


# QMS02-A6

## Quality Management System: Development and Management of Laboratory Documents; Approved Guideline—Sixth Edition



This document provides guidance on the processes needed for document management, including creating, controlling, changing, and retiring a laboratory's policy, process, procedure, and form documents in both paper and electronic environments.

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A guideline for global application developed through the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute consensus process.

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Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute  
950 West Valley Road, Suite 2500  
Wayne, PA 19087 USA  
P: 610.688.0100  
F: 610.688.0700  
[www.clsi.org](http://www.clsi.org)  
[standard@clsi.org](mailto:standard@clsi.org)

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## Quality Management System: Development and Management of Laboratory Documents; Approved Guideline—Sixth Edition

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Lucia M. Berte, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB, DLM; CQA(ASQ)CMQOE  
Linda A. Chambers, MD  
Joan M. Carlson, MLT(CMLTA), BSc(MLS), MT(ASCP)  
Heidi Dillenbeck, BS, MT  
Mark F. Gendron, MBA, MT(ASCP)  
Heather Meyer, MT(ASCP), (ASQ)CQE  
Jane Marshall Norris, MT(ASCP)SBB, CQA(ASQ)  
Kareena D. Parris  
Jasmyn Ray, BSc, MLS, MLT  
Doreen M. Ryan, MT(ASCP)  
Melissa Singer, MT(ASCP)  
Elaine Van Oyen, MLT, ART

### Abstract

Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute document QMS02-A6—*Quality Management System: Development and Management of Laboratory Documents; Approved Guideline—Sixth Edition* presents the important components of creating, evaluating, approving, controlling, changing, and retiring documents used in the laboratory environment. This guideline describes the processes needed in a document management system, whether paper-based or electronic. Key features of electronic document management systems are described. Several examples of process and procedure documents for preexamination, examination, and postexamination laboratory activities are included.

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## Committee Membership

### Quality Systems and Laboratory Practices

**Carl D. Mottram, BA, RRT, RPFT,  
FAARC  
Chairholder  
Mayo Clinic  
Rochester, Minnesota, USA**

**Devery Howerton, PhD, MS,  
MT(ASCP)SI  
Vice-Chairholder  
Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA**

Deirdre Astin, MS, MT(ASCP)  
New York State Department of Health  
Albany, New York, USA

Michael B. Cohen, MD  
ARUP Laboratories  
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Nancy Dubrowny, MS, MT(ASCP)SC  
BD Preanalytical Systems  
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, USA

Dennis J. Ernst, MT(ASCP)  
Center for Phlebotomy Education  
Corydon, Indiana, USA

Michelle Jenkins, MS, MT(AMT) ASQ,  
CQE, CMQ/OE  
Abbott Diagnostics  
Irving, Texas, USA

Michelle McLean, MS, MT(ASCP)  
Greiner Bio-One North America,  
Inc.  
Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Jennifer Schiffgens, MBA,  
MT(ASCP), CLS  
California Pacific Medical Center  
San Francisco, California, USA

Tonya Wilbon, BS, M(ASCP)  
FDA Center for Devices and  
Radiological Health  
Rockville, Maryland, USA

### Subcommittee on Quality Management Systems

**Lucia M. Berte, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB,  
DLM; CQA(ASQ)CMQOE  
Chairholder  
Laboratories Made Better!  
Broomfield, Colorado, USA**

**Tania Motschman, MS,  
MT(ASCP)SBB, CQA(ASQ)  
Vice-Chairholder  
Laboratory Corporation of America  
Burlington, North Carolina, USA**

Joan M. Carlson, MLT(CMLTA),  
BSc(MLS), MT(ASCP)  
Alberta Health Services – Edmonton  
General Hospital  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Anne T. Daley, MS, MT(ASCP)DLM,  
CMQOE(ASQ)CSSBB  
Chi Solutions, Inc.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Christine D. Flaherty, MHA, CLS,  
CPHQ  
Sutter Health Sacramento Sierra  
Region Laboratories  
Sacramento, California, USA

Karen Heaton, MLT(CMLTA)  
Calgary Laboratory Services  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

John Kim, PhD  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Debra Kuehl, MS, M(ASCP)  
Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Elizabeth Sheppard, MBA,  
HT(ASCP)  
Ventana Medical Systems, Inc.  
Tucson, Arizona, USA

Miki Van Houten, MT(ASCP)  
Oregon State Public Health  
Laboratory  
Hillsboro, Oregon, USA

Harriet R. Walsh, MA, MT(ASCP)  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid  
Services  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

## Working Group on Laboratory Documents

<p><b>Lucia M. Berte, MA, MT(ASCP)SBB, DLM; CQA(ASQ)CMQOE</b>  <b>Chairholder</b>  <b>Laboratories Made Better!</b>  <b>Broomfield, Colorado, USA</b></p>	<p>Heather Meyer, MT(ASCP), (ASQ)            CQE            BD Diagnostics            Burlington, North Carolina, USA</p>	<p><b>Staff</b>            Clinical and Laboratory Standards            Institute            Wayne, Pennsylvania, USA</p>
<p><b>Linda A. Chambers, MD</b>  <b>Vice-Chairholder</b>  <b>Riverside Methodist Hospital and Grant Medical Center</b>  <b>Columbus, Ohio, USA</b></p>	<p>Kareena D. Parris            Ventana Medical Systems, Inc.            Tuscon, Arizona, USA</p>	<p>Luann Ochs, MS  <i>Senior Vice President – Operations</i></p>
<p>Doreen M. Ryan, MT(ASCP)            Committee Secretary            Mayo Clinic            Rochester, Minnesota, USA</p>	<p>Jasmyn Ray, BSc, MLS, MLT            Alberta Health Services – University of Alberta Hospital            Edmonton, Alberta, Canada</p>	<p>Jennifer K. Adams, MT(ASCP), MSHA  <i>Staff Liaison</i></p>
<p>Heidi Dillenbeck, BS, MT            New York State Department of Health – Wadsworth Center            Albany, New York, USA</p>	<p>Melissa Singer, MT(ASCP)            Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services            Baltimore, Maryland, USA</p>	<p>Megan L. Tertel, MA  <i>Editor</i></p>
	<p>Elaine Van Oyen, MLT, ART            Calgary Laboratory Services            Calgary, Alberta, Canada</p>	<p>Ryan J. Torres  <i>Assistant Editor</i></p>

## Acknowledgment

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Joan M. Carlson, MLT(CMLTA), BSc(MLS), MT(ASCP)  
 Alberta Health Services – Edmonton General Hospital  
 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Mark F. Gendron, MBA, MT(ASCP)  
 Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
 New York, New York, USA

Jane Marshall Norris, MT(ASCP)SBB, CQA(ASQ)  
 AABB  
 Jacksonville, Florida, USA

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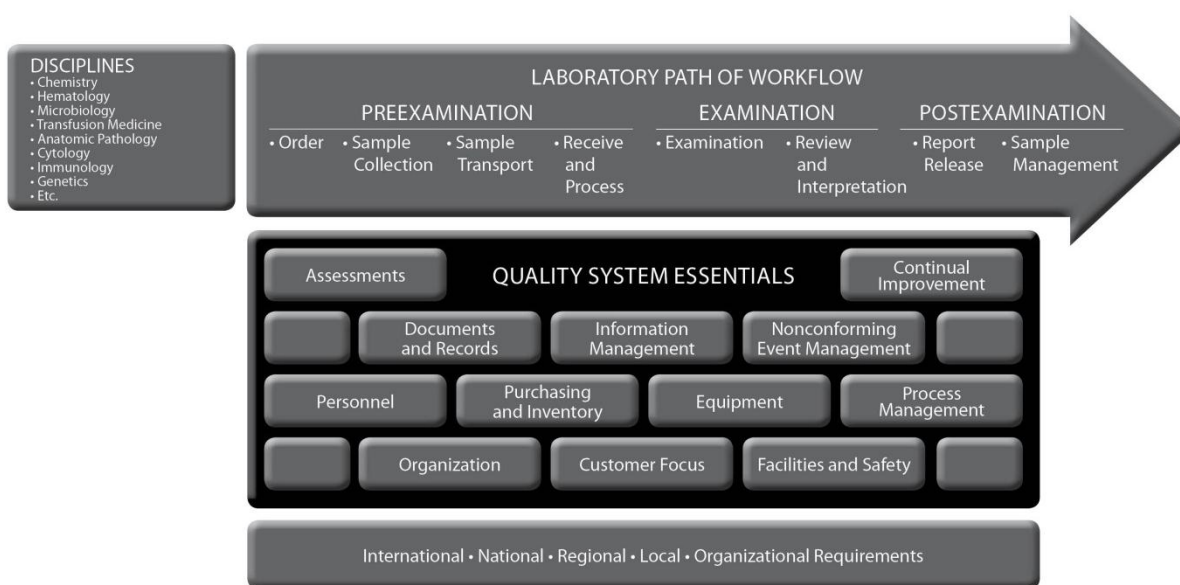
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## Foreword

Control of documents and records (DR) is critical to optimizing the effectiveness of a QMS and sustaining quality. This guideline encourages using an organized process-based approach for implementing and managing a program to develop and control the medical laboratory's many documents. In an environment of document management, only approved versions of paper-based or electronic documents are available for use by staff in all locations where they are needed.

DR is one of the 12 quality system essentials (QSEs) in CLSI document GP26,<sup>1</sup> which describes a structured approach to organizing, creating, and maintaining the necessary information for the QSEs. The QMS model depicted in Figure 1 demonstrates how each QSE, such as DR, is a building block to quality that is necessary to support any laboratory's path of workflow (POW) from preexamination to examination to postexamination. This document is designed to guide the user in the development and implementation of a document management system.



**Figure 1. The Quality Management System Model (see CLSI document GP26)<sup>1</sup>**

If a QSE is missing or not well implemented, problems may occur in any or all preexamination, examination, and postexamination laboratory activities, as well as laboratory management activities. For example, when the laboratory lacks defined processes for properly installing, calibrating, and maintaining its instruments so they work effectively, problems will occur in examination processes.

The requirements for QSE DR can be summarized as:

- Development and maintenance of a document management system
- Development and maintenance of a record management system

The current edition of QMS02 will focus only on the processes within a document management system.

### Overview of Changes From GP02-A5

Previous editions of QMS02 have focused on essential elements to include in laboratory examination procedures.

This edition of QMS02 has been reorganized to provide guidance for:

- Using an overall process for document management and control
- Using flow charts to depict the sequence of activities in laboratory processes
- Preparing instructions for performing procedures in the preexamination, examination, and postexamination processes in the laboratory's POW
- Preparing process and procedure documents specifically for multitest automated analyzers
- Writing procedures for the LIS
- Managing and controlling paper-based and electronic laboratory documents after they are approved for use

**Key Words**

Computer procedure, document, document control, document management, electronic procedures, laboratory procedure, laboratory process, procedures manual, technical procedures

# Quality Management System: Development and Management of Laboratory Documents; Approved Guideline—Sixth Edition

## 1 Scope

This guideline presents evidence-based suggestions for preparing different types of laboratory documents. In addition, a process is described for how laboratory documents can be managed and controlled from the time a need is recognized for a new or revised document, through the document's use and control, until the time it is retired.

This guideline is applicable to documents used by medical laboratories of any size, complexity, or specialty, including point-of-care testing.

QMS02 is intended for use by the following:

- Administrative and technical personnel who develop laboratory documents
- Manufacturers
- Educators
- Regulatory and accreditation organizations

QMS02 is a *guideline* for how to implement requirements established in international standards, and by regulatory and accrediting organizations for laboratory documents and procedures manuals. ***QMS02 is not a standard***; that is, this guideline does not set requirements for laboratory documents and procedures. **Instead, this guideline describes what laboratories need to do to meet published regulations, accreditation requirements, and international standards<sup>2-13</sup> for documents and document management, and provides suggestions and examples for fulfilling the requirements.**

## 2 Introduction

All work happens in processes—that is, sequences of activities that a laboratory needs to perform in a specific order, and correctly, to transform a given input into the desired output. Laboratories need to communicate both the sequence of activities (ie, process) as well as the instructions for how to perform a given process activity (ie, procedure). Documented processes and procedures provide essential information for both new and experienced employees about how to perform all of their job tasks—including tasks not related to directly performing examinations, such as training, competence assessment, collecting blood samples, and using the laboratory's computer system.

To provide structure for the document management system described in this guideline, a process for how a laboratory can manage and control its documents is introduced. The flow chart starts with awareness of a need for a new document and proceeds through the lifespan of a document from development, evaluation, approval, distribution, review, change, and finally retirement. Figure 2 shows the activities and decisions in an effective document management process. Each main activity in the process is shown in a box; decisions made regarding documents are shown in a diamond as a question with a yes/no answer. Each activity, with its respective decisions and actions, is discussed in a separate section of this guideline; section numbers are shown to the left of the respective activities. Additional information to assist with developing a document management system is found in later sections.

This guideline provides several examples of common laboratory processes and procedures. Laboratories are encouraged to use these examples as starting points for documenting their own processes and procedures. Although there are specified international standard, regulatory, and accreditation requirements for needed contents of laboratory procedures manuals, *there are no specific requirements*