How to Prepare for a Site or Hybrid 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.

A site audit is an audit that includes a visit by an Auditor to the RTO or applicant's premises. It allows the Auditor to collect, through interviews and observation, a broad range of evidence to determine the extent to which an RTO or applicant complies with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Standards for RTOs).

A hybrid audit will be conducted by an Auditor off site, and involves interviews and an inspection of the RTO or applicant's physical premises and resources via videoconference. The entry and exit interviews are also conducted via teleconference.

The following information has been compiled to assist you and your organisation to prepare for an audit against the Standards for RTOs including links to further guidance.

Why is your organisation being audited?

The primary objective of an audit is to establish that the RTO or applicant is, at a minimum, meeting the applicable Standards for RTOs. The TAC engages an external panel of Auditors to undertake audit services on its behalf. These Auditors will need to sight tangible evidence that demonstrates how the RTO or applicant meets compliance with the applicable Standards for RTOs being audited.

The purpose and scope of a TAC audit will depend on the type of audit. The different audit categories include:

Audits Resulting from Applications:

- Initial registration audits
- Amendment to scope audits
- Renewal of registration audits

👉 Further information on Category of Audit

Audits Initiated by TAC

- Monitoring audits
- Complaint audits
- Strategic Reviews
- Compliance Monitoring Audits

Who will conduct the audit?

An audit may be conducted by a single Auditor or by an audit team comprised of a lead Auditor, one or more co-Auditors and an observer/s may also attend. If an observer is required to attend your audit, you will receive a request seeking your consent from the Regulation Officer.

👉 Further information on The Audit Team

Preparing for the audit

No two people, business practices or providers are the same. The Auditor will generally not be familiar with a particular applicant's/RTO's operations and is therefore reliant on their representatives to provide clear and logical information about how the business operates.

Once it has been determined that an audit is required, there are a number of things that an RTO should consider in preparing for the audit.

- Be informed - review the intent and requirements of the audit as advised by TAC. This could include watching the Preparing for Audit or Renewal of Registration webinar and viewing the information on the TAC Audits page.

- Consider evidence requirements - the Auditor's role is to verify evidence that the applicant/RTO is achieving quality training and assessment outcomes and is using a continuous improvement approach to ensure they meet the requirements of the Standards for RTOs.

- Conduct a self-assessment prior to audit. Use an approach that best suits your business context however, the Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs could inform your self-assessment. You may also choose to use the Initial/Renewal or Amendment Self-Assessment Tools. Whatever form the self-assessment takes, at the very least it will be important to determine if and how your business is:

  - achieving compliance with the Standards for RTOs;
  - meeting training package requirements;
  - delivering training to industry standards;
  - meeting the learning needs of clients; and
  - continuously improving outcomes.

- It is a good idea to provide the Auditor with a snapshot of your business, such as the scope of delivery, number of students, modes of delivery, staffing, facilities, client groups, special features, etc.

- Decide which staff members, students and clients 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 to expect.

- It is most likely that the Auditor will track the progress of students. If this is the case, the Auditor will identify students and where relevant, clients such as employers, they may want to interview to determine the extent to which the applicant/RTO is achieving its outcomes.

- For site audits:

  - allocate a staff member to be the Auditor's guide during the visit. This staff member will support the audit process by ensuring relevant staff are available at planned times, assisting with Auditor requirements and acting as the liaison between the Auditor and the applicant's/RTO's staff;
  - allocate a workspace for the Auditor to analyse evidence and conduct interviews; and
  - advise the Auditor of any special access arrangements, such as safety clothing, white card, security or parking arrangements.

Prior to Audit

Once it has been determined that an audit will occur, TAC will allocate an Auditor. Once the Auditor accepts the audit assignment, TAC will advise the RTO and the Auditor will coordinate the next phase in the audit process. TAC will authorise the Auditor to contact the RTO to schedule an audit. Site and hybrid audits are to occur within 10 working days of the Auditor receiving authorisation to contact the provider. You will be advised of the scope of the audit by the TAC Secretariat prior to audit.

- Further information on what happens Prior to Audit
- Flowchart – Site Audit Process
- Flowchart – Hybrid Audit Process

What will happen during an audit?

The audit will commence with an entry interview conducted by the lead Auditor, who introduces the audit team (if applicable) and outlines the audit process and the anticipated schedule for the audit. At this meeting, you will be able to provide the Auditor with a snapshot of your business, such as the scope of delivery, number of students, modes of delivery, staffing, facilities, client groups, special features, etc.

During the audit, the Auditor will ask a series of questions and review evidence relating to your organisation's outcomes and delivery of nationally recognised training in line with the Standards for RTOs.

The audit may also include observation of training delivery and/or assessment and discussions with students, staff and end user clients such as employers. The Auditor may also identify opportunities for improvement.

For an initial registration audit, the Auditor will look for evidence that required systems, processes and training and assessment resources are in place.

The Auditor will take notes during the audit to assist with the preparation of an audit report. These notes may be in hard copy or electronic format.

The audit will conclude with an exit interview with relevant staff. At this meeting, the Auditor will provide an overview of the audit findings and allow you the opportunity to ask questions. The Auditor will also explain what happens after the audit. You may make notes, but you will not be given a written report at the exit meeting. The Auditor will inform the applicant/RTO that the information provided at the exit meeting is a preliminary assessment only, and that the official audit report, provided by TAC, will include more comprehensive information on the audit findings.

Further information on what happens during the audit

What will happen following the audit?

The Auditor will prepare an audit report based on the findings of the audit and this report will be submitted to the 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 Council proposing to reject the application or to apply sanctions to the RTO's registration.

If additional time has been granted, the applicant/RTO has 20 working days from the date of receipt of an audit report to provide additional evidence to the Auditor. The evidence provided will be reviewed by the Auditor, who will then provide an Evidence Review report to TAC outlining the outcomes of the rectification. The report will indicate whether the RTO has demonstrated compliance or has remaining non-compliances.

Where non-compliance remains after evidence review, TAC will consider whether to provide another opportunity for rectification, reject the application, apply sanctions and/or endorse follow up action.

Where compliance has been achieved the applicant/RTO will receive correspondence from TAC and the RTO's details on the national VET register www.training.gov.au will be updated accordingly.

> - Further information on what happens following the audit
> - TAC Fact Sheet: Managing Non-compliance
> - Dispute of Audit Findings Policy and Procedure
> - Appealing a Council Decision Information Sheet
> - Complaints and Freedom of Information

Is further assistance available?

You can contact your Regulation Officer at the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat, either by phone on (08) 9224 6510 or by email: tac@dtwd.wa.gov.au

In addition there are a number of resources available to assist applicants/RTOs with preparing for an audit including:

Fact Sheets

TAC has developed a number of Fact Sheets to provide guidance against the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*. These Fact Sheets can be accessed at Training Accreditation Council (TAC) - Fact Sheets.

Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs.

This Guide is intended for use by those applying to become an RTO, existing RTOs, Auditors and other regulatory or compliance staff. It may also be of interest to specific VET stakeholders, including learners, trainer/assessors, RTO managers, industry and employers, and third-party providers.

This document can be accessed at Users' Guide to the Standards for RTO .

Webinars and events

TAC's educative strategies aim to provide specialised professional development opportunities that deliver practical information to support business improvement and compliant practices. TAC regularly hosts webinars and events throughout the year on topics of interest to RTOs, such as the requirements of the Standards for RTOs, course accreditation and TAC processes. All programs are free to attend and registration is available through the TAC's Professional Development Calendar.

The majority of webinars and events are recorded and are available to view at Webinar Recordings and Resources.

The following recordings in particular may assist with your understanding of the audit process:

- Preparing for Audit
- Becoming an Registered Training Organisation
- Renewal of Registration

Podcasts

'TAC Talks' is the official podcast of TAC. Listen as TAC Auditors and experts discuss targeted aspects of compliance and quality at TAC Talks – Podcast.