

Code of Practice for RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers

The Training Accreditation Council (the Council) establishes a panel of RTO auditors and course accreditation reviewers to undertake its regulatory function of ensuring training providers comply with the requirements of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and course developers comply with the requirements of the AQTF2007 Standards for Accredited Courses.

RTO auditors and course accreditation reviewers must observe the Council's Code of Practice at all times.

Honesty and integrity

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will:

- behave in a fair manner and without favouritism, patronage or prejudice
- ensure their personal beliefs or opinions do not influence their findings
- take reasonable steps to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, including disclosing any material or personal interest related to their duties, in accordance with the Council's policies
- not accept any inducement, gift or other benefit while carrying out their duties, in accordance with Department of Training and Workforce Development policies
- participate in performance monitoring activities
- co-operate fully with any official investigation into how they have carried out their duties
- co-operate fully with any Freedom of Information request.

Respect and courtesy

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will:

- treat everyone with respect, courtesy, honesty, fairness and equity
- not respond to intimidating, hostile or offensive behaviour
- not personally criticise any staff member, contractor or representative of a training provider or course owner
- provide information about their role, and explain how their comments will contribute to judgments about compliance.

Confidentiality

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will maintain appropriate confidentiality and will:

- ensure information gained in the course of their duties is not used improperly
- protect ownership of intellectual property of training providers and course owners, and any commercial-in-confidence material or information disclosed in the course of the audit/review
- ensure information gained in the course of their duties is not disclosed unless authorised or required by law.

Procedural fairness

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will, in line with existing audit processes:

- allow reasonable opportunities for evidence to be presented
- provide sound reasons to support findings of non-compliance

Competence

At a minimum RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will hold the following (or its successor):

RTO Auditors

- BSB51615 Diploma of Quality Auditing
- TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training, or TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development
- BSBAUD402 Participate in a quality audit
- BSBAUD501 Initiate a quality audit
- BSBAUD503 Lead a quality audit
- BSBAUD504 Report on a quality audit
- TAEASS503 Lead assessment validation processes

Accreditation reviewers

- BSB51615 Diploma of Quality Auditing
- TAE50116 Diploma of Vocational Education and Training, or TAE50216 Diploma of Training Design and Development
- BSBAUD402 Participate in a quality audit
- BSBAUD501 Initiate a quality audit
- BSBAUD503 Lead a quality audit
- BSBAUD504 Report on a quality audit
- TAEDES402 Use training packages and accredited courses to meet client needs
- TAEDES504 Research and develop units of competency

Moderation and ongoing professional development

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will participate in ongoing moderation and professional development activities. This is essential for maintaining competence and ensuring consistency of interpretation of relevant standards.

Due care and diligence

RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers will carry out their duties in a manner which is:

Systematic

Activities will be conducted in a systematic manner, based on an appropriate sampling strategy where appropriate, to ensure confidence in findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Outcome-focused

The primary role of RTO auditors and accreditation reviewers is to determine whether the training provider or course owner has complied with the requirements of the relevant standards, based on evidence provided. Wherever possible, evidence will relate to outcomes from implementation of systems and processes. If the implementation has not achieved the outcome/s required, examination of the systems or processes may be required. Where systems or processes have not been implemented (e.g. during an audit relating to initial registration as an RTO), the systems and processes will be examined to confirm whether, when these are fully deployed, they will result in compliance with the requirements of the relevant standards.

Evidence-based

Findings about compliance are based on valid, current, sufficient and authentic evidence. No preconceptions are held about the form evidence may take and judgments will be based solely on the evidence presented, without bias.

The judgment about how evidence is related to compliance will be guided by these questions:

- Is the evidence clearly related to the relevant standard?
- Is the evidence current?
- Has sufficient evidence been provided for a judgment about compliance to be made?
- Is the evidence authentic?

The judgment will be determined by focusing on the following points:

- 'This is the standard'
- 'This is the evidence you have provided'
- 'Here is a gap/issue and it is for these reasons'.

Flexible

Evidence requirements will accommodate the organisation's size and scope of operations, and the context in which it operates. There is no 'one size fits all' approach.

Fair, open and transparent

The training provider or course owner will be informed about the process in advance and given a reasonable opportunity to provide evidence of compliance. The training provider or course owner will be informed of the processes for lodging complaints and appeals.

Where on-site activities are conducted, training providers will be provided with at least 10 working days' notice, unless unusual circumstances apply or the training provider agrees otherwise.

The process and outcomes will be made clear to the training provider or course owner by:

- ensuring they understand the process and the implications of non-compliance
- informing them about the opportunity to address any non-compliance identified
- encouraging questions and providing clear and unambiguous responses
- advising the training provider or course owner who they can contact if they have any questions or concerns.