

## Creating world class quality standards

### Why are standards important?

There are a number of levels of standards creation.

The highest level – “International Standards” is the most complex. It requires the widest level of agreement between those creating the standards. These standards have to satisfy the needs of the different groups represented, such as industrial, trade and consumer groups of all of the countries involved. These international standards, which are identified by the letters ISO, are most widely recognised across the globe.



ISO is an international standard and applies in most countries.

EN is a European Standard and is used throughout the countries of the European Union.

BS means the Standard is a British Standard.

A good example of an international standard relates to the format of credit cards. Standard number BS EN ISO 7810: 1996 defines their dimensions. Keeping to this Standard is important as it means that people can use the cards

worldwide. A traveller without cash in another country can be confident they can get money using their own card.

As a customer, you will have a lot more confidence in products you know have been tested and meet British, European and International Standards. In the same way, your school will want to purchase gym and science lab equipment that meets the specifications of the safety standards.

### **Benefits of meeting standards**

Businesses therefore benefit from working with BSI to meet standards, because:

- \* standards protect consumers' fundamental right to safety, the right to be informed and the right to choose. These rights relate to products, services, processes and materials
- \* standardization promotes effective research and development, and makes products easier to use
- \* standardization relies on all sections of society being involved in standards. This provides an opportunity for everyone to share knowledge and make their voice heard.

### **Competitive advantage**

*A focus on quality also delivers competitive advantage.*

Many businesses cannot compete by lowering prices because their market, for example, clothes or food, is very competitive. Therefore, they compete on quality. This means they deliver quality products at the right time to fit their customers' needs. Companies that focus on quality can compete against rivals who have lower cost bases.