



Australian Government



Ongoing Support Assessments Quality Framework

V1.1

Disclaimer

This document is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of Disability Employment Services Providers' obligations. It should be read in conjunction with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement and any relevant guidelines or reference material issued by the Department of Social Services under or in connection with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement.

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Ongoing Support Assessments Quality Framework

Document Change History

Version	Effective Date	End Date	Change & Location
1.1	3 December 2018		Amended the term Account Manager to Relationship Manager. Updated to include a system enhancement that allows the OSA due date to be automatically extended by 28 days on acceptance of the OSA work order.
1.0	1 July 2018	2 December 2018	Original version of document.

Background

The Ongoing Support Assessments (OSA) Quality Framework outlines the basis on which the Department of Social Services ('the Department') will assess the quality of OSA services.

The OSA Quality Framework is designed to guide National Panel of Assessors (NPAs) in understanding the quality requirements of OSAs and to serve as a guide for Ongoing Support Assessors to improve the quality of assessments.

The NPAs Program Grant Agreement (the Grant Agreement) outlines the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for NPA providers under three categories:

- KPI 1 Efficiency
- KPI 2 Effectiveness
- KPI 3 Quality

The KPIs for the NPAs as outlined in the Grant Agreement are at [Attachment A](#).

Panel Providers are required to meet the KPIs in providing the OSA Services. The Department will measure the Provider's performance against the KPIs taking into consideration:

- Deliverables specified in the Grant Agreement and Work Order
- each OSA
- feedback, complaints and disputes, and
- performance audits conducted by the Department including stakeholder satisfaction surveys.

Ongoing Support Assessors are guided by the Ongoing Support Guidelines and the Ongoing Support Assessment Guidelines when undertaking assessments. In addition, OSA Panel Providers are expected to deliver the services in accordance with other supporting documents, listed under the reference documents section in this OSA Quality Framework.

Disability Employment National Panel of Assessors Program Grant Agreement Clauses:

Clause 25 - Code of Practice and Service Guarantee
Clause 27 - Key Performance Indicators
Clause 28 - Performance Management
Clause 74 - OSA Services
Clause 75 - OSA Assessments
Clause 76 - OSA Assessment Reports

Reference documents relevant to this guideline:

Disability Employment National Panel of Assessors Program Grant Agreement
Disability Employment National Panel of Assessors – Your Service Guarantee
Employment Services Code of Practice
Ongoing Support Guidelines
Ongoing Support Assessment Guidelines
Ongoing Support Assessment Supporting Document
National Panel of Assessors Performance Framework
ECSN Learning Modules

Explanatory Note:

All capitalised terms have the same meaning as in Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement and the National Panel of Assessors Grant Agreement. In this document, “must” means that compliance is mandatory and “should” means that compliance represents best practice.

Ongoing Support Assessments Quality Framework

The OSAs Quality Framework enables the Department to assess Panel Providers' performance against KPI 3 – Quality in a fair and objective manner. The Framework provides the basis for assessing quality using three categories:

- Quality of Service Delivery
- Quality of OSA Reports
- OSA Provider Capability

There is some overlap between the Quality Framework, and the Performance Framework in terms of KPI 2 – Effectiveness, however, this overlap will not result in duplicated or unnecessary reporting. KPI 2 focuses on the effectiveness of OSA delivery and the reports. The quality of the OSA reports is a major part of the OSA Services.

The Department may use results of stakeholder satisfaction surveys that may be conducted from time to time, feedback (including from other assessors subsequently assessing the same client), feedback from the Department's National Customer Service Line (NCSL), complaints, disputed assessments, as well as quality audits to assess the quality of OSA Services.

Quality of Service Delivery

The Department has engaged the NPAs to deliver independent assessments of Disability Employment Services Participant's Ongoing Support requirements to maintain their employment.

Panel Providers are required to conduct OSAs in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Employment National Panel of Assessors Program Grant Agreement individual Work Orders and in accordance with the Guidelines.

The Department assesses the quality of service delivery through evidence of compliance with the Grant Agreement, the Employment Services Code of Practice (the Code), and the Disability Employment National Panel Assessors Service Guarantee, using feedback, complaints, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, Post Program Monitoring surveys, evaluation and audit strategies, quality assurance projects and contract management.

Assessing quality of service delivery includes the following requirements:

- Panel Providers must act with due care and diligence when conducting all aspects of an OSA, and especially when communicating with Disability Employment Services Participants.
- Developing respectful relationships with the parties to an assessment is an important part of service delivery. The Department will use feedback, complaints and results of satisfaction surveys to measure the behaviours of assessors when delivering the OSA Services.
- OSAs can only be conducted by Approved Assessors with the required qualifications and experience. The Department may conduct quality assurance projects to check qualifications of Assessors and to check that assessments are completed by Approved Assessors.
- Services must be conducted at or above the minimum standards in the Code and the Service Guarantee, and the Panel Provider makes these documents available to Customers.
- Maintain a customer feedback register, which needs to be made available to the Department on request.
- Produce and implement a Disability Employment Strategy which is to be made available to the Department on request. If the Provider is a sole trader, they are not required to produce and implement these strategies.
- Use of reasonable endeavours to increase its purchasing from Indigenous Enterprises through its supply chain and employment of Indigenous Australians in the delivery of Services.
- Criminal records checks are completed for Personnel who conduct the OSA Services.
- Any changes in control of the Panel Provider's organisation are reported to the Department.

Quality of Ongoing Support Assessment Reports

An OSA report should deliver a comprehensive, consistent and appropriate assessment of a Participant's Ongoing Support that they require to maintain their current employment.

The Department will conduct audits of OSA Reports each quarter. The Department reserves the right to change the frequency of the audits.

A minimum sample of OSA Reports will be quality audited by the Department. Samples will be selected to ensure a sample of OSA Reports completed by each Panel Provider is audited each six months.

Panel Providers will be given an OSA audit report around six weeks of the end of each quarterly reporting period, outlining the Assessment Reports that were audited, the results and any qualitative feedback that may be useful to consider in future assessments.

The three main areas which form the focus of the quality audits of OSA reports are:

1. Comprehensiveness

- Each OSA Report should demonstrate that the Assessor has taken a thorough approach to gathering information from all relevant people including the DES Provider, the Employer (where the Participant has consented), the Participant, and an Advocate (if applicable), where the Participant has nominated an Advocate to be involved.
- Where the OSA report has excluded any components of an OSA, the Ongoing Support Assessor has obtained an exemption to exclude those components, and the OSA report further substantiates the reasons for the exclusion.
- The quality audits of OSA reports will assess whether the following parts of the OSA report demonstrate a comprehensive gathering of evidence and comprehensive summary of the conclusions from the relevant part of the Assessment:
 - Provider interview

- Participant interview
 - Employer interview
 - Workplace visit
 - File summary
2. Consistency
- The quality audits will assess whether all parts of each OSA Report are cohesive and where there are any inconsistencies between any parts of the OSA Report, that there is acceptable explanation or reasons for the differences.
 - The Ongoing Support Assessor must gather all available and relevant information. It will not always be the case that all parts of the assessment will be fully consistent. Where there are important differences in views or information provided to the Ongoing Support Assessor, the OSA Report must adequately synthesise all relevant information so that the OSA Summary contains no unsubstantiated or unexpected recommendations.
3. Appropriateness
- The OSA Report clearly identifies the Participant's Ongoing Support requirements including the type of support, frequency and amount of support.
 - The OSA Report clearly articulates why the recommended future level of support is required to maintain the Participant's current employment, and relates the nature of support to the Participant's barriers to working independently in their current job.
 - The OSA Reports statements about the Participant's support requirements and the support received are relevant to the requirements in the Ongoing Support Guidelines.
 - The OSA Report and its recommendation demonstrate the Ongoing Support Assessor understands the requirements of the Ongoing Support Guidelines and the Ongoing Support Assessment Guidelines.
 - The language used in the OSA Report is appropriate, respectful and non-offensive.

Quality of Panel Provider Capability

Quality of OSA Services is influenced by the capabilities of the Organisation. The Department assesses performance at an organisation level. NPAs are contracted and administered at organisation level.

The Department will provide OSA feedback (as required) to assist Panel Providers to analyse, assess and continually improve their performance.

The Department will include the following factors in its ongoing contract management arrangements of OSA Panel Providers:

- The Panel Provider complies with the Information Privacy Principles of the Privacy Act 1988 to protect and respect the rights of individual Disability Employment Services Participants. The Panel Provider does not disclose personal information about Participants without their informed consent.
- The Panel Provider has management systems in place that facilitate quality management practices and continuous improvement.
- The Panel Provider has management systems in place to ensure that all Ongoing Support Assessors have appropriate skills and qualifications.
- The Panel Provider has systems in place to provide training, skills development including ensuring that they have completed the ECSN Learning Modules and they have read the relevant Guidelines relating to the delivery of the OSA Services.
- The Panel Provider demonstrates responsiveness to feedback received about its delivery of OSA Services.
- The Panel Provider has management systems in place to identify any new and amended Guidelines, IT systems or instructions related to OSA Services.
- The Panel Provider is aware of its responsibilities to manage its availability and capacity to deliver OSA Services and to communicate with their Relationship Manager/or the

Relationship Manager's delegate, and to contact the Department's Assessment Team on 1800 065 123 in relation to extensions of due dates for completion of OSAs. Note: On acceptance of the OSA work order the Department's IT systems automatically extends the OSA due date (once only if one is required) by 28 days to ensure NPAs have sufficient time to conduct the OSA and complete their report.

Assessing Panel Providers using the Quality Framework

Where quality of OSA issues has been identified the relevant Relationship Manager/or the Relationship Manager's delegate will raise these issues with the relevant Provider as required throughout the relevant Performance Period. The Provider may then be subject to further remedial action to rectify the breach under the Grant Agreement. At the end of each Performance Period, the Department will provide each Panel Provider with an assessment against KPI3 by exception. If the breach is not rectified to the Department's satisfaction, the Department may, by providing Notice to the Provider, immediately impose one or more remedies set out in the Deed such as suspending payment, withholding Work Orders and or imposing additional performance reporting requirements.

Future development of the Quality Framework

The department is committed to monitoring and reviewing the Quality Framework to ensure that it is achieving its aim of delivering high quality disability employment services.

Attachment A – National Panel of Assessors KPIs

KPI	Description	Measure
KPI1 Efficiency	1.1 Timeliness	<p>90% of assessments are completed within the timeframes set out in the Grant Agreement.</p> <p>90% of allocated assessments are accepted by the Panel Member.</p> <p>Where Panel Members reject allocated assessments, the Panel Member provides acceptable reasons for all rejections.</p> <p>Where the Department has returned Assessment Reports to the Panel Member for corrective action, all subsequent reports are finalised and submitted to the Department within 5 Business Days of receipt of request by the Panel Member.</p>
KPI2 Effectiveness	<p>2.1 Accurate, individualised assessments</p> <p>2.2 Thorough assessment reports</p>	<p>a) Assessments are conducted in a manner that responds to the individual’s circumstances, measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the Department sampling of assessment reports, and ii) taking into consideration where there is a higher than average level of appealed decisions that are overturned. <p>b) 90% of assessment reports sampled by the Department are accepted as complete, without requiring further work.</p>
KPI3 Quality	3.1 Stakeholder satisfaction	<p>a) The Department’s satisfaction with the delivery of the Service, as measured by but not limited to results of stakeholder satisfaction surveys, feedback (including from other assessors subsequently assessing the same client) and complaints.</p>