What a Certification Body Verifies in a Quality System

GUIDING QUESTION *Read your scope statement to somebody who has never been to your hotel. Could they tell you what you sell, and could they tell you what you have declared does not apply to you, and why?*

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
Hotels do not design and may exclude clause 8.3.	Incorrect. Clause 8.3 is applicable whenever the organisation designs or develops products or services within its QMS scope; a hotel is not exempt by sector.	
An exclusion accepted at the last audit is settled.	No. Applicability must remain valid as the organisation and its activities change.	
The scope may name the organisation rather than its services.	No. The QMS and certification scope must identify the types of products and services covered, not merely the legal entity name.	
Outsourced services may be excluded from the scope.	No. Outsourcing does not remove a process from QMS responsibility where it affects products or services; it triggers external-provider controls.	
A justification for exclusion need only be brief.	Brief can be sufficient only if it is also accurate and supportable. The organisation must be able to justify non-applicability under clause 4.3.	
The certification body decides the scope.	The organisation defines its QMS scope; the certification body verifies and defines the certification scope for the certificate.	
The certificate demonstrates that the service conforms.	No. A management-system certificate attests conformity of the QMS within its stated scope, not conformity of every individual service output.	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	The scope statement as documented information, and the recorded justification for any requirement determined not to be applicable.		
Record	Evidence that the scope and the applicability determinations have been reviewed since they were made, and in particular after any significant change to the property.		
Read	The property's website, its two largest listings, its brochure and its last three client proposals, against the scope statement. This comparison takes twenty minutes and is where a quality certifier begins.		
Told	Ask who decided what a guest on a named package receives, and against what. The answer establishes whether a design activity took place, without the word being used.		
Seen	The service itself. A programme with a fixed sequence, a specification and a price is a designed thing regardless of what the documentation calls it.		
Absence	There will be no record of the applicability		

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
	determination having been revisited since certification. Often the justification is the original sentence, unchanged, and predates several of the services the property now sells.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Treating an accepted exclusion as settled.	It was a determination about the property when it was made, the property has changed, and nothing about a previous audit makes it permanently true.	
Justifying by industry.	Hotels do not design is a statement about an industry; the organisation does not undertake these activities is a statement about a property, and only the second can be verified.	
Writing a scope that names the hotel.	It is the only sentence most readers of the certificate will ever see and it should tell them what the property provides.	
Forgetting that the evidence is public.	A quality certifier reads the website, the listings and the proposals, and the property wrote all of them.	
Believing an exclusion removes an activity.	The applicability provision concerns requirements; what the property sells is a matter for the scope, and the two are different mechanisms.	
Concealing a change of circumstances.	Declaring that an exclusion no longer holds demonstrates that the property reviews its own changes, which is separately required and separately looked for.	
Never listing what has been created this cycle.	Four minutes, and the applicability answer is usually in it.	
Assuming the certificate says the service conforms.	It says a system was found to conform, within a scope, at a date, and Volume 1b gave a chapter to what follows from that (4.14).	

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline
The scope names services, not the hotel.			
The market material is the evidence.			
An exclusion is a live determination.			
The justification describes this property.			
The list of what has been created this cycle is the fastest self-test available.			

In brief

A quality certification body verifies the boundary before it verifies the system: that the scope states the types of products and services covered, that it corresponds to what the property actually sells, and that any requirement determined not to be applicable carries a justification that holds against what the property demonstrably does. The third has no equivalent in an environmental certification and is the largest difference between the two audits.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 4.1. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.