



Australian Government

Workforce
Australia

Quality Assurance Framework

Guidance Note

Quality Principles Quality Auditor Application

Version History

A full version history of this document can be found below.

Version	Date	Summary of changes
0.1	14 June 2022	Initial document

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Quality Assurance Framework

Note

All capitalised terms in this document have the same meaning as in the Deed unless otherwise specified.

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) sets out the minimum standards of quality for Workforce Australia Services Providers (Providers), ensuring their policies and processes support continuous improvement and quality service delivery.

To obtain QAF Certification, Providers must:

- achieve Certification against one of the 2 approved Quality Standards, and
- demonstrate adherence to the Department's 7 Quality Principles.

QAF Certification is valid for 3 years, subject to a Provider maintaining Certification against both the Quality Standards and the Quality Principles.

QAF Certification will only be granted where the Provider has:

- provided the Department with evidence of Quality Standards Certification, and
- achieved Certification against the Quality Principles.

Providers must obtain a QAF Certificate no later than 9 months after any Head Licence Start Date, unless otherwise Notified by the Department, and maintain the currency of the Certificate for the duration of the Head Licence Term.

Quality Standards

Providers must choose one of the following Quality Standards to be certified against as part of their Certification under the QAF:

- **ISO 9001** - the international standard for a quality management system of that name issued by the International Organization for Standardization (available at <https://www.iso.org/iso-9001-quality-management.html>).
- **National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS)** - the National Standards for Disability Services as published by the Commonwealth (available at <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/standards-and-quality-assurance/national-standards-for-disability-services>).

Note

A Provider must be delivering Disability Employment Services (DES) if using NSDS for QAF Certification.

Quality Standard Auditors

A Provider must engage a CAB that has been accredited by the Joint Accreditation Scheme of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) to undertake an ISO 9001:20015 or NSDS Audit.

A Provider may use a different CAB for its Quality Standards Audit to the CAB that is used for its Quality Principles Audit.

Quality Principles

There are 7 Quality Principles:

1. Governance
2. Leadership
3. Staff
4. Participants
5. Labour market, Employers and Community
6. Operational effectiveness
7. Continual improvement

Each of the Quality Principles is underpinned by a set of Key Performance Measures (KPMs), containing Practice Requirements (PRs) that a Provider must meet to demonstrate conformance with the KPM. The KPMs and PRs are included in the Quality Assurance Framework Guidance for Conformity Assessment Bodies document (the Guidance).

Types and scope of Quality Principles Audits

Audit Type	Description
Certification audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial audit All KPMs and Practice Requirements must be audited.
Recertification audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted every 3 years All KPMs and Practice Requirements must be audited.
Surveillance audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted annually in between the certification and recertification audits. The following must be audited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 per cent of the Practice Requirements (refer Attachment A) any non-conformances identified in the Certification or Recertification audit any other Practice Requirements, as identified by the Department.
Extraordinary audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted where requested by the department The scope of an Extraordinary Audit will be determined by the Department on a case-by-case basis and will be targeted to a specific aspect, or aspects, of the Quality Principles.

Conducting Quality Principles Audits

Auditor	Description
Quality Auditor Audits	Providers that are not audited by the Department must engage a Department approved CAB to undertake Quality Principles Audits.
Department led Audits	<p>Suitably trained Departmental Officers may conduct Quality Principles Certification, Recertification and Surveillance Audits on certain Providers at the Department's discretion.</p> <p>Providers selected for Department led audits will be advised no later than 8 weeks prior to the proposed audit.</p>

Department approved Quality Principles Quality Auditors List

Eligibility

To be considered for inclusion on the Department approved Quality Principles Quality Auditors List (the Quality Auditor List), a CAB must be currently accredited with JAS-ANZ to undertake an ISO 9001 or NSDS Audit.

Appointment to the Quality Auditor List does not guarantee Providers will engage the CAB for any Quality Principles Audits or any volume of Quality Principles Audits.

The Department will only accept a proposal from a foreign company if it is registered under Part 5B.2, Division 2, of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*.

Inclusion on the Quality Auditors List

Eligible Applicants will be included on the Quality Auditor List once they have been assessed as meeting the Conditions for Participation and have entered into the Quality Principles Quality Auditor Deed (the Deed) with the Department.

The terms of the Deed are not negotiable. A copy of the Deed is on the Department's website with the Application and must be signed and returned to the Department as part of the Application process. If your Application is accepted by the Department, the Department will execute the Deed.

Note

The Department reserves the right not to execute the Deed and makes no representations that it will accept the organisation's Application or approve the organisation as a Conformity Assessment Body on the Quality Auditor List

The Deed provides that the Department may issue the Guidance, which forms part of the Deed. The Guidance is provided as part of this application process. Other supporting QAF documents will be made available to approved CABs and Quality Auditors via the GovTeams platform.

CABs included on the Quality Auditor List will be required to:

- ensure that any relevant Personnel and Subcontractors attend and/or undertake any training and information sessions as specified in the Guidance or as otherwise Notified by the Department, including passing any assessment to the Department's satisfaction, prior to conducting Quality Principles Audits;
- ensure that any relevant Personnel and Subcontractors have the appropriate auditing experience, skill and/or qualification;
- ensure that any relevant Personnel and Subcontractors have a sufficient understanding of the Quality Principles and the Workforce Australia Services required to be delivered by Providers to effectively and efficiently conduct Quality Principles Audits;
- provide to the Department information related to the Deed, and comply with all the Department's requests and directions related to the Deed;
- maintain the Required Accreditation;
- maintain its expertise, capacity and capability to provide Quality Principles Audits, as specified in its Application;
- effect and maintain, or cause to be effected and maintained, the insurances specified in the Deed;
- conduct Quality Principles Audits and produce Quality Principles Reports in accordance with the Deed and Guidance, to a high professional standard, in line with all relevant professional codes of conduct, and based on valid, current and authentic evidence.

Contractual arrangements with Providers

Providers may request a Quality Principles Audit from any CAB on the Quality Auditor List as and when required. The engagement of a CAB from the Quality Auditor List is entirely a matter for the Providers.

The terms of any contract between a Provider and a CAB, including payments terms, for a Quality Principles Audit is a matter for agreement between those parties. However, Applicants should be aware that the Deed requires that certain conditions are included in any contract between a CAB and Provider, including a right of termination where the CAB's Deed with the Department is terminated.

Further, the Workforce Australia Deed of Standing Offer 2022 – 2028 requires the Provider to meet certain obligations in relation to engaging CABs. Those obligations include ensuring that in any relevant contract, CABs are required to provide all information and assistance to the Department, as requested by the Department, in relation to Quality Principles Audits.

Costs

All costs of applying and participating on the Quality Auditor List must be met by the CAB.

The Provider is responsible for its audit costs, including the close out of non-conformances.

Conflict of Interest

Applicants must notify the Department of any Conflict in accordance with the declaration included in the Application.

Conflict means an actual, potential or perceived conflict between any interest of the Applicant and the performance of the Applicant's obligations under the Deed, including any interest that may interfere with or restrict the applicant in performing those obligations fairly and independently.

If a Conflict exists at the time of Application, the Department may, at its absolute discretion:

- exclude the Application from further consideration, or
- impose conditions on the CAB for the management of the Conflict.

If the Applicant is unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions imposed or otherwise resolve the Conflict in a manner satisfactory to the Department, the Department may exclude the Application from further consideration.

There are also ongoing requirements under the Deed in relation to Conflicts that a CAB must adhere to.

Lodgement of Application

The Department will assess Applications for inclusion on the Quality Auditor List on an ongoing basis until 2 March 2028. The Department will endeavour to finalise assessment of Applications within 10 business days of receipt of the Application.

Applications will be assessed on whether they meet or do not meet the relevant requirements.

To apply for inclusion on the Quality Auditor List, the Applicant must:

1. complete and submit the Application form to ESQAF@dese.gov.au;
2. complete the CAB Contact Person details and, where relevant, any Subcontractor details in items 2 and 3 of Schedule 1 of the Deed and submit to the Department in accordance with the below instructions; and
3. submit 2 copies of the Deed properly signed by the Applicant's organisation to the Department in accordance with the below instructions.

Instructions for execution and return of Deed

Two copies of the Deed must be properly signed by the person(s) with authority to bind the Applicant's organisation in accordance with the rules of the Applicant's organisation and relevant legislation.

If the Applicant's organisation is registered under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), you have the option of signing the Deed electronically. Where you choose this option, please advise the Department of the method by which the Applicant's organisation will electronically execute the Deed and the names and roles of the individuals signing.

Please ensure that you **do not date** the 2 signed copies of the Deed, as the Department will insert the date upon execution by the Department.

Once 2 hard copies of the Deed have been properly signed by the Applicant's organisation, return the 2 original signed copies of the Deed and the completed Schedule items referred to above to the postal address below, or, if signing electronically, to ESQAF@dese.gov.au. The Department's postal address is:

Attention: Director, Quality Assurance Framework Team

Location Code: C12MR6

GPO Box 9880

CANBERRA ACT 2601

If your Application is accepted by the Department, the Department will then execute and date each hard copy of the Deed and will forward one original copy to your organisation for its records.

Note

The Department reserves the right not to execute the Deed and makes no representations that it will accept the organisation's Application or approve the organisation as a Conformity Assessment Body on the Quality Auditor List

Publication of the Department Approved Quality Principles Quality Auditors List

The Applicant must agree to the publication of their legal name, trading name, ABN/ACN, address, contact position, telephone number, email address on the Department's Provider Portal if their Application is accepted.

Further information

Requests for further information regarding the Application process, the QAF or the Quality Principles should be submitted in writing to ESQAF@dese.gov.au