WORKING MATERIAL 4.14 · CHAPTER 4 — THE CERTIFIER'S LENS · SETTING: KESWICK, ENGLAND, UNITED KINGDOM

The Transition Audit: From v3.0 to v4.0

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7b — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 4.14 (book page 361)

GUIDING QUESTION

Thousands of hotels hold certificates issued against version 3.0 of the GSTC criteria, and the standard they were certified against has now been replaced. The transition guidance gives them three years, but a hotel's own certification cycle rarely ends on the same day as the transition. When should a certified hotel move to version 4.0, and what will the certification body read differently when it does?

WHO THE RULES BIND

The GSTC Accreditation Manual (AM-I v4.1) cited on this sheet binds certification bodies, not hotels. Where a row refers to it, it describes what the certifier must do and what the hotel can check; it is not a requirement of the GSTC Hotel Standard.

1 · Verification Pact: market claims against the standard

Copied from the book. The last column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know it.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A version 3.0 recertification in 2028 gives three more years	No	Version 3.0 certifications are no longer valid after 30 December 2028	
A certified hotel must switch at its next surveillance audit	No	Surveillance and renewal may use version 3.0 unless body and client agree to move earlier	
Version 4.0 renumbers the same criteria	No	The standard was separated, regrouped, given new criteria such as A14 and B6, and indicators beside each criterion	
Conformity is still judged at the level of the criterion	No	The transition guidance bases audits on indicators rather than criteria	
Auditors certified on version 3.0 need nothing further	No	Clause 10.15.2: an examination within six months of revised criteria	
The GSTC will move the hotel's certificate to version 4.0	No	The certification body audits the hotel against version 4.0; the GSTC accredits the body	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property, and note where it shows.

☐ Assuming that a version 3.0 renewal carries a full three-year certificate past 30 December 2028.

☐ Reading the transition guidance one sentence at a time rather than as a whole.

☐ Treating version 4.0 as a renumbering of version 3.0.

☐ Preparing for the audit by criterion when conformity is read by indicator.

☐ Running the internal audit against the old criteria in the year of transition.

☐ Overlooking criteria that did not exist in version 3.0, such as A14 and B6.

☐ Leaving the choice of audit version to an informal conversation instead of a written agreement.

☐ Waiting for recertification to discover the gaps, with no time left to close them.

3 · A Checklist for a Hotel Certified Under Version 3.0

The book's checklist, with a column for your own answer.

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
On what date was our last certification decision, and when does the cycle end?	The cycle runs three years from the decision (8.10.5)	
Does our cycle end before or after 30 December 2028?	Version 3.0 certifications are no longer valid after that date	
Has our certification body informed us of its transition plan?	Clause 7.4 requires bodies to inform certified clients in a timely manner	
Have we mapped our evidence to the version 4.0 indicators?	Audits are based on indicators rather than criteria	
Which version 4.0 criteria have no counterpart in our version 3.0 file?	New criteria such as A14 and B6 need evidence from scratch	
Will we agree in writing to move to version 4.0 at an earlier audit?	Surveillance and renewal may use version 3.0 only unless both agree otherwise	

4 · What would show this is working

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. Indicator references point to the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0; where the evidence lives is this book's practice, not a requirement of the standard.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Is every old record mapped to a version 4.0 indicator, with archived records listed?	Crosswalk document	☐
Has each version 4.0 indicator been marked evidenced, partly evidenced or not evidenced?	Indicator status sheet	☐
Has an internal audit been run against version 4.0 indicators before the external audit?	Internal audit report and management review minutes	☐
Is the audit version for each coming audit agreed in writing with the body?	Written confirmation from the body	☐
Is the date 30 December 2028 read alongside the certificate's own expiry?	Audit calendar (transition guidance 2026ACL02)	☐

> *What this sheet is not: the GSTC Hotel Standard does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard's criteria, indicators and guidelines govern the real case. Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails.*