

**ISO/IEC 27001**

# **Foundation vs Lead Implementer**

Choosing the right starting point for your ISO/IEC 27001 journey

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## Document control

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**Purpose.** This guide explains, in plain language, the difference between ISO/IEC 27001 Foundation and ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer. It is designed for newcomers who want to choose the right training based on goals and responsibilities.

### The difference in one sentence

Foundation helps you understand ISO/IEC 27001 and how an ISMS works. Lead Implementer prepares you to plan and lead an ISMS implementation toward certification readiness.

## Quick comparison

Dimension	ISO/IEC 27001 Foundation	ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer
Main goal	Understand requirements and ISMS fundamentals	Plan and lead ISMS implementation
Depth	What and why	How and when
Best for	Beginners, stakeholders, project contributors	ISMS leads, consultants, security/GRC managers
Typical outcome	Confidence to participate and communicate correctly	Ability to build a roadmap and drive implementation workstreams

## What you learn in each course

### ISO/IEC 27001 Foundation

- Understand ISO/IEC 27001 clauses (4–10) and how they connect.
- Learn the ISMS vocabulary: scope, leadership, planning, support, operations, performance evaluation, improvement.
- Recognize what evidence looks like (documents vs records) and how it supports audits.
- Be able to contribute to an ISMS project without misinterpreting the standard.

### ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer

- Translate ISO/IEC 27001 requirements into a roadmap, governance model, and practical implementation plan.
- Structure risk assessment and risk treatment planning in a workable way (owners, criteria, decisions, follow-up).
- Design governance routines: KPIs, internal audits, management review, corrective actions, continual improvement.
- Prepare the organization for certification audit readiness and evidence collection.

## How to choose in 60 seconds

### Choose Foundation if:

- You are new to ISO/IEC 27001 and want a correct baseline.
- You support an ISMS project but you will not lead it (IT, engineering, privacy, legal, procurement, operations).
- You want a fast way to read ISMS documents and follow discussions with confidence.

### Choose Lead Implementer if:

- You are accountable for implementing the ISMS and guiding the organization toward certification readiness.
- You need to build a roadmap, assign ownership, coordinate delivery, and produce evidence.
- You are a consultant expected to lead implementation activities for clients.

## Prerequisites and experience requirements

People often confuse two different things: the prerequisites for attending a training course, and the requirements for obtaining a formal credential after passing the exam. Rules vary by training body. The example below reflects the publicly available PECB certification scheme.

### Foundation (example: PECB)

**Training prerequisites:** None.

**After passing the exam: No professional experience or ISMS project hours are required for the Foundation certificate holder credential.**

### Lead Implementer (example: PECB)

**Training prerequisites:** A general knowledge of ISMS concepts and ISO/IEC 27001 is recommended.

**After passing the exam:** experience requirements depend on the certification level you apply for.

Credential level	Professional experience	Information security management experience	ISMS project hours
Provisional Implementer	None	None	None
Implementer	2 years	1 year	200 hours
Lead Implementer	5 years	2 years	300 hours
Senior Lead Implementer	10 years	7 years	1,000 hours

**Other requirement:** signing the PECB Code of Ethics (as part of the application process).

Source: PECB public ISO/IEC 27001 Foundation and ISO/IEC 27001 Lead Implementer certification requirement tables.

## Common misconceptions (and the reality)

Misconception	Reality
"Foundation is too basic to be useful."	Foundation prevents misunderstandings and makes implementation work faster and cleaner.
"Lead Implementer is only about writing policies."	Lead Implementer is about planning, governance, coordination, and certification readiness.

## About risQera

risQera supports organizations with cybersecurity consultancy across ISMS implementation, risk management, and compliance programs aligned with ISO/IEC 27001 and broader GRC practices.

**Beyond Risk: turning requirements into decisions, actions, and audit-ready evidence.**

### What we deliver

- ISMS lifecycle support: design, implementation, operation, and continual improvement.
- Risk management tools and execution: methodology, registers, treatment planning, and reporting.
- Integrated compliance: governance and reporting across security and GRC programs.

### How risQera can help

Core services	Typical outputs and evidence
ISMS implementation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gap assessment and implementation roadmap</li><li>• Scope, context, and stakeholder requirements</li><li>• Statement of Applicability and control implementation support</li><li>• Audit readiness and corrective action follow-up</li></ul>
Risk management and assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk methodology and assessment workshops</li><li>• Treatment planning and decision support</li><li>• Third-party and cloud risk support</li><li>• Reporting aligned with governance needs</li></ul>
Training and enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Templates and checklists to standardize evidence</li><li>• Coaching for ISMS owners and process leads</li><li>• Support for certification transitions and surveillance audits</li></ul>

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