

Halderstone



Training module

Audit Communication & Interviewing

Plan and conduct effective audit interviews, use structured questioning, and guide conversations to obtain reliable audit evidence



Do your audit interviews often drift, missing crucial evidence or creating unnecessary tension?

Overview

Audit interviews are pivotal moments that shape both the evidence gathered and the auditee's engagement. This module tackles the common issue of unstructured conversations that can lead to missed information or strained relationships. Participants will develop practical interview discipline, learning to prepare with clear evidence intent, employ precise questioning, manage conversational dynamics, and objectively document outcomes, all while maintaining professional distance and respectful interaction.



Target audience

- Aspiring auditors who want to audit management systems following best practices
- Practising management system auditors who want to strengthen their audit knowledge, judgement, and effectiveness

Is this module for you?

It is a good fit for you if you...

- conduct audit interviews and want more reliable, usable evidence.
- experience interviews drifting into informal conversations.
- struggle to balance rapport, professional distance, and control.
- face resistance, defensiveness, or senior stakeholders during audits.
- want interviews to consistently support audit conclusions.

It may be less suitable for you if you...

- already conduct disciplined, evidence-driven interviews under pressure.
- are not involved in audit execution or interviewing.
- are primarily looking for judgement, sampling, or audit planning foundations.
- want negotiation, coaching, or facilitation training rather than audit interviewing.

Learning outcomes



Key outcomes

- Prepare audit interviews with clear purpose, defined boundaries, and specific evidence targets
- Employ effective questioning techniques to enhance the reliability of information obtained
- Manage conversational dynamics and challenging behaviours professionally without escalation

Additional capabilities

- Open and structure interviews to maintain productivity and professionalism
- Maintain rapport while preserving professional distance and avoiding informality bias
- Document interview outcomes objectively, noting any limitations affecting evidence strength

Agenda

The auditor's communication role in execution

How interviewing functions as an evidence-gathering activity rather than a discussion or workshop, and how to maintain professional distance through respectful interaction without informality bias.

Preparing interviews with intent

How to define purpose, scope boundaries, and evidence targets for interviews, and select interviewees and sequencing from an execution perspective within the audit plan

Opening and structuring the conversation

How to open interviews clearly by setting roles, boundaries, timeboxes, and information use, and apply practical conversation flow models that support reliable evidence gathering

Questioning techniques for reliable information

How to use open, probing, and clarifying questions to distinguish process reality from documented intent, and avoid leading wording, assumptive framing, and premature conclusions

Managing dynamics and difficult behaviours

How to handle defensive, evasive, or overly confident interviewees, and stay neutral in power-imbalance situations, including when interviewing senior management

De-escalation and recovery moves

How to apply conversation control and reliability checks, and steer long or irrelevant responses back on topic without rigidity

Managing time pressure while maintaining completeness

How to confirm understanding, recognise when interview input is insufficient, and document interviews as audit evidence in a way that supports later reporting

Effective and efficient note-taking structures

How to capture evidence and quotations objectively, record limitations and open points, and ensure handover to reporting supports later findings without writing them during execution

Case-based workshop

Applying the learned concepts, methods, and approaches in a realistic case setting

Included materials

Learning materials

- Slide deck
- Participant workbook

Templates & tools

- Audit interview plan
- Interview agenda template
- Question development worksheet
- Interview evidence log
- Interview summary sheet
- Behavioural response guide
- Mini-scenario pack for continued practice

Confirmation

- Confirmation of participation

Preparation guidance

Assumed background

This module assumes participants can already:

Familiarity with ISO 19011 guidance is helpful but not required.

- Explain the purpose of audits and the auditor role in execution
- Distinguish interview input (statements) from evidence and auditor interpretation at a basic level
- Understand the general flow of an internal audit and common audit terminology

Preparatory modules

Foundation (depending on background)

Useful if you are new to the underlying concepts

- Audit Principles

Logistics

Available languages

- English
- German

Standard delivery options

- Virtual live teaching
- Blended learning (e-learning + live)

Bespoke delivery options

- On-site delivery at your place
- Content adapted to your organization



Halderstone

Halderstone by Langer & Co

Zürcherstrasse 2

CH-8852 Altendorf

Switzerland

info@halderstone.com

www.halderstone.com