporting documents the Certification Body shall implement action.

Complaints, appeals and disputes shall be handled promptly and without undue delay. The majority of such matters should be resolved within one month of receipt. Records of complaints and investigations must be available to SQFI upon request.

8 Management System Requirements

8.1 Options

8.1.1 The Certification Body shall develop management system, maintained in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 clause 8, which shall also address the SQF Program requirements outlined in this document and the SQF Code.

8.1.2 The Certification Body shall have included in the management system provisions that address:

- General management system documentation
- Control of document
- Control of records

Records must be maintained for all quality system activities to verify compliance. Records must be available to SQFI on request.

- Management review (review of inputs and review of outputs)
- Internal Audits

The Certification Body shall conduct annual internal audits of its certification procedures applicable to their SQF certification program. Management reviews and internal audits shall cover the activities of contract service providers.

The internal audits shall cover all activities in nominated territories and the country where the Accreditation is granted.

The Certification Body shall review its management system and certification procedures applicable to these requirements at least annually. Records of internal audits and management reviews shall be reported annually and made available to the SQFI or its representative on request

- Corrective actions
- Preventive actions