



How to Prepare for an Audit against the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

An integral part of the process of becoming an RTO and maintaining registration is participation in audits. The following information has been compiled to assist you and your organisation to prepare for an audit against the *Standards for RTOs*.

Why is your organisation being audited?

Audits are conducted when training organisations first apply for registration, within the first 24 months of registration for new RTOs and subsequently on an assessment basis during the registration period.

The extent to which each RTO is monitored and audited by the registering body throughout its registration period is based on an assessment of risk to the quality of training and assessment outcomes and the national VET system. The Training Accreditation Council (TAC) uses information about the RTO's performance and its operating context to undertake a risk assessment.

Who will conduct the audit?

On the day of the site visit you may have an audit team that consists of a single lead Auditor, one or more Auditors and/or a Technical Advisor. Observers may also attend audits to ensure that correct audit processes are being followed. The roles of the audit team and observers are outlined in the Audit Handbook, which is available on the www.education.gov.au website.

If an observer is required to attend your audit, you will receive a request seeking your consent from the Regulation Officer.

What will be the focus of the audit?

The focus of an audit is on the outcomes achieved by the RTO. Auditors will evaluate what the RTO has achieved against the *Standards for RTOs* and quality indicators based on evidence provided by the RTO. Evidence takes many forms and auditors will consider a range of evidence to determine if an RTO has met its required outcomes. The Users' Guide to the *Standards for RTOs* is a useful tool for an RTO to determine how best to inform the auditor about its operations, outcomes achieved, analysis and continuous improvement. The Users' Guide is available on the TAC website (www.tac.wa.gov.au).

There is no one template or a "must do" checklist for RTOs to follow. RTOs are responsible for providing evidence and for the form that the evidence takes. Evidence will vary depending on the size and scope of operations and the context in which the RTO operates.

Where possible other audits may be integrated to minimise disruption to your organisation. An example is where an RTO has a monitoring audit scheduled and is also applying to amend its scope of registration. If it is determined that an audit is required for the amendment application, it may be possible to conduct the two audits concurrently.

You will be advised of the scope of the audit by the TAC Secretariat prior to audit. As the audit unfolds the auditor may identify other areas that also require further inquiry.

What will happen during a site audit?

The audit will commence with an opening meeting that the auditor will conduct with senior staff of the organisation to outline the process.

During the audit, the auditor will talk with relevant staff, learners and end user clients such as employers, and review evidence to determine the extent to which the organisation is achieving quality training and assessment outcomes in line with the *Standards for RTOs* and the operating context of the RTO. The audit may also identify opportunities to improve on these outcomes.

For an initial registration, the auditor will only look for evidence that required systems are in place. Deployment will be confirmed at the post initial audit (conducted within the first 24 months of registration).

The auditor will report the audit findings and will take notes in some form during the audit to assist them with providing you with an accurate audit report.

The audit will conclude with a closing meeting which provides the auditor with an opportunity to provide a preliminary overview of their findings and the RTO with an opportunity to make any comment on the audit.

How can your organisation prepare for the audit?

- Be informed – review the intent and requirements of the audit as advised by TAC. There are a number of resources available from the TAC website www.tac.wa.gov.au and from the national Department of Education and Training website – www.education.gov.au.
- Consider evidence requirements - the auditor's role is to verify evidence that the organisation is achieving quality training and assessment outcomes and is using a continuous improvement approach to ensure the ongoing achievement of these outcomes.
- Conduct a self-assessment prior to audit – use an approach that suits the context of the RTO. The Users' Guide to the *Standards for RTOs* could inform the conduct of a self-assessment. You may choose to use the TAC self-assessment template located on the [TAC website](#) for this purpose.
- Whatever form your self-assessment takes, at the very least it will be important to determine if and how the organisation is achieving the following:
 - compliance with the *Standards for RTOs 2015*
 - delivering training to industry standards
 - meeting the learning needs of your clients
 - continuously improving the outcomes of these
 - meeting the requirements of the national VET system
- Work with the auditor to help them understand your organisation. It is a good idea to provide the auditor with a snapshot such as the scope of delivery, number of students, modes of instruction, staffing, facilities, client groups, special features, etc.
- Identify key contacts - staff, learners, clients
 - Decide which staff will be best placed to provide supporting evidence, and ensure they will be available.
 - Participation in an audit can be stressful. Work with staff to help them feel more at ease with the audit process and let them know what is expected during the process.
 - It is most likely that the auditor will track the progress of learners and as a result will identify learners and where relevant clients such as employers to interview to determine the extent to which the RTO is achieving its outcomes.
- Consider logistics for the audit – any special access requirements, etc
 - Allocate a staff member to be the auditor guide during the visit. The guide assists the process by maintaining the auditor, ensuring staff are available at planned times, assisting with auditor requirements and acting as the liaison between the auditor and the organisation's staff.
 - Allocate a workspace for the auditor to work at for evidence analysis and to conduct interviews and advise the auditor of any special access arrangements, such as safety clothing, security or parking arrangements.
 - Give consideration to the duration of the site audit – this will be dependent on the size and scope of the audit.

- Many organisations use a consultant to assist them prepare for an audit. During an audit, it is necessary for the interaction to be between the auditor and the organisation, and not between the auditor and the consultant. A consultant may attend an audit to provide support to you but cannot provide responses to the auditor on the organisation's behalf, or enter into discussions regarding the conduct, progress or findings of the audit.

What will happen following the audit?

The auditor will prepare an audit report based on the findings of the site audit. The report will be submitted to the Training Accreditation Council for consideration.

If significant or critical levels of non-compliance is demonstrated at audit, the Council will;

- find the applicant/RTO is non-compliant;
- propose to reject the application or propose to apply sanctions to the RTO's registration; and
- provide the applicant with 20 working days to respond to the Council's proposal and provide any supporting evidence for review.

If minor non-compliance is demonstrated at audit, the Council will provide the applicant/RTO with an opportunity to address non-compliances without the proposal to reject or proposal to apply sanctions to the RTO's registration.

For more detailed information about what happens after the site visit, including what to expect, the possible outcomes, and the organisation's responsibilities, please see the audit process flowcharts available from the TAC website.

Further information will be provided by your Regulation Officer following the audit to ensure that you are well informed about the post audit process.

Following a site audit, the organisation will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the audit process and the conduct of the audit. The Council uses this feedback to monitor and review the process, and where appropriate make improvements.

Is further assistance available?

You can contact your Regulation Officer at the TAC Secretariat, Department of Education Services either by phone on (08) 9441 1910; or by email: tac@des.wa.gov.au