

TASC QUALITY ASSURANCE: ON-SITE AUDITS

Introduction: Audits and Continuous Improvement

The on-site audit process and the formal reports issued after an audit are powerful tools that inform learning communities' continuous improvement processes. They assist schools and colleges in their efforts to improve teaching and learning, and the assessment of learning outcomes, against defined standards by:

- acknowledging best practice and planned improvements
- identifying areas where improvements might be made
- identifying and supporting course providers in taking any specific actions required to ensure community confidence in the reliability, integrity, and validity of reported learner achievement.

Frequently Asked Questions

“Does being audited mean that there is something wrong?”

Audits are a normal part of the quality assurance processes used by many organisations and institutions. Audits enable TASC to have confidence in the validity, reliability and integrity of results recommended by providers. There are many reasons why TASC may schedule an on-site audit. These include: the period of time since a provider was last audited; the relative risk of some courses to the integrity of the TCE; the number of learners/courses provided; results of previous audits; patterns of reported student learning outcomes; complaints; major changes in delivery arrangements; and – in the case of Level 3 and 4 courses – systemic differences between internal and external ratings.

“Will we know when an audit is happening or does TASC just turn up one day?”

Providers are notified in advance of an audit. We aim to give as much notice as possible.

“Why am I being audited?”

Providers are audited, not individual teachers. As a teacher of a course being reviewed at audit you may be asked by your principal to supply documents and attend part of the audit meeting. You – as an individual – are not audited: it is the provider's processes and systems of delivering and assessing courses that are the subject of the audit.

“What standards are applied at audit?”

Depending on the nature of the audit, one or more of the following *Standards For The Provision Of TASC-Accredited Senior Secondary Courses* will apply. Specific information about which Standards – and the required evidence – will be given as part of the audit notification communication from TASC.

- Standard 1:** Course providers will ensure that all the knowledge, skills and experiences that comprise a course are delivered to students, and that all stated course requirements are met
- Standard 2:** Course providers will ensure that individual students are exposed to the learning required by a course
- Standard 3:** Course providers will ensure that assessment tools meet the requirements of the course and are valid, fair, and equitable
- Standard 4:** Course providers will ensure that accurate assessment records are maintained
- Standard 5:** Course providers will have effective and documented procedures to ensure comparability of the interpretation and application of course standards to the evidence of student work
- Standard 6:** Course providers will have policies and procedures to ensure that any disputes regarding internal assessments are resolved prior to final reporting to TASC
- Standard 7:** Course providers will ensure that students are given explicit learning regarding academic integrity
- Standard 8:** Course providers will have policies and procedures to ensure that any disputes regarding a school’s refusal to endorse the academic integrity of externally assessed folios are resolved

For further details see the [Provider Standards](#).

“Will all courses we provide be audited?”

No. Usually TASC will nominate which course/s will form the scope of the audit. Providers may also nominate courses that they wish to be audited.

“Do I need to produce samples of learner work?”

1. Tabling a few marked samples of current learner work can be helpful. It shows auditors that assessment tasks and marking guides are actually used.
2. Some courses have work requirements such as learners keeping a log book/journal or creating a folio. Providers may be asked to table current samples of such learner work as evidence that the course requirements are being met. It is understood that – depending on the timing of the audit – these may be works in progress.
3. Some courses have quality assurance requiring the retention of copies of ‘borderline’ samples of learner work. In selecting samples for retention, providers should consider:
 - a. that the samples need to be substantial enough that they reflect the borderline between awards not ratings (e.g. Satisfactory Award not ‘C’ rating on a particular criterion)
 - b. the borderline in question is between ‘PA’ and ‘SA’ not those between higher awards (e.g. CA/HA or HA/EA)
 - c. the number of samples will depend on how many borderline cases have arisen in the time that the course has been provided. Common sense judgements need to be made regarding the number of samples held, and for how long they are retained. As a general guide, between four to six samples from the past few years (saved in electronic form if possible) would suffice if this number had naturally arisen in that timeframe.

“What happens after an audit?”

TASC Officers will write a formal report about their audit findings. This will be sent to the principal and a copy is kept on TASC files. The audit report provides valuable feedback to schools and colleges. These may include:

- affirmations (confirmation of ideas, plans and future actions)
- commendations (praise for best practice)
- recommendations (identification of areas that could be improved)
- requirements (identification of areas where specific action is required).

Providers will be given time to address any requirements, and TASC will work with providers to address these. Providers will be asked to supply evidence when any required actions have been taken. This may involve a follow-up audit or supplying documented evidence to TASC.