Streamlining ISO 17025 Accreditation

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When you think about the challenges you are facing to receive or keep your accreditation you may feel overwhelmed and wonder where to start with fulfilling all of the requirements. You may also be wondering how you are going to continue to manage the notebooks, folders, filing cabinets, and network drives that contain all of your documents, records, and forms. What a momentous task for one person or one lab.

Qualtrax has had continued success with helping organizations meet increased internal and external scrutiny, information dissemination, and managing and scheduling requirements. Because it is a complete compliance management application, Qualtrax easily manages all types of documents, streamlines forms and processes, and easily tracks requirements such as training, corrective actions, purchasing, and technical records.

The first element of ISO 17025 that most organizations tackle is Document Control (4.3). Qualtrax easily manages the document control process and provides a complete audit history that includes all elements of the ISO requirement. Once a document is placed into the application the audit history begins. Revision numbers are automatically assigned and updated and revision history is tracked as edits are made to a document. Review and approval processes allow the appropriate personnel to make comments and electronically sign a document. With the folder properties of the application, organizations are able to easily manage “view” and “edit” rights, review dates, and standards the document meets. Quality personnel are assured that only the last published version of the document is being viewed or used by appropriate personnel, even during the editing process. A master document list rounds out the document control process. This list is automatically updated with each document title, id number, current revision, and published date which eliminates the need to manually manage a list.

Other elements of ISO 17025 that Qualtrax manages are Purchasing Services and Supplies (4.6) and Technical Records (4.13.2). The workflow feature of the application allows administrators to turn their paper forms into electronic forms (workflows) that become records which are immediately searchable and reportable. Workflows are automatically routed and managed for required content. Users who start a workflow have the ability to track that workflow from start to finish by using their task list through the search feature or via reporting. Because the workflow becomes a record as soon as it is started, organizations have the ability to report on all workflows, not just those that are complete. This is great for managing the corrective action process.
Qualtrax can also relieve the stresses that come along with employee training. Keeping track of training required for each lab employee presents its own set of challenges. Manually tracking trainings that need to be administered, training due dates, and whether or not trainings have been completed requires a spreadsheet or database that must be manually updated by an employee or training coordinator. By using the testing and training feature of Qualtrax, you will be able to set-up trainings for a specified group of employees and have those trainings assigned to new employees or re-administered to existing employees automatically. Qualtrax allows users to set training due dates, assign groups, acknowledge completion, and perform effectiveness sign-offs. Users can also utilize the Qualtrax training matrix to quickly demonstrate to an auditor that everyone in the lab is current on training requirements.

Email Notifications in the system allow users to be notified when there is a task that must be completed. These automatic notifications can be used to meet the notification requirement when documents are updated or need to be reviewed, when trainings are due, and when workflows need to be completed. The system will also monitor tasks assigned and notify users or managers when tasks are approaching their due date or become overdue.

System reports and the report designer allow you to easily pull information needed for your internal or external audits which significantly reduces the amount of time needed to prepare for an audit. Reports can be created and run on a schedule then emailed to the appropriate users. To help manage the information needed for management review of the quality system, reports can be delivered on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

There are many other ways Qualtrax helps streamline the process for ISO Accreditation, but the elements of document control, workflows, and employee training are the most notable features for easing your labs day to day pain points. Because our system is designed to handle these items out of the box, reaching your goal is easier, faster, and more organized.

About the Author:
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