

- FREE CHECKLIST

NQA-1 audit checklist

Work through this before a customer audits your NQA-1 program. For each of the 18 requirements in Part I of ASME NQA-1, you get the questions the auditor will ask, the records to have on the table, and a finding auditors often write up.

An **NQA-1 audit** checks two things: that your QA program covers the requirements of the ASME NQA-1 edition in your contract, and that your work follows the program. The auditor reads your QA manual and procedures, then samples completed work to see whether the records prove the procedures were followed. This checklist follows the 18 requirements in Part I, in the order recent editions list them. It doesn't reproduce the standard, so check every answer against the edition named in your contract.

Confirm the scope before you start. Your customer sets the NQA-1 edition, any Part II requirements, and the scope of supply. Not every requirement applies to every supplier. Design control only applies if design is in your scope. Your QA manual should say which requirements apply and which don't, and why.

Which edition applies

NQA-1 has no categories like CSA N299. What changes from one audit to the next is the edition and which parts of it your contract invokes. Part I holds the 18 basic requirements on this checklist; Part II adds requirements for specific kinds of work.

Your contract

The edition that applies is the one named in your contract or purchase order, along with any Part II requirements it invokes. Everything below is context; the contract decides.

ASME

ASME's current edition is NQA-1-2026. Your contract may name an earlier one, such as 2024, 2022, 2019 or 2017, so check which edition you are being audited to. NQA-1-2026

NRC

For US nuclear power plants in design and construction, NRC Regulatory Guide 1.28, Revision 6 (September 2023) "endorses, with certain clarifications and regulatory positions, Part I and Part II requirements included in NQA-1-2017, NQA-1-2019, and NQA-1-2022 for the implementation of a quality assurance (QA) program during the design and construction phases of nuclear power plants and fuel reprocessing plants". RG 1.28, Rev. 6

ASME certificate

A company seeking an ASME NQA-1 Quality Program Certificate writes a QA manual with “commitment statements identifying which Requirements of Part I and Part II of the NQA-1 Standard are applicable and which are not applicable”. After certification, “the accepted QA Manual will be used by ASME Audit Teams as the basis for conducting future audits and determining continued compliance with the accepted QA Program”. ASME guidance

Before the audit

- ☐ The contract or purchase order names the NQA-1 edition and any Part II requirements, and you have a copy of that edition.
- ☐ Your QA manual says which Part I and Part II requirements apply to your work and which don't.
- ☐ You have agreed the audit date, the auditor's agenda, and which areas and people they will see.
- ☐ You have picked a completed job and traced it from purchase order to shipment, and every record on the way is there and signed.
- ☐ Open NCRs and corrective actions are closed, or have a dated plan you can show.

If you only have time for one of these, do the job trace. Following one real order from purchase order to shipment turns up the same gaps an auditor will find, in roughly the order they will find them.

The checklist, requirement by requirement

01 Organization

The auditor checks that the organization chart, the written responsibilities and the people doing the work all match, and that the people who verify quality are independent of the people who do the work.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there a current organization chart showing who is responsible for quality?
- ☐ Are the responsibilities and authority of each role that affects quality written down?
- ☐ Can the person responsible for quality stop unsatisfactory work without approval from cost or schedule owners?
- ☐ Are the people who inspect or verify work independent of the people who did it?
- ☐ When work is delegated, is the delegation written down and the delegate named?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Organization chart
- Role descriptions or responsibility matrix
- Written delegations of authority
- Stop-work records, if any

COMMON FINDING

An inspector who reports to the production supervisor whose work they accept, with nothing written to show their independence.

02 Quality Assurance Program

Includes training and qualification of personnel

The auditor checks that the QA program is documented and approved, that it says which requirements apply to your work, and that the people doing quality-affecting work are trained and qualified for it.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Does the QA manual say which Part I and Part II requirements apply to your work, and which do not?
- ☐ Has senior management approved the QA program in writing?
- ☐ Has everyone doing quality-affecting work been through indoctrination and training on the procedures they use?
- ☐ Are inspection, test and NDE personnel qualified, with current certifications?
- ☐ Are lead auditors qualified, and are their qualification records kept up to date?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- QA manual with its statement of applicable requirements
- Indoctrination and training records
- Inspection, test and NDE personnel certifications
- Lead auditor qualification records

COMMON FINDING

A technician performing a test under a procedure they were never trained on, with no training record dated before the test.

03 Design Control

Applies when design is in your scope of supply

If design is in your scope, the auditor checks how design inputs are recorded, how each design is verified, and how changes are controlled.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are design inputs (codes, standards, purchaser requirements) recorded and approved before design starts?
- ☐ Is each design verified by someone who did not do the original design, by review, alternate calculation or test?
- ☐ Are design changes, including field changes, controlled the same way as the original design?
- ☐ Are interfaces with other design organizations and the purchaser written down?
- ☐ Is design software checked before its results are used?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Design input documents
- Design verification records
- Design change records and approvals
- Records showing design software was checked before use

COMMON FINDING

A field change made to a drawing without design verification, because it was treated as a minor correction.

04 Procurement Document Control

The auditor checks that your purchase orders pass the technical and quality requirements down to your own suppliers, and that quality reviews them before they go out.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Do purchase orders state the technical requirements, the quality requirements and the records the supplier must send?
- ☐ Do purchase orders say which NQA-1 requirements apply to the supplier?
- ☐ Does quality review purchase orders, and changes to them, before they are issued?
- ☐ Do purchase orders give you and your customer the right of access to the supplier's facilities and records?
- ☐ Do purchase orders require the supplier to report nonconformances and, where applicable, defects under 10 CFR Part 21?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- A sample of purchase orders with quality clauses
- Quality review sign-off on those purchase orders
- Purchase order change records

COMMON FINDING

A purchase order to a sub-supplier that leaves out the quality requirements your customer placed on you.

05 Instructions, Procedures, and Drawings

The auditor checks that quality-affecting work is done to written instructions, procedures or drawings, and that those documents say how to tell whether the work was done right.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is every quality-affecting activity covered by an instruction, procedure or drawing?
- ☐ Do those documents include acceptance criteria, so the person doing the work knows what good looks like?
- ☐ Are the documents written for the people who use them?
- ☐ When you watch the work being done, does it match the procedure?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Procedure index
- Work instructions and drawings for a sample job
- Acceptance criteria referenced in those documents

COMMON FINDING

A procedure that says to inspect a part but gives no acceptance criteria, so each inspector applies their own.

06 Document Control

The auditor checks that documents are reviewed and approved before use, that changes go through the same review, and that only the current revision is at the point of work.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are documents reviewed for adequacy and approved before they are issued?
- ☐ Are changes reviewed and approved by the same organization that approved the original, or one it has delegated?
- ☐ Is there a list or system showing the current revision of each controlled document?
- ☐ Are obsolete copies removed from the work area or clearly marked?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Controlled document list
- Approval records for a sample of documents
- Change history for a recently revised document

COMMON FINDING

An obsolete procedure revision in use at a workstation, still in a binder nobody updated.

07 Control of Purchased Items and Services

Includes commercial-grade dedication and CFSI where they apply

The auditor checks that you buy only from suppliers you have evaluated, that you verify what you receive, and that commercial-grade items are dedicated before safety-related use.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Was each supplier evaluated before it was approved, and is the scope of approval written down?
- ☐ Is supplier performance reviewed, and are suppliers re-evaluated at a set interval?
- ☐ Is incoming material inspected against the purchase order, including certificates of conformance, before it is released?
- ☐ If you dedicate commercial-grade items, are critical characteristics identified and verified for each item?
- ☐ Are receiving inspectors trained to recognize counterfeit, fraudulent and suspect items?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Approved supplier list with scope of approval
- Supplier evaluation and audit records
- Receiving inspection records and certificates of conformance
- Commercial-grade dedication plans and records, if used

COMMON FINDING

A supplier kept on the approved list after its evaluation expired, with orders still being placed.

08 Identification and Control of Items

The auditor checks that items can be identified and traced to their records through every stage of work, so the wrong item cannot be used.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are items marked or tagged so they can be identified at every stage?
- ☐ Can you trace an item to its heat, lot or batch and to its inspection and test records?
- ☐ Is identification transferred when material is cut, split or processed?
- ☐ Is the marking method one that will not damage the item?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Traveler or routing for a sample job
- Heat and lot traceability records
- Marking procedure

COMMON FINDING

Bar stock cut to length with the heat number left on the offcut and not transferred to the part.

09 Control of Special Processes

The auditor checks that processes such as welding, heat treatment and NDE are done to qualified procedures by qualified people, with the results recorded.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are welding procedures qualified, with procedure qualification records on file?
- ☐ Are welders, NDE examiners and heat treatment operators qualified for the processes they perform?
- ☐ Are heat treatment, NDE and other special processes done to qualified procedures?
- ☐ Are process parameters recorded where the procedure requires it?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Welding procedure specifications and procedure qualification records
- Welder and NDE personnel qualification records
- Special process procedures and their qualification records
- Process charts or logs

COMMON FINDING

A welder whose qualification had lapsed because there was no record of continuity in the qualifying process.

10 Inspection

The auditor checks that inspections are planned, done by qualified people who did not do the work, and recorded against written acceptance criteria.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there an inspection plan for each order, showing hold and witness points?
- ☐ Are inspectors independent of the people who did the work being inspected?
- ☐ Is work stopped at hold points until an authorized person releases it?
- ☐ Are inspection results recorded, with the inspector identified and the acceptance criteria referenced?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Inspection plans
- Inspection reports
- Hold point release records
- Inspector qualification records

COMMON FINDING

Work that moved past a hold point before the hold was released, with the release signed afterwards.

11 Test Control

The auditor checks that tests are planned and done to written procedures, with prerequisites met and results evaluated against acceptance criteria.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are tests done to written test procedures that include acceptance criteria?
- ☐ Are prerequisites, such as calibrated instruments and the test configuration, checked and recorded before testing starts?
- ☐ Are test results recorded, evaluated by a qualified person, and accepted or rejected?
- ☐ Is a failed test handled as a nonconformance?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Test procedures
- Test records and results evaluations
- Records of test prerequisites

COMMON FINDING

A test result accepted without anyone recording the evaluation against the acceptance criteria.

12 Control of Measuring and Test Equipment

The auditor checks that every instrument used for acceptance is calibrated, traceable to national standards, and within its due date when used.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there a register of all measuring and test equipment used for acceptance?
- ☐ Is each instrument labelled with its calibration status?
- ☐ Are calibrations traceable to nationally recognized standards?
- ☐ When an instrument is found out of tolerance, do you evaluate everything it was used to accept since its last good calibration?
- ☐ Can you show which instrument was used for each acceptance measurement?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Measuring and test equipment register with due dates
- Calibration certificates
- Out-of-tolerance evaluations
- Records linking instruments to the measurements they were used for

COMMON FINDING

A gauge found out of tolerance with no review of the items it accepted since its last calibration.

13 Handling, Storage, and Shipping

The auditor checks that items are protected from damage, deterioration and loss from receipt to delivery.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are there written handling, storage, cleaning, packaging and shipping instructions where the item needs them?
- ☐ Are storage areas controlled for the conditions the item needs?
- ☐ Are shelf-life items tracked and removed when they expire?
- ☐ Does packaging and marking meet the purchaser's requirements?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Handling and storage procedures
- Storage area inspection records
- Shelf-life log
- Shipping records

COMMON FINDING

Weld consumables stored outside their required conditions, with no record of the storage temperature.

14 Inspection, Test, and Operating Status

The auditor checks that anyone can tell, at any point, whether an item has passed its required inspections and tests, so untested items are not used by mistake.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is the inspection and test status of each item shown by tags, stamps, travelers or records?
- ☐ Is status kept with the item as it moves through the shop?
- ☐ Are status indicators changed only by authorized people?
- ☐ Can operating status (in service, out of service, under test) be seen where it matters?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Status tags and stamps in use
- Travelers showing status at each step
- Procedure for applying and removing status indicators

COMMON FINDING

An item in the shipping area with no tag or record showing it had passed final inspection.

15 Control of Nonconforming Items

The auditor checks that nonconforming items are identified, segregated and dispositioned by an authorized person before anything else happens to them.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Are nonconforming items tagged and segregated so they cannot be used by mistake?
- ☐ Is each nonconformance documented with a description of the condition?
- ☐ Are dispositions (use as is, reject, repair, rework) made by people with the authority to make them?
- ☐ Do use-as-is and repair dispositions have a technical justification, and go to the purchaser where the contract requires it?
- ☐ Are repaired and reworked items re-inspected to the original acceptance criteria or approved alternatives?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Nonconformance log
- A sample of closed nonconformance reports with dispositions
- Technical justifications for use-as-is and repair
- Purchaser approvals, where required

COMMON FINDING

A use-as-is disposition with no technical justification, signed by the production manager.

16 Corrective Action

The auditor checks that conditions adverse to quality are found, corrected and kept from happening again, and that significant ones get a cause analysis.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there a process for identifying conditions adverse to quality from NCRs, audits, complaints and other sources?
- ☐ For significant conditions, is the cause determined and action taken to prevent recurrence?
- ☐ Are significant conditions, their causes and the actions taken reported to the appropriate level of management?
- ☐ Is each corrective action verified as complete and effective before it is closed?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Corrective action log
- Cause analysis records for significant conditions
- Reports to management
- Closure and effectiveness verification records

COMMON FINDING

A significant condition closed by fixing the item, with no cause analysis and no action to prevent it recurring.

17 Quality Assurance Records

The auditor checks that the records proving the work was done right are complete, identifiable, retrievable and protected for as long as they must be kept.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there a list of the QA records you keep, with their retention periods?
- ☐ Are records authenticated (signed or otherwise approved) and legible?
- ☐ Are records protected from loss, damage and unauthorized change, including electronic records?
- ☐ Are corrections made so the original entry stays readable and the person correcting it is identified?
- ☐ Can you retrieve the complete record package for a past order?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Records retention schedule
- A complete record package for a past order
- Storage and backup arrangements, including for electronic records

COMMON FINDING

Electronic records with no backup and no control over who can change them.

18 Audits

The auditor checks that you audit your own program and your suppliers on a schedule, with qualified auditors who are independent of the work, and that findings are acted on.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- ☐ Is there an audit schedule covering every applicable element of the QA program?
- ☐ Are audits led by qualified lead auditors who are independent of the area audited?
- ☐ Are audit results written up and reported to the management of the audited area?
- ☐ Are findings responded to, and is the corrective action verified?
- ☐ Are supplier audits scheduled and done as your procedures require?

RECORDS TO HAVE READY

- Internal and supplier audit schedules
- Audit plans, checklists and reports
- Lead auditor qualification records
- Finding responses and follow-up verification

COMMON FINDING

An internal audit schedule that has not covered some elements of the program for several years.

NQA-1 and 10 CFR 50 Appendix B

Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50 is the NRC regulation that sets 18 quality assurance criteria for nuclear power plants and fuel reprocessing plants. NQA-1 is the ASME standard many programs use to meet it. The titles line up one for one, which makes it straightforward to check a finding against both. The 10 CFR 50 Appendix B audit checklist quotes each criterion. Appendix B titles are from the current eCFR text.

NQA-1 PART I REQUIREMENT	10 CFR 50 APPENDIX B CRITERION
1. Organization	I. Organization
2. Quality Assurance Program	II. Quality Assurance Program
3. Design Control	III. Design Control
4. Procurement Document Control	IV. Procurement Document Control
5. Instructions, Procedures, and Drawings	V. Instructions, Procedures, and Drawings
6. Document Control	VI. Document Control
7. Control of Purchased Items and Services	VII. Control of Purchased Material, Equipment, and Services
8. Identification and Control of Items	VIII. Identification and Control of Materials, Parts, and Components
9. Control of Special Processes	IX. Control of Special Processes
10. Inspection	X. Inspection
11. Test Control	XI. Test Control
12. Control of Measuring and Test Equipment	XII. Control of Measuring and Test Equipment
13. Handling, Storage, and Shipping	XIII. Handling, Storage and Shipping
14. Inspection, Test, and Operating Status	XIV. Inspection, Test, and Operating Status
15. Control of Nonconforming Items	XV. Nonconforming Materials, Parts, or Components
16. Corrective Action	XVI. Corrective Action
17. Quality Assurance Records	XVII. Quality Assurance Records
18. Audits	XVIII. Audits

Questions about NQA-1 audits

Which edition of NQA-1 applies to my work?

The edition named in your contract or purchase order. ASME's current edition is NQA-1-2026. For US nuclear power plants in design and construction, NRC Regulatory Guide 1.28, Revision 6 (September 2023) endorses, with clarifications, Parts I and II of NQA-1-2017, NQA-1-2019 and NQA-1-2022. Confirm the edition, and any Part II requirements, with your customer before preparing for the audit.

What does an NQA-1 audit check?

An NQA-1 audit checks that your QA program covers the applicable requirements of the edition in your contract, and that your work follows it. Auditors read the QA manual and procedures, then sample completed work against the 18 Part I requirements: organization, the QA program, design control, procurement document control, instructions and procedures, document control, purchased items and services, identification of items, special processes, inspection, test control, measuring and test equipment, handling and storage, inspection and test status, nonconforming items, corrective action, QA records and audits.

Who performs NQA-1 audits?

Usually your customer, or an auditor working for them, before placing safety-related work and periodically after. ASME also audits companies that hold or apply for an NQA-1 Quality Program Certificate. ASME's guidance says the accepted QA manual is the basis for its future audits of a certificate holder.

Is ASME NQA-1 certification the same as passing a customer audit?

No. An ASME certificate shows ASME has audited your QA program, and a customer may accept it as part of their evaluation. Your customer still decides what evidence, audits and oversight they need for the work they are buying.

How does NQA-1 relate to 10 CFR 50 Appendix B?

Appendix B is the NRC regulation that sets 18 quality assurance criteria for nuclear power plants and fuel reprocessing plants. NQA-1 is the ASME consensus standard many programs use to meet those criteria. The titles of the 18 NQA-1 Part I requirements line up one for one with the 18 Appendix B criteria, and NRC Regulatory Guide 1.28 endorses specific NQA-1 editions for design and construction.

What records should I have ready for an NQA-1 audit?

Have your QA manual and its statement of applicable requirements, organization chart, training and qualification records, controlled document list, approved supplier list and sample purchase orders, travelers and inspection and test records for a completed job, the calibration register and certificates, the nonconformance and corrective action logs, audit schedules and reports, and your records retention schedule.

How do I prepare for an NQA-1 audit?

Confirm the edition and any Part II requirements with your customer. Check that your QA manual says which requirements apply and which do not. Work through each requirement on this checklist against your own procedures, then trace one completed job from purchase order to shipment and check every record on the way. Close what you find before the audit date.

REFERENCES

1. ASME. *NQA-1-2026: Quality Assurance Requirements for Nuclear Facility Applications*. New York: ASME, 2026.
2. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. *Regulatory Guide 1.28, Revision 6: Quality Assurance Program Criteria (Design and Construction)*. Federal Register notice, 11 September 2023.
3. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. *10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B: Quality Assurance Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Reprocessing Plants*. eCFR, current as of 1 October 2026.
4. ASME. *Guidance on Writing a Quality Assurance Manual (Q1.3-02/14)*. Accessed 4 October 2026.

FORGED

Forged Operations builds quality management software for nuclear suppliers and operators. Score your program against NQA-1 for free at forgedops.com/assessment, or email hello@forgedops.com.

This checklist is a preparation aid. It does not reproduce or replace ASME NQA-1. Check each item against the edition named in your contract. Latest version: forgedops.com/nqa-1-audit-checklist/