



QUALITY MANUALS | FIRST EDITION

IAF SUPPLIER QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AUDITOR MANUAL

Supplier development and
verified production readiness

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Advanced product quality planning and part approval
Manufacturing process audits and traceability
Auditor competence and corrective action

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Publication identity and use

IAF Supplier Quality Assurance and Auditor Manual

This manual provides the requirements, operating procedures and evidence framework for the defined supplier assurance, automated inspection or automotive service activities. Apply it through a controlled site implementation plan and equipment-specific work instructions.

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Reading and applying requirements

“Shall” identifies a requirement when adopted by a site, programme or agreement. “Should” identifies a recommendation. An example is illustrative; it is not a machine setting, test acceptance limit or completed operating record. Annex worksheets may be reproduced for controlled internal use.

Controlled implementation

Stable Release identifies the completed publication text. Site approval, process validation, competence authorization and equipment release are recorded when performed. A missing safety limit, test criterion or release authority prevents activation of the affected operation. Mandatory law, product requirements and validated equipment instructions remain applicable.

Relationship to IAF recognition

Use of this manual does not by itself confer membership, Corporate Recognised status, accreditation, certification or a licence to use IAF marks. Those decisions follow the applicable IAF guides, independent evaluation and recorded scope.

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Using the annexes

Enter actual values, evidence references, names and dates in the worksheets. A blank, unsigned or illustrative record is not proof of completion. Retain the record with its governing instruction and revision.

1 Purpose and scope

1.1 This manual establishes how an automotive organization develops suppliers, plans new products, approves production parts and audits manufacturing evidence. It applies to production and service parts, materials, assemblies, electronics, embedded software and outsourced processes. The adopting organization shall identify the legal entities, manufacturing locations, product families and customer programmes within scope.

1.2 The objective is a repeatable production process that supplies conforming parts with reliable genealogy and effective response to change. A successful sample, favourable audit score or commercial nomination alone is insufficient. Approval shall connect the actual product revision, manufacturing route, tooling, measurement system, process controls and authorized receiving customer.

1.3 Advanced Product Quality Planning (APQP) is the coordinated planning of product and process readiness. Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) is the evidence and decision process used to demonstrate that the intended production system can meet the agreed requirements. The controls in this manual shall be mapped to each customer programme without claiming that one generic submission satisfies every contract.

1.4 Activities include initial sourcing assessment, design and manufacturing readiness, production trials, part approval, launch containment, ongoing process audits, traceability exercises and supplier improvement. Contract manufacturers and sub-tier processors shall remain visible in the approved scope. A supplier shall not present another site or a pilot line as the intended production source.

1.5 Use this manual with the IAF Quality Manual, IAF Supply Chain and Logistics Manual, IAF Lean Manufacturing and SOP Manual and the relevant battery, vision and OT manuals. The IAF Accreditation Scheme Guide governs any separate recognition decision. Supplier approval for one customer or product does not confer unrestricted Federation authorization.

2 Definitions and approval states

2.1 A supplier site is the location that performs the agreed operation. A production family groups parts only where material, process, equipment, risks and verification are demonstrably comparable. Family approval shall list included part numbers and justified differences. A shared logo, commodity description or nominal machine type is not evidence of technical equivalence.

2.2 A special characteristic is a product or process feature requiring enhanced control because of safety, function, fit, downstream manufacture or another agreed consequence. Engineering shall define the designation and acceptance requirement. The supplier shall propagate the designation into drawings, process risk analysis, work instructions, control plans and sub-tier requirements.

2.3 Approval states shall distinguish nominated, development only, trial authorized, conditionally approved, serial production approved, restricted and suspended. Each state shall identify permitted activities. Trial authority does not permit unrestricted shipment. An expired concession, obsolete revision or suspended source shall be blocked from automatic release in purchasing and production systems.

2.4 A deviation or concession permits a specifically identified departure under defined authority, quantity, time and controls. It does not rewrite the drawing or eliminate the need for permanent corrective action. A reworked part is returned to the original requirements; a repaired part may require separate engineering acceptance and explicit customer consent.

2.5 An audit finding compares objective evidence with an applicable requirement. An observation identifies a potential improvement without alleging a requirement failure. Auditor recommendations, technical approval and commercial sourcing decisions are separate records. Evidence shall distinguish witnessed facts, sampled records, interview statements and unresolved assumptions.

3 Responsibilities and independent decisions

3.1 The Supplier Quality Manager owns this system, the technical supplier register, audit programme and escalation process. Procurement obtains contractual access and manages commercial commitments. Engineering owns design requirements, characteristic classification, technical deviations and validation acceptance. Production and Logistics confirm the intended operating conditions and delivery interfaces.

3.2 The supplier appoints an accountable quality representative, APQP leader, process owners and authorized release personnel. Sub-tier quality responsibility shall be allocated explicitly. Outsourcing a heat treatment, coating, software build or laboratory test does not remove the direct supplier's duty to verify the resulting evidence and control changes.

3.3 The customer programme owner agrees submission content, readiness milestones and acceptance authority before trials. A competent reviewer checks the complete evidence package; an authorized decision maker records the permitted production and shipment scope. Where independence is required by an IAF scheme, the applicable scheme decision process shall govern.

3.4 Auditors shall have access to relevant records and safe observation opportunities. They shall declare financial, employment, consulting and personal conflicts before assignment. A person who designed the audited control shall not be its sole independent evaluator. Gifts, purchasing pressure or threatened delivery penalties shall not determine findings.

3.5 Any worker may report a suspected safety or integrity failure and request containment. Only the designated authority may release held material. Delegations shall specify technical scope, duration and absence cover. Escalation shall preserve the IAF Conflict of Interest, Whistleblowing and Appeals and Complaints policies without delaying necessary protective action.

4 Supplier selection and risk segmentation

4.1 Before nomination, verify legal identity, actual production address, product experience, process capability, available capacity, financial continuity and access to essential technical information. Visit or otherwise obtain adequate direct evidence for critical operations. An administrative questionnaire may support screening but shall not substitute for witnessing a process whose capability is material to the decision.

4.2 Risk segmentation shall consider product consequence, design novelty, process complexity, new materials, software content, sub-tier dependence, historical escapes, geographical changes and the maturity of traceability. Record the rationale and uncertainty. High commercial spend is not the only reason for high scrutiny; a low-cost fastener may have a critical function.

4.3 Map the manufacturing route through every significant sub-tier operation. Identify shared raw-material sources, common tooling, outsourced tests and unapproved brokers. Agree notification and access provisions for changes affecting conformity. Confidentiality may require restricted review arrangements, but missing evidence shall remain a decision limitation.

4.4 Set the development plan from the assessed gaps: competence, maintenance, measurement, process stability, error proofing, records or capacity. Each action shall have a responsible owner, due milestone and evidence of completion. A commercial promise to improve after launch shall not close a missing safety or release control.

4.5 Approve the supplier for a defined site and product or process scope. Reassess segmentation after a significant escape, transfer, ownership change, extended shutdown or persistent corrective-action failure. Procurement shall verify technical status before changing a purchase order to a different manufacturing source.

5 APQP gates and programme control

The programme team shall establish the following IAF gate structure at project launch. Dates, customer submission expectations and deliverables shall be agreed before commitments are made. Gates are evidence reviews; the passage of a calendar date does not constitute approval.

Gate	Required evidence	Decision
G0 Scope	Customer needs, product boundaries, feasibility, sourcing risks and accountable team.	Authorize development scope.
G1 Product readiness	Controlled requirements, design risks, special characteristics and validation plan.	Authorize process development.
G2 Process readiness	Process flow, risk analysis, controls, tooling, gauges, training and trial plan.	Authorize production trial.
G3 Demonstration	Representative trial, measurement suitability, test results, capability and capacity evidence.	Authorize submission or repeat trial.
G4 Part approval	Complete PPAP evidence, resolved gaps, accepted conditions and launch controls.	Define shipment permission.
G5 Launch exit	Stable output, effective controls, closed issues and customer acceptance where required.	Transfer to routine monitoring.

At each gate, record the evidence revision, unresolved issues, consequence, owner and decision. A conditional advance may permit limited development work; it shall not silently authorize production shipment. Safety, legality and product acceptance requirements cannot be waived by a project traffic-light status.

The APQP leader shall maintain one integrated schedule connecting supplier and sub-tier milestones, tooling, validation, logistics and customer trials. Review critical dependencies at the agreed cadence. Escalate delayed evidence before it becomes an unapproved launch shortcut. Annex A provides a reusable gate record.

6 Requirement capture and technical feasibility

6.1 Engineering and Supplier Quality shall establish a controlled requirement register covering drawings, material specifications, digital models, dimensions, appearance, performance, software behaviour, durability, packaging and identification. Record revision, source, applicability and responsible verifier. Resolve contradictions between a drawing, model and purchasing description before manufacture.

6.2 Feasibility review shall involve the people who will actually design, manufacture, inspect, maintain and supply the part. Evaluate tolerances, material availability, tool access, inspection access, handling, rate, environmental conditions and error recovery. Record assumptions and evidence; a signed feasibility form without analysis does not demonstrate capability.

6.3 Translate customer functions and failure consequences into verifiable characteristics. Specify units, datum systems, test conditions, acceptance rules, sample populations and required evidence. For software or electronic assemblies, include approved hardware, software configuration, programming identity, functional tests and security-sensitive provisioning controls.

6.4 The supplier shall challenge requirements that cannot be measured reliably or produced consistently. Proposed changes shall be routed through controlled engineering review and customer agreement where applicable. Do not silently relax a tolerance, substitute a material or change the interpretation of an appearance boundary to secure a feasible quotation.

6.5 Close feasibility with an explicit decision: feasible, feasible subject to named actions, or not feasible. Link each action to an APQP gate and approval dependency. Preserve the reviewed requirement baseline so later audits can distinguish an approved change from a process that never met the original commitment.

7 Design and process risk analysis

7.1 The cross-functional team shall examine credible failure modes, their effects, causes and controls across the product and manufacturing sequence. Include normal operation, changeover, restart, tool wear, maintenance, rework, mixed variants, missing data and foreseeable human error. The analysis shall be specific enough to direct action at the actual workstation.

7.2 Assess consequence, likelihood and ability to prevent or detect the failure using a defined internal scale. Do not let a low composite score conceal a severe safety consequence or unsupported control. Prioritize elimination and prevention before relying on additional inspection. Record why residual risk is accepted and by whom.

7.3 Maintain alignment among process flow, risk analysis, control plan and work instructions using stable operation and characteristic identifiers. If the flow includes outsourced coating or rework, its risks and controls shall appear in the same connected system. An audit shall trace selected high-consequence risks through to live controls.

7.4 For every action, state the design or process change, owner, due date and verification method. Demonstrate effectiveness through appropriate trials, measurement or challenge tests. A revised risk rating is not evidence that the physical control works. Error-proofing claims require controlled tests of the failure condition and the resulting reaction.

7.5 Review the analysis after design or process change, new failure information, customer complaints and relevant lessons from similar products. Preserve earlier versions and link them to production dates. Previously accepted assumptions shall be revisited when field evidence or operating conditions invalidate them.

8 Control plans and reaction instructions

8.1 The control plan shall identify each relevant operation, characteristic, specification, measurement method, equipment, sampling frequency, record and reaction. Separate development, launch and routine production controls where their intensity differs. The current instruction at the workstation shall match the released plan and the actual part revision.

8.2 Define the sampling unit precisely: piece, cavity, weld, batch, coating lot, programmed module or process cycle. Specify how shifts, machines, cavities and variants are covered. A sample from one cavity or a favourable time period shall not be represented as coverage of all production conditions.

8.3 Every out-of-control or nonconforming condition shall have an actionable reaction: stop or restrict the affected process, identify the last known conforming point, segregate suspect material, notify the owner and verify correction. State who may restart and what first-off checks are required. Operators shall know these steps without searching a generic policy.

8.4 For automated controls, document the inspection recipe, trigger, identification handshake, reject mechanism and confirmation of segregation. Loss of image, test data, network or reject confirmation shall not default to acceptance. Manual fallback requires a validated method, competent staffing, traceability and written activation authority.

8.5 Challenge error-proofing devices using safe, controlled test methods at defined intervals and after relevant intervention. Identify test artefacts and prevent their shipment. Record the failure simulated, response observed and recovery. A green status lamp without a meaningful challenge does not establish that an interlock protects the intended failure mode.

9 Measurement systems and calibration assurance

9.1 The measurement owner shall select methods with adequate range, resolution, uncertainty, access and robustness for the characteristic. Calibration establishes a relationship to a suitable reference; it does not alone demonstrate that an operator, fixture, algorithm and production environment can make a reliable acceptance decision.

9.2 Study repeatability, reproducibility, bias, stability and relevant part variation using a planned design. Include representative operators, fixtures, ranges, surface conditions and shifts. For attribute decisions, compare repeated blinded classifications with an independently established reference and report disagreement by defect type and boundary condition.

9.3 Document the acceptance criterion for measurement performance before the study. Customer requirements and risk determine the permissible uncertainty and error. If uncertainty makes the pass or fail decision ambiguous, use a defined decision rule, improve the method or obtain independent evaluation; do not round a result into compliance.

9.4 Calibration and intermediate checks shall have justified intervals based on use, drift, environment and consequence. Record instrument identity, reference identity, method, conditions, results and authorized status. Protect settings and quarantine equipment that is overdue, damaged or outside its permitted performance.

9.5 When a measurement system fails, identify product evaluated since the last defensible valid state. Assess the nature and direction of error, affected characteristics and available independent evidence. Reinspect or contain as required, communicate material impacts and verify recovery before restoring release authority. The vision manual supplies additional controls for camera-based measurement.

10 Production trial and capacity demonstration

Owner: APQP leader with Production and Supplier Quality. The trial shall represent the intended serial process. Agree duration, quantity, product mix and acceptance criteria from risk and customer requirements; this manual does not impose a universal trial quantity.

Step / owner	Required action and evidence
1 Freeze the scope	Identify part revision, site, route, machines, tools, cavities, material batches, software, operators and shifts. Record any difference from planned serial production and its effect on the evidence.
2 Confirm readiness	Verify released instructions, trained personnel, suitable measurement systems, maintenance, error proofing, sub-tier evidence, packaging and traceability. Resolve critical gaps before starting.
3 Run representative work	Operate at the intended conditions, including normal handling and inspection. Record changeovers, stoppages, scrap, rework, staffing and interventions. Do not remove unfavourable cycles from the trial record.
4 Collect linked evidence	Preserve first-off and routine measurements, functional and material results, process data and sample identities. Cover relevant cavities, tools, shifts and variants. Retain raw data and rejected output.
5 Evaluate sustained output	Calculate accepted output over the full declared period. Compare with committed demand, availability and bottlenecks. Distinguish observed throughput from a theoretical ideal cycle rate.
6 Decide and document	Review conformity, stability, capacity and unresolved limitations. Authorize submission, repeat the trial or restrict scope. Identify retained samples, their location and any permitted use.

Trial completion does not authorize shipment. Product remains in its declared status until the competent approval decision. Annex B captures the trial configuration and reconciliation; Annex G illustrates capability and throughput calculations.

11 Process stability and capability evaluation

11.1 Before quoting a capability index, verify measurement suitability, the selected population and reasonable process stability. Preserve time order and subgroup definitions. Examine special causes, trends, changeovers, tool wear and shifts. Combining distinct machines or cavities into one average can conceal an incapable stream and shall require explicit justification.

11.2 For a stable approximately normal process, C_p describes specification width relative to six within-process standard deviations. C_{pk} also considers process centring. P_p and P_{pk} use the declared overall variation estimate. The report shall identify the estimator and assumptions; these indices are not interchangeable labels for a spreadsheet output.

11.3 For non-normal, bounded, discrete or autocorrelated data, choose and justify an appropriate analysis. Do not transform data solely to produce a favourable index. Use confidence intervals or another justified uncertainty assessment when sample size is limited. An apparently high index from a short, selected run is weak evidence of sustained production.

11.4 Agree the required capability threshold and treatment of special characteristics before the study. This manual establishes no universal acceptance index. A customer requirement, engineering risk decision or contractual criterion shall be stated in the approval record. A capable dimension does not prove functional performance or conformity of an unmeasured characteristic.

11.5 When capability is inadequate, investigate causes, improve the process and reassess. Temporary containment requires a technically effective detection method and bounded permission; additional inspection does not increase underlying process capability. Preserve failed studies and explain why later evidence supports release rather than replacing the earlier record.

12 PPAP submission evidence

Supplier Quality shall agree a submission matrix with the receiving customer before the trial. Identify what must be submitted, retained, witnessed or independently reviewed. The following evidence families are the IAF control framework; customer forms and required submission arrangements remain programme-specific.

Evidence family	Minimum content to verify
Product baseline	Approved part and drawing revisions, technical changes, materials, special characteristics and any required design validation.
Manufacturing system	Actual site and process flow, tooling and cavity identities, process risk analysis, control plan, work instructions and sub-tier approvals.
Measurement and tests	Measurement-system suitability, dimensional results, material and performance test results, raw data and competent test-provider scope.
Production demonstration	Representative trial identity, process stability and capability, sustained output, scrap and rework and unresolved operating limitations.
Product presentation	Appearance acceptance when applicable, identified retained samples, gauges or fixtures, packaging, labels and traceability demonstration.
Decision record	Submission index, supplier declaration, open deviations, customer-specific evidence and authorized approval with scope and conditions.

Every report shall connect to the tested samples and production conditions. Verify that results belong to the submitted revision and site. A copied certificate, unexplained result change or missing raw evidence requires investigation. Electronic records shall preserve identity, original values, changes and reviewer actions.

Missing items require an explicit applicability decision or open-action entry. Marking an item not applicable requires a technical reason and authorized review. Do not classify unavailable evidence as not applicable. Annex C provides the submission and decision worksheet.

13 Submission review and production release

Owner: authorized Supplier Quality reviewer and customer decision maker. Trigger: initial submission, changed product or process, renewed approval or a defined customer request. Review shall cover the full claimed scope.

Step / owner	Required action and evidence
1 Check completeness	Confirm the submission index, revisions, site, product range, trial conditions and agreed evidence. Identify omitted, stale or contradictory records before deciding technical adequacy.
2 Review technical validity	Check measurement suitability, raw results, functional evidence, special characteristics, capability assumptions, sub-tier controls and traceability. Resolve material discrepancies with the responsible specialist.
3 Resolve conditions	Identify each unmet requirement and its consequence. Reject unsupported safety or legal departures. Any permitted temporary deviation requires the proper engineering and customer authority.
4 Record the decision	State approved, conditionally approved or rejected. Identify exact parts, revisions, site, route, tooling and restrictions. Approval shall name the accountable decision maker and actual date.
5 Activate controls	Update supplier, purchasing and production status. Communicate approved scope, launch controls, quantity or time limits and required labels. Block transactions outside the decision.
6 Monitor expiry	Track conditional volumes, dates and closure evidence. Reassess before expiry. Continued ordering or silence from a reviewer does not extend temporary approval.

The auditor may recommend action but shall not imply customer approval. A release signature is valid only within its delegated scope. Finance or Procurement shall not remove a technical hold solely because material has been invoiced or demand is urgent.

14 Launch containment and transfer to routine control

14.1 Before first shipment, define launch containment for the product, sites, quantities and duration. Select enhanced checks from failure consequence and process maturity. State the responsible team, detection method, independent verification where necessary, identification of accepted lots and the path for rapid customer notification.

14.2 Containment shall target credible escapes rather than duplicate an ineffective check. For each inspection, establish defect definitions, adequate measurement, operator competence, environmental conditions and records. If the defect cannot be reliably detected after manufacture, improve the process or restrict production instead of presenting inspection as complete protection.

14.3 Review daily or at the agreed risk-based cadence the defects, escapes, rework, downtime, traceability exceptions and unresolved actions. Keep internal defects distinct from customer escapes. Intensify controls when process behaviour changes. A period with no complaints is insufficient if little product has reached the customer or the failure emerges later in use.

14.4 Exit criteria shall be agreed at launch entry and include representative production exposure, stable controls, closure of relevant issues, acceptable quality evidence and customer concurrence where required. The authorized review shall name the effective lots or date and the routine control plan revision. Do not remove controls simply because the launch calendar ended.

14.5 If a serious escape occurs after exit, assess affected populations and reinstate suitable containment. Record whether the cause reflects process deterioration, an inadequate original control or a new failure mode. Feed the lesson into future APQP plans and the supplier risk classification.

15 Changes and renewed approval

15.1 The supplier shall request review before changes to design, material, source, manufacturing site, tooling, cavity, process sequence, special process, inspection method, software, packaging or significant production rate. The agreement shall define notification duties for restart after an extended interruption and transfer between sub-tier locations.

15.2 The change request shall describe the current and proposed state, reason, affected parts, risks, required validation, inventory exposure and intended effective point. Include samples, tools in transit, customer stock and service parts. Emergency circumstances require a bounded emergency decision; they do not make an unapproved change disappear.

15.3 Engineering and Supplier Quality shall define the evidence needed for renewed approval. Reuse unchanged evidence only when its applicability is justified. A new cavity, material or algorithm may require targeted studies even when the drawing remains unchanged. Verify interactions with software, appearance, packaging and downstream assembly.

15.4 Control cutover with distinguishable revisions, batches or serial ranges. Reconcile residual stock, rework, mixed shipments and sub-tier material. Do not relabel older product as the new configuration without an approved conversion process and verified results. Communicate the actual transition to every affected receiving location.

15.5 After implementation, audit the first representative production and confirm that the approved change is what was installed. Retain the request, risk review, trials, decision, effective population and follow-up results. Unauthorized change requires containment and a decision on source restriction or suspension.

16 Audit programme and coverage planning

16.1 The Supplier Quality Manager shall maintain an audit programme covering sourcing, launch, routine production, special processes, traceability and corrective-action effectiveness. Prioritize safety consequence, new technology, supplier performance, change, previous findings and evidence gaps. Set and review an annual programme while allowing immediate risk-driven additions.

16.2 Define each audit objective, applicable requirements, site, product families, process scope and decision use. System audits evaluate management controls; process audits follow actual operations; product audits examine output against defined requirements. Layered checks are short recurring operational verifications and shall not be presented as a substitute for independent process auditing.

16.3 Plan coverage of shifts, cavities, tools, machines, variants, outsourced operations and abnormal flows. Sample rework, start-up and rejected material as well as normal production. State what will not be observed and why. A single polished demonstration shall not stand for a full production system without evidence of equivalence.

16.4 Remote review may support document examination and interviews where access, confidentiality and evidence integrity are adequate. Critical physical observations shall be performed on site when remote methods cannot establish the necessary facts. Record connectivity, camera control, unseen areas and other limitations in the report.

16.5 Do not treat audit sampling as statistical proof of every item unless a valid statistical design supports that claim. Choose samples independently, preserve their identifiers and explain coverage. Expand the sample when discrepancies suggest systemic failure or when the supplier's records cannot be reconciled.

17 Auditor qualification and conduct

17.1 The audit manager shall define competence by assignment: audit method, product technology, manufacturing process, measurement, data interpretation, traceability, communication and safe site behaviour. Generic course attendance is insufficient for a specialist assignment. A battery process, welded structure or software-controlled inspection requires relevant technical competence in the team.

17.2 Qualification shall include observed audit performance, evidence evaluation, clear finding writing and suitable technical experience. A supervised trainee may participate within an assigned role. Record the assessor, witnessed scope, demonstrated strengths, limitations, authorization date and review triggers. Annex H includes an assignment readiness record.

17.3 Auditors shall distinguish evidence from opinion, avoid leading witnesses, protect confidential designs and interview personnel respectfully. Use qualified interpreters where needed and preserve the meaning of technical statements. Do not demand unsafe demonstrations, enter guarded areas or handle restricted equipment without authorization and competence.

17.4 Declare conflicts before appointment and when circumstances change. A supplier development consultant shall not independently validate their own design of a control. Manage perceived as well as actual conflicts through reassignment, independent review or another documented safeguard. Fees and travel arrangements shall not depend on a favourable finding.

17.5 Review auditor performance through report quality, witnessed practice, overturned findings, feedback and technical currency. Reauthorize after significant scope change, prolonged inactivity or competence concerns. Suspend assignments when evidence shows poor impartiality or inability to evaluate the required technology.

18 Audit preparation and opening meeting

Owner: Lead Auditor. Preparation shall make the site visit purposeful and allow safe, lawful access without permitting the supplier to determine every sample in advance.

Step / owner	Required action and evidence
1 Define criteria	Confirm the applicable contract, controlled IAF requirements, customer requirements and approved technical documents. Identify the questions the audit must resolve and the intended decision use.
2 Review prior evidence	Examine performance, escapes, changes, previous findings, approval status, process maps and relevant sub-tier information. Develop process-specific audit trails and potential sample populations.
3 Confirm the team	Match technical competence to scope, resolve conflicts, assign responsibilities and agree confidentiality. Arrange interpreters and specialist support where required.
4 Plan the visit	Agree access, operating periods, production availability, safety induction, photography rules and record handling. Reserve time for rework, night-shift evidence and unexpected discrepancies.
5 Open with management	Confirm objective, scope, criteria, methods, communication and stop-work arrangements. Explain finding categories, factual review and the route for disputed evidence.
6 Select live trails	Choose identifiable orders, batches or units from the actual population. Link them to operations and records. Adjust the plan when production conditions differ materially from the agreed scope.

Record attendance, scope changes and access restrictions. If essential evidence cannot be observed, report the limitation and decide whether a further visit is needed. Do not issue a positive conclusion for an unexamined critical process.

19 Production floor audit method

19.1 Follow a selected part from material receipt through manufacture, inspection, rework, packing and release. At each operation compare the approved instruction with what the operator and equipment actually do. Ask the operator to explain the normal method, defect reaction and restart criteria, then verify those statements against records and observation.

19.2 Use linked evidence: the requirement states what should occur; observation and records show what occurred; the product or process result shows the consequence. Record machine, station, part, lot, shift, time and document revision. Screenshots and photographs shall have a permitted purpose and sufficient context to avoid misleading interpretation.

19.3 Test control effectiveness through approved safe challenges, review of real failures and examination of the resulting quarantine or release transactions. Do not introduce an unsafe condition to prove an audit point. A demonstration performed only with an auditor's specially prepared sample shall be identified as such and supported by ordinary production evidence.

19.4 Inspect rejected stock, off-line work, temporary repairs, handwritten instructions, manual overrides and abandoned transaction queues. These frequently reveal differences between the planned and actual process. Verify how supervisory approval is recorded and whether affected product is distinguishable from routine accepted output.

19.5 Triangulate contradictions rather than selecting the most convenient explanation. Expand sampling, consult a specialist or record unresolved uncertainty. Close the audit trail by tracing a released product back to the controls relied on for acceptance. A clean workstation or confident interview does not replace this evidence chain.

20 Process specific audit focus

The auditor shall translate these focus areas into questions tied to actual requirements, characteristic identifiers and operating records. This matrix does not prescribe welding, coating or machining settings.

Process	What to witness	Evidence to trace
Press and forming	Material and thickness identity, die condition, setup, crack and dimensional checks, lubricant and scrap segregation.	Coil or blank lot to tool, cavity, checks and finished batch.
Welding and joining	Approved joint configuration, parameter control, consumables, fixtures, electrode wear and validation of joint integrity.	Joint requirement to process record and suitable verification results.
Paint and coating	Surface preparation, chemical controls, cure conditions, contamination and appearance assessment.	Batch and route to process conditions and acceptance evidence.
Machining and treatment	Tool life, offsets, fixture control, outsourced treatment, mixed material prevention and gauge suitability.	Material heat to machine, treatment batch and dimensional result.
Assembly and electronics	Part identity, sequence, fastening, programming, functional tests, repair routes and access control.	Serial number to critical components, software and end tests.
Battery operations	Material genealogy, environmental controls, joining, contamination prevention and electrical test authorization.	Cell and module identities to pack, process history and release.

For processes whose outputs cannot be fully verified by later inspection, examine process qualification, validated operating windows, competent personnel and ongoing monitoring. A surface image shall not be treated as proof of internal weld quality; appearance alone shall not establish coating durability or battery integrity.

Verify any claimed equivalence between equipment, materials or process routes. The relevant IAF production and battery manuals provide connected controls; the approved product and process instructions establish the actual acceptance limits.

21 Traceability architecture and data integrity

21.1 Traceability shall connect incoming material, sub-tier processing, manufacturing events, inspection, rework and shipment at the granularity required by risk and contract. Define lot creation, serial assignment, split, merge and consumption rules. A barcode identifies a record; it does not prove that the physical part corresponds to that record.

21.2 Record the relevant material heat or batch, supplier site, tool and cavity, machine, date and shift, process recipe, operator authorization, critical component identities and acceptance results. For software-controlled parts, preserve the released software identity and programming outcome. State which associations are direct observations and which are derived from time or batch allocation.

21.3 Parent and child relationships shall survive repacking, partial consumption, mixed pallets, rework and disassembly. Prevent duplicate serials and ambiguous reuse of labels. When individual genealogy is lost, expand the suspect population to the defensible common boundary; do not reconstruct precise identities from unsupported assumptions.

21.4 Digital systems shall validate transaction sequence, time synchronization, interfaces and error queues. A failed scan or missing result shall block the required release step. Corrections shall preserve the original value, reason, actor and approval. Backup and recovery tests shall demonstrate restoration of relationships as well as individual data files.

21.5 The control plan shall specify retention, retrieval targets, access and offline arrangements. Manual fallback shall use unique controlled identifiers and later reconciliation. Traceability exercises shall include production, warehouse and customer records so that a technically correct local database is not mistaken for an end-to-end containment capability.

22 Backward and forward traceability audit

Owner: Lead Auditor with the supplier traceability owner. Use independently selected units and batches. Agree the retrieval target before the exercise according to safety, customer and operational needs.

Step / owner	Required action and evidence
1 Select and preserve	Choose a released unit or shipment, record its physical identity and freeze the relevant record versions. Include a changed, reworked or mixed-flow example where relevant.
2 Trace backward	Locate material and component sources, sub-tier operations, process configuration, inspection and release. Compare physical labels, original source records and system relationships.
3 Trace forward	Select one implicated input or process event and identify every affected work-in-progress, finished unit, shipment and destination. Include returns, replacements and service stock.
4 Reconcile quantities	Account for received input, output, scrap, rework, retained samples, on-hand stock and transfers using appropriate conversion or yield rules. Investigate every unexplained difference.
5 Test containment	Verify that identified product can actually be blocked, located and communicated to receiving parties. Use clearly identified exercise messages and avoid confusing a drill with a real recall.
6 Report the outcome	Record completeness, elapsed time, inaccessible data, false inclusions, missed units and corrective actions. Repeat affected trails after correction and retain independent verification.

An exercise passes only against its pre-agreed criteria, including no unexplained loss of required genealogy. A rapid query with incomplete scope is a failure of containment capability. Annex E provides the audit record and a quantity reconciliation example.

23 Findings and protective action

Each finding shall name the requirement, objective evidence, affected scope and consequence. Separate factual correction from disagreement about interpretation. Findings shall be reviewed for consistency; a numerical score cannot cancel a mandatory failure.

Category	Meaning	Required control
Critical	Immediate serious safety or integrity threat, deliberate falsification or absent essential permission.	Stop affected activity or release, contain product and escalate immediately.
Major	Systemic failure or evidence that the control cannot reliably protect conformity or traceability.	Contain the affected scope and require verified corrective action before unrestricted release.
Minor	Isolated requirement failure without evidence of systemic loss or immediate invalidity.	Correct, examine cause and verify effectiveness within the assigned period.
Observation	Improvement opportunity without demonstrated requirement nonconformity.	Record separately; do not make it an undisclosed approval condition.

For supplier contractual audits, the notification shall specify containment and corrective-action deadlines based on consequence and customer obligations. Urgent protection shall begin immediately and shall not wait for the final report. Where the audit is an IAF accreditation assessment, its finding categories, mandatory notification periods and closure rules govern.

Present findings at the closing meeting with the evidence and affected population. Record the supplier response, unresolved issues, report recipients and decision route. Receipt of the report is not agreement with every conclusion. A good-faith challenge shall not attract retaliation or remove necessary containment.

24 Problem solving and corrective action

Owner: supplier process owner, monitored by Supplier Quality. Trigger: escape, audit finding, failed trial, traceability gap or repeated control failure. Annex F captures the full action cycle.

Step / owner	Required action and evidence
1 Define the problem	Describe the failed requirement, actual condition, location, time, frequency and affected population. Separate confirmed facts from hypotheses and identify what remains unknown.
2 Contain the exposure	Block suspect stock across supplier, transit, customer and service channels. Establish a capable screening or alternative control. Confirm counts, responsibilities and customer communication.
3 Establish causes	Test explanations for occurrence, failure of detection and management-system weakness. Use physical evidence and process history. Operator error alone is insufficient without examining conditions and controls.
4 Implement correction	Restore conformity where possible through authorized work and disposition. Select permanent preventive changes, assess new risks and obtain approval before altering the product or process.
5 Verify effectiveness	Use pre-agreed measures and representative exposure, including the original failure condition. Confirm that containment can end safely and that similar products or sites have been considered.
6 Close and sustain	Approve closure, update risk analysis and instructions, train personnel and schedule follow-up. Preserve unsuccessful trials and reopen the action if recurrence contradicts the claimed solution.

Retraining, a revised form or a photograph of a clean area is not automatically a root-cause solution. Effectiveness evidence shall address the mechanism that caused the failure and the reason it escaped detection.

25 Supplier development and performance review

25.1 Supplier development shall focus on demonstrated process weaknesses and future requirements. Agree a baseline, target behaviour, responsible team, resources and review milestones. Improvement may address measurement, tooling, maintenance, standard work, special-process knowledge, sub-tier oversight or data integrity. Avoid an action list consisting only of additional reporting.

25.2 Performance measures shall distinguish rejected pieces, customer escapes, line disruptions, audit findings, on-time corrective actions and repeat failures. Define the denominator and treatment of mixed lots. Report parts per million as nonconforming pieces divided by received pieces times one million; do not combine that measure with defect counts per piece.

25.3 Compare suppliers using comparable products and exposure. A small supplier with few deliveries may show a volatile rate; a mature supplier may have delayed field failures. Display volume, period and uncertainty alongside the metric. Do not reward a supplier for hiding internal rejects or delaying complaint classification.

25.4 Escalation may move from focused support to additional verification, restricted sourcing or suspension. Decisions shall be evidence-based, proportionate and communicated with conditions for recovery. Procurement shall coordinate capacity implications while maintaining technical protection. An alternative supplier requires its own demonstrated approval.

25.5 Management review shall examine whether development actions improved actual outcomes and whether customer or supplier pressure undermines independent decisions. Capture transferable lessons without disclosing another supplier's confidential designs. Close a development programme only when the agreed evidence demonstrates sustainable improvement.

26 Escapes and customer containment

26.1 A suspected customer escape shall trigger immediate evaluation of safety, function, affected quantities and shipment status. Identify the last defensible conforming boundary and expand it when genealogy or inspection validity is uncertain. Protect receiving production and service users through the applicable incident and communication process.

26.2 Notify the responsible customer contact with verified facts, affected identifiers, current uncertainty, containment instructions and the next update commitment. Do not wait for complete root-cause analysis before communicating a material risk. Formal reporting and recall responsibilities shall be determined by the competent legal and product-safety roles.

26.3 Coordinate supplier stock, transit, receiving locations, distributors, repair channels and returned product. Preserve evidence needed for technical investigation, including failed parts, packaging, logs and configuration. Handle damaged batteries or other hazardous returns through specialist arrangements; a quality return authorization is not a transport permission.

26.4 Any screening, rework or field correction shall use an approved instruction, competent personnel, capable equipment and traceable results. Record inspected, accepted, rejected and unresolved quantities. A sorting provider shall not independently relax acceptance criteria or substitute undocumented parts to meet a delivery deadline.

26.5 Authorize resumption only when the containment boundary, technical correction and release evidence are adequate. Review whether previously approved parts or processes require renewed submission. The customer incident record and supplier corrective-action record shall remain linked, including decisions about downstream notification and effectiveness monitoring.

27 Records confidentiality and document control

27.1 Apply the IAF Documents and Records Guide to requirement baselines, APQP gates, submissions, audit plans, raw evidence, findings, decisions and corrective actions. Each record shall identify its owner, revision, date, scope and related part or process. Preserve original results and attributable corrections rather than overwriting an unfavourable outcome.

27.2 The retention schedule shall satisfy applicable product-life, legal, customer and IAF scheme obligations. For work under the IAF Accreditation Scheme Guide, apply its minimum periods and longer certificate-related requirements. Suspend disposal during litigation, investigation, recall or unresolved dispute. The schedule shall state the event that starts each retention period.

27.3 Protect customer drawings, manufacturing know-how and personal information with role-based access and controlled transfer. Auditors shall collect only evidence necessary for the audit purpose. Where full copies are unnecessary or prohibited, record a defensible witnessed evidence reference with sufficient detail for review.

27.4 Electronic signatures and approvals shall identify the actual person and delegated authority. Shared accounts, pasted signatures and automatic approval on timeout are unacceptable for technical decisions. Validate data migration and recovery so that revisions, attachments, relationships and audit trails remain usable.

27.5 Corrected reports shall identify what changed, why, who authorized it and which recipients require notification. Obsolete operational instructions shall be removed from points of use while retained for historical reconstruction. The document controller shall verify that active links and controlled copies point to the current approved version.

28 Implementation and management review

28.1 The adopting organization shall conduct a gap assessment against this manual and assign owners to each relevant process. Map existing customer requirements and IAF documents to avoid contradictory approvals or duplicate records. Record the adopted scope and operational effective date separately from the publication issue date.

28.2 Before activation, establish the supplier register, APQP gate model, submission matrix, auditor authorizations, traceability data model and escalation contacts. Pilot the procedures on representative parts and suppliers. Resolve critical gaps and demonstrate that personnel can use the records and act on a failed gate.

28.3 Train teams using practical cases: a failed measurement study, unapproved sub-tier change, incomplete genealogy, misleading capability result and disputed audit finding. Evaluate decision quality and evidence handling. Training completion alone shall not authorize a person to lead a specialist audit or release production.

28.4 Review implementation after the first representative launch and audit cycle, then at the planned management-review interval and after major incidents. Examine escapes, overdue actions, approval scope errors, auditor performance, traceability exercise results and supplier improvement outcomes. Resource decisions shall address the causes of repeated gaps.

28.5 The manual owner shall propose revisions through the IAF Documents and Records Guide and the competent constitutional authority. Communicate changes, effective dates and required retraining. Annex H links the implementation record to the wider IAF system; no local procedure may silently expand an IAF accreditation or mark-use scope.

Annex A APQP gate and requirement register

Form SQA F01. Create one record per programme and gate. Attach the requirement register and action log; repeat rows as needed. Blank fields require completion before the recorded gate can support a decision.

Identity	Entry
Programme and customer	
Supplier entity and site	
Part family and revisions	
Gate and review date	
Chair and technical reviewers	

Requirement or deliverable	Evidence and status	Owner and due date
Product baseline and feasibility		
Special characteristics and risks		
Process and measurement readiness		
Trial and submission requirements		
Sub-tier and logistics readiness		

Decision: advance / limited development only / hold. Scope and exclusions: _____.
 Open actions and impact: _____. Evidence required before next gate: _____.

Accountable approval and date: _____. Customer concurrence where required: _____.
 Communication recipients and record: _____. A limited advance shall explicitly state whether any product movement is permitted.

Annex B Production trial and control plan record

Form SQA F02. Complete before and during the representative trial. Retain the underlying process logs, measurement results and sample identifiers.

Trial identity	Recorded value or evidence
Part revision and material batches	_____
Site route machine tool and cavities	_____
Software recipe and control plan	_____
Operators shifts and authorization	_____
Period quantity mix and planned rate	_____
Gauge and test readiness	_____
Packaging and genealogy controls	_____

Quantity or time	Value	Evidence
Total produced and first-pass accepted	_____	_____
Scrap rework and unresolved hold	_____	_____
Planned time and actual interruptions	_____	_____
Accepted output over full trial period	_____	_____

Control-plan sample: operation and characteristic ____; specification ____; method and gauge ____; sampling unit and frequency ____; record ____; abnormal reaction and restart authority ____.

Differences from serial production and their impact: _____. Trial outcome and limitations: _____. Quality and Production review with date: _____. Shipment permission, if any, is recorded separately.

Annex C PPAP review and approval worksheet

Form SQA F03. Submission ID _____. Supplier site _____. Customer programme _____. Part and revision _____. Submission reason _____. Trial record _____.

Evidence family	Record and revision	Review result
Product and engineering baseline	_____	_____
Flow risks and control plan	_____	_____
Measurement-system suitability	_____	_____
Dimensional material and functional tests	_____	_____
Capability and production capacity	_____	_____
Appearance samples and checking aids	_____	_____
Sub-tier packaging and traceability	_____	_____
Customer-specific and declaration records	_____	_____

Use accepted / gap / not applicable with a justified reason. Open item, affected requirement and evidence needed: _____. Technical reviewer and date: _____.

Decision: approved / conditionally approved / rejected. Authorized parts, revisions, route and tooling: _____. Permitted quantity, period and conditions: _____. Customer decision reference: _____.

Decision maker and delegated scope: _____. Activation in purchasing and production: _____. Expiry monitoring owner: _____. A conditional decision shall state the required closure evidence and shall not permit an unsupported safety departure.

Annex D Supplier process audit worksheet

Form SQA F04. Audit ID _____. Site and dates _____. Lead auditor and specialists _____. Criteria and revisions _____. Scope and excluded areas _____. Conflict review _____.

Audit trail	Selected sample and evidence	Result
Requirement to operator instruction	_____	_____
Material identity to actual process	_____	_____
Special characteristic to live control	_____	_____
Gauge status to acceptance result	_____	_____
Reject or rework to final disposition	_____	_____
Change to approved cutover	_____	_____
Sub-tier record to finished product	_____	_____
Shipment to release authority	_____	_____

For each trail, record part or batch, machine, shift, time, requirement clause and evidence identifier. Result: conforming / finding / insufficient evidence. Insufficient evidence is not a positive conclusion.

Finding record: requirement ____; observed condition ____; objective evidence ____; affected population ____; category and reason ____; protective action ____; supplier response ____.

Coverage limitations and additional work: _____. Closing meeting and recipients: _____. Report reviewer and date: _____. Retain the detailed trail and controlled photographs only where their collection is permitted.

Annex E Traceability exercise and reconciliation

Form SQA F05. Exercise ID _____. Selected physical unit or batch _____. Selection method _____. Retrieval target and rationale _____. Start and completion times _____. Auditor _____.

Required relationship	Evidence and completeness
Customer shipment to finished identity	_____
Finished identity to process and tests	_____
Process to material and critical components	_____
Sub-tier operation to original evidence	_____
Input batch to all affected outputs	_____
Outputs to stock transit and destinations	_____
Rework scrap and samples reconciled	_____
Containment blocks demonstrated	_____

Illustrative piece-count exercise: 1,000 blanks received = 950 shipped conforming pieces + 20 conforming pieces on hand + 15 pieces in controlled rework + 10 scrapped pieces + 5 retained samples. The total reconciles to 1,000; the categories are mutually exclusive and all units belong to the same defined population.

For cutting, coating or other transforming processes, use a justified mass or yield conversion and record its uncertainty. A balanced total does not prove the individual genealogy is correct.

Unexplained difference _____. Missing or false links _____. Affected population and immediate control _____. Pass or fail with reasons _____. Actions owner and deadline _____. Independent repeat verification _____.

Annex F Containment and corrective action record

Form SQA F06. Case ID _____. Trigger and date _____. Customer and supplier contacts _____. Product and affected requirement _____. Accountable owner _____.

Stage	Required case entry
Problem	Actual versus required condition, where, when, frequency and confirmed population: _____
Containment	Supplier, transit, customer and service quantities; screening method and responsible parties: _____
Cause evidence	Occurrence cause, escape cause and system cause; tests that support or reject each explanation: _____
Permanent action	Approved change, new risk review, owner, due date and implementation evidence: _____
Effectiveness	Measure, representative exposure, expected result, actual outcome and independent reviewer: _____
Closure	Remaining risks, customer concurrence, updated controls and authorized release from containment: _____

Quantity reconciliation: suspected ____; located ____; screened ____; accepted ____; rejected ____; unresolved _____. State category boundaries so the same unit is not counted twice.

Escalation and communication log: timestamp ____; recipient ____; verified facts ____; required action ____; next update _____. Record contractual or mandatory reporting deadlines separately.

Closure authority and date _____. Follow-up due _____. Similar parts or sites reviewed _____. Reopen the case if recurrence or new evidence contradicts the accepted cause or effectiveness conclusion.

Annex G Capability and throughput examples

These examples explain calculation and interpretation. They are not acceptance thresholds, a completed study or permission to release production.

Capability example

Assume a stable approximately normal dimension with a suitable measurement system. Lower specification = 9.90 mm; upper specification = 10.10 mm; mean = 10.02 mm; within-process standard deviation = 0.020 mm; overall standard deviation = 0.025 mm.

Measure	Calculation	Result
Cp	$(10.10 - 9.90) / (6 \times 0.020)$	1.67
Cpk	$\min(10.10 - 10.02, 10.02 - 9.90) / (3 \times 0.020)$	1.33
Pp	$(10.10 - 9.90) / (6 \times 0.025)$	1.33
Ppk	$\min(0.08, 0.12) / (3 \times 0.025)$	1.07

Centring and the variation estimate change the conclusion. The report must also show sample size, time sequence, subgrouping, stability evidence, uncertainty and the agreed criterion. These four numbers alone cannot establish approval.

Sustained output example

A declared 8-hour trial produces 4,400 units, of which 4,180 are first-pass conforming, 150 need rework and 70 are scrap. First-pass yield = $4,180 / 4,400 = 95.0\%$. First-pass accepted output over the full period = $4,180 / 8 = 522.5$ units per hour.

If the commitment is 550 first-pass conforming units per hour, this trial does not demonstrate that rate. Excluding stoppages from the denominator or counting unverified rework as accepted would misstate the result. Record separately any later verified recovery and the resources it consumes.

Annex H Implementation and IAF document interfaces

Form SQA F07. Site and scope _____. Adoption owner _____. Actual activation date _____. Gap review and critical actions _____. Record the controlled versions used for each interface.

IAF document	Interface to implement
Quality Manual and Constitution	Institutional authority, accountability, impartial decisions and management review.
Accreditation Scheme Guide	Separate evaluation, decision, scope, notification and recognition conditions.
Documents and Records Guide	Numbering, approvals, retention, corrections, archival and disposal.
Supply Chain and Logistics Manual	Supplier identity, delivery release, sub-tier mapping and material containment.
Lean and Gigafactory manuals	Manufacturing controls, process qualification, battery genealogy and safe operation.
In Line Quality and OT manuals	Automated inspection validity, configuration control and trustworthy records.
Five IAF policy documents	Whistleblowing, complaints, mark use, privacy and conflicts of interest.

Auditor assignment record: person ____; technical scope ____; relevant experience ____; witnessed audit evidence ____; assessor ____; limitations ____; conflict review ____; authorization and review date ____.

Activation checks: supplier register ____; gate templates ____; submission matrix ____; traceability pilot ____; auditor competence ____; escalation contacts ____; training and exercise evidence ____.

Management review date and decision _____. Remaining actions and owners _____. This manual supports supplier assurance; it does not change Corporate or Corporate Recognised membership status or independently authorize use of an IAF mark.