A Programme That Has to Cover the Whole Hotel

GUIDING QUESTION *Add up the hours your internal audit programme will spend in the building this year. Now count the processes it is supposed to cover. What is the quotient, and would you defend it out loud?*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the four parts with the people who own the process. The left-hand text comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what the market says, what actually holds, and your property

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
Every process must be audited at least once a year.	No. Annex A clarifies that all QMS processes need to be audited, but ISO 9001 does not require every process to be audited once in every calendar year.	
Every clause of the standard must be covered annually.	No. There is no requirement for annual clause-by-clause coverage.	
Every department must appear in the programme.	No. The programme is process- and QMS-based, not a mandatory departmental rota.	
Audit frequency is a matter for the certification body.	No. The organisation establishes its internal-audit frequency; certification-body audits are a separate process.	
A completed schedule demonstrates a conforming programme.	No. Completion of a schedule does not prove that the programme was properly designed or effective.	
The audit programme must be documented as a procedure.	No. Documented evidence of programme implementation and results is required; a separately documented procedure is not.	
Deciding not to audit a process is a nonconformity.	Not automatically. A process may be scheduled at a different justified frequency, but it cannot be left outside the QMS audit universe indefinitely if it is a QMS process.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	The audit programme, examined for the three inputs the standard names and for any record of what has been deliberately excluded from the cycle.		
Record	The audit reports of the last cycle, with their durations. Total hours divided by processes in scope is a two-minute calculation that characterises the whole programme.		
Read	Two years of findings sorted by process rather than by date. A process producing the same finding twice is an input the programme was required to consider and almost certainly did not.		
Told	Ask why a particular audit is in the programme. An answer naming importance, a previous result or a change is a designed programme; an answer naming the calendar is a grid.		
Seen	An audit in progress, timed. A half-day audit of a hotel department is visibly a visit, and an auditor conducting one will usually say so if asked kindly.		
Absence	There will be no record anywhere of a process the property decided not to audit, with a reason. In most hotel programmes the exclusions are the entire operation minus the schedule, and none of them has been decided.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Pursuing identical annual coverage.	ISO 9001:2026 does not require every process to receive the same annual audit effort; equal treatment can consume the available hours without directing depth where it is most needed.	
Treating even coverage as fairness.	It gives equal attention to unequal processes, and nobody has ever decided that the parking arrangement deserves what the arrival chain deserves.	
Never counting the hours.	The quotient of audit time over processes in scope characterises a programme in one number and takes two minutes.	
Building the programme from the calendar.	A grid is a statement that this year will resemble last year, which is precisely what the change input exists to contradict.	
Leaving the archive unread.	Previous results are a named input, and a process producing the same finding three times has been telling the programme where to go for years.	
Recording no rationale for frequency.	If some processes receive less audit attention in a cycle, the programme should be able to explain why while still ensuring that all QMS processes are audited over the programme.	
Confusing a good closure rate with a working programme.	Findings from visits are small and close easily, which is why the rate looks best in the programmes that find least.	
Reporting by department.	A programme designed as a grid reports as a grid, and the only pattern management can see is the one the schedule imposed.	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
The hours are counted before the programme is built.			
Equal annual coverage is abandoned as a goal.			
Each audit carries a reason drawn from the three the standard names.			
Exclusions are recorded with reasons.			
Fewer audits, longer.			

In brief

The property plans and maintains an audit programme covering frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, and establishes it by considering the importance of the processes concerned, the results of previous audits, and changes affecting the organisation. All three inputs differentiate, and none of them produces a schedule in which everything appears once.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 3.3. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.