

A standard for standards —

Part 1: Guide to the context, aims and general principles

ICS 01.120

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Foreword

[A1] This part of BS 0 is published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee of the British Standards Institution (BSI). It supersedes BS 0-1:1991, which is withdrawn. **[A1]**

BS 0 is intended primarily for the use of BSI committees and staff, particularly chairmen and committee secretaries and those providing first drafts. It was first published in 1974 and comprehensively revised in 1981 and 1991. The standard is now issued in three parts:

- *Part 1: Guide to the context, aims and general principles;*
- *Part 2: Recommendations for committee procedures;*
- *Part 3: Specification for structure, drafting and presentation.*

A single index is provided to all three parts, published with BS 0-3.

The revision of all parts of BS 0 has been undertaken to give greater prominence to the principles and procedures required for international and European standardization which accounts for the major part of the BSI standards work programme. The procedures and drafting rules for international and European standards have generally been followed in preparing this revision.

[A1] In the revision of BS 0-1 (including Amendment 1:2002 and Amendment 2:2002), Clause 3, Clause 4, Clause 5 and Clause 6 provide the fundamental rules governing standardization by voluntary consensus. Clause 7 explains the use of standards. Clause 8 provides an overview of the “new deliverables”, i.e. the new types of document issued by standards bodies. Annex A comprises the joint mission statement issued in 1994 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). **[A2]** text deleted **[A2]**

Amendments to BS 0 have been issued in 2002 mainly:

- a) to introduce changes resulting from reorganization and renaming of internal BSI committees;
- b) to update texts as a result of the 2001 revision of the ISO/IEC Directives;
- c) to provide information on “new deliverables” within the international, European and national environments;
- d) to revise the dating policy for British Standard adoptions of European standards. **[A1]**
- [A2]** e) to delete the text of the 1995 revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Kingdom Government and BSI on standards following the further revision of the MOU in 2002, the full text of which is available from the BSI website (www.bsi-global.com). **[A2]**

The start and finish of text introduced or altered by amendment is indicated in the text by tags **[A1]** **[A1]**. Tags indicating changes to text carry the number of the amendment. For example, text altered by amendment 1 is indicated by **[A1]** **[A1]**. Minor editorial changes are not tagged.

The editorial principles, layout and typographical presentation used in BS 0 illustrate the practice to be followed in British Standards.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard does not of itself confer immunity from legal obligations.

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i and ii, pages 1 to 16, an inside back cover and a back cover.

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1 Scope

This part of BS 0 describes the context of standardization and, in particular, identifies the aims, principles and procedural safeguards that apply when standards are prepared. It explains how standards are used in trade descriptions and in contracts, and how they may be invoked in legislation.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this part of BS 0 the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1

standardization

activity of establishing, with regard to actual or potential problems, provisions for common and repeated use, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context

NOTE 1 In particular, the activity consists of the processes of formulating, issuing and implementing standards.

NOTE 2 Important benefits of standardization are improvement of the suitability of products, processes and services for their intended purposes, prevention of barriers to trade and facilitation of technological cooperation.

[ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 1.1]

2.2

standard

document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context

NOTE Standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits.

[ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 3.2]

2.3

consensus

general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments

NOTE Consensus need not imply unanimity.

[ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 1.7]

2.4

regulation

document providing binding legislative rules, that is adopted by an authority

[ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 3.6]

3 Concepts and context

3.1 Standards and regulations

Standardization is a very broad concept that includes both the creation of consensus-based documents by recognized bodies and the voluntary use of these documents as standards for collective benefit.

Standards do not in themselves impose any obligations of adherence. Regulations, which the law requires to be implemented, may however refer to standards in such a way as to make compliance with them compulsory. The use of standards in trade descriptions, contracts and regulations is described in Clause 7.

3.2 Types of standard

Standards are prepared for various reasons and many uses. To this end, there are different types of standards such as vocabularies (formerly known in BSI as glossaries), methods, specifications and codes of practice, guides or recommendations (see BS 0-3:1997 including Amendment 1:2002, Clause 10). An important distinction is drawn between a specification (that prescribes requirements to be fulfilled) and a code of practice (comprising guidance and recommendations to be followed).

The contents of any type of standard can be subdivided into normative (i.e. standardizing) elements and other elements which are purely informative, and are distinguished by context and wording.

3.3 The context of standardization

3.3.1 The global standardization system

Standardization takes place at international, regional and national levels, as shown in Table 1. International and regional standardization is achieved mainly through the collective efforts of national standards bodies. The international and regional organizations are linked by collaboration agreements and, together with the national standards bodies, form a global standardization system. They have adopted agreed procedures and modes of cooperation which are described in ISO/IEC Guide 59. A joint mission statement adopted in 1994 by ISO, IEC and ITU is given in Annex A. Annex B provides a short guide to international and European organizations concerned with standardization.

Table 1 — Standards organizations at different levels

International	
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
Regional (European)	
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
National (United Kingdom)	
BSI	British Standards Institution, including the British Electrotechnical Committee as the UK member of IEC and CENELEC
NOTE In some countries, separate national standards bodies may be members of ISO/CEN and IEC/CENELEC.	

3.3.2 BSI as the UK national standards body

BSI is responsible for British Standards and (together with the British Electrotechnical Committee) provides the gateway for UK representation in the international and European standards organizations. It is an independent, non-profit distributing organization formed by subscribing and committee members. Its role as the UK national standards body is derived from:

- its Royal Charter [1];
- its membership of the international and European standards organizations;
- Ⓐ — its formal Memorandum of Understanding with the UK Government in respect of its activities as the UK's national standards body (see Annex C and www.bsi-global.com). Ⓐ

3.3.3 Duty of care

BSI owes a duty of care to all those who rely on its publications, whether directly or indirectly. It remains the responsibility of users to ensure that they select standards which are in all respects appropriate to their needs and that they use them appropriately.

3.3.4 Legal recognition

That a standard has been prepared and approved in accordance with BS 0, especially with regard to consensus (see 2.3 and 6.3), should enable any interested party to assert in legal proceedings that it embodies agreement between all interested parties on what is mutually acceptable. On the same basis, courts have discretion to admit the relevant standard as evidence, and so to take account of it in giving judgement.

Support for the application of British Standards as agreements produced and promulgated in the public interest has been given by the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976 [2]. Within agreements which may be subject to registration under that Act, the Office of Fair Trading disregards any requirement which relates solely to compliance with a British Standard.

4 Aims of standardization

4.1 Summary

The broad aims of standardization can be summarized as the benefits of improvement in:

- a) the quality of goods and services, i.e. their fitness for purpose;
- b) the quality of life, i.e. health, safety and the environment;
- c) efficient use of resources;
- d) conditions for trade.

From a public point of view, the main objectives in developing standards are that:

- they provide an agreed basis for assessing product, process or service performance, particularly with regard to safety and the prevention of injury;
- they offer unambiguous technical criteria for legal and contractual purposes;
- they are universally recognized and used.

4.2 Quality of goods and services

Standardization should aim to increase the satisfaction of users of goods and services; standards should be framed in a manner which recognizes user requirements and how they will be satisfied. Typical user requirements for quality in the sense of fitness for purpose include reliability, compatibility, interchangeability and amenity.

4.3 Quality of life

Standardization should aim to enhance the quality of life by improvements in health, safety, security, comfort, convenience and environmental protection. Where health, safety and security are concerned, standardization should aim to identify hazards and reduce associated risks. Environmental protection should include the conservation of natural resources as well as reduction of harmful effects of manufacture and other activities.

4.4 Efficient use of resources

Standardization should aim to increase efficiency and economy in the use of resources. This can be achieved through variety control, economies of scale, reduction of waste in time and materials, distribution efficiency and ease of maintenance. Although variety reduction may restrict consumers' choice, the greater efficiency that standardization allows can be used to reduce cost and improve quality for the consumer. Standardization can also provide a means to transfer the benefits of technology from developed to developing countries.

4.5 Conditions for trade

Standardization should aim to support the conditions that promote trade, particularly international trade. Standardization can help to ensure fairness in conditions for the purchase of goods and services, taking into account the needs of both providers and users. It can help to remove barriers to trade caused by differences in national practices or by individual interests securing undue advantage. It should promote clear and unambiguous communication between parties in a form suitable for use in legally binding documents.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade [3], revised in 1991, recognizes the important contribution that the use of international standards and conformity assessment systems can make to improving efficiency of production and facilitating the conduct of international trade.