

Frequently Asked Questions



National Panel of Assessors Auditing and Certification

WHY DO I NEED AN AUDIT?

The NPA Scheme applies to providers who deliver assessment services as part of the DSS funded NPA program. The assessment services are considered to be employment services under the Disability Services Act 1986 (DSA).

All organisations delivering services that are considered employment services funded by the Australian Government under the DSA are required to adhere to and be audited against the standards set out in Schedule 1 of the NSDS Determination.

WHAT STANDARDS AM I BEING AUDITED AGAINST?

- The "National Standards for Disability Services" (NSDS) are formally published as the National Standards for Disability Services 2013.
- The standards can be accessed here: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/standards-and-quality-assurance/national-standards-for-disability-services>
- The NSDS includes six (6) standards, each containing a number of "Indicators of Practice" which your organisation will be audited against, although a number of these indicators are deemed "Not Applicable" for NPA providers
 - The applicable indicators are:
 - Standard 1 (Rights): 1:1, 1:2, 1:5, 1:6, 1:9
 - Standard 2 (Participation & Inclusion): 2:1, 2:6
 - Standard 3 (Individual Outcomes): 3:4, 3:5
 - Standard 4 (Feedback & Complaints): 4:1, 4:3, 4:6
 - Standard 5 (Service Access): 5:2
 - Standard 6 (Service Management): 6:1, 6:2

WHICH NPA ASSESSMENT TYPES ARE "IN SCOPE" OF THE AUDIT?

All three types of NPA assessments are in scope of the audit, including:

- Supported Wage System (SWS)
- Ongoing Support (OS)
- Workplace Modifications Services (WMS)

HOW MANY AUDITS WILL I NEED?

- NPA Providers will need to successfully complete a single "Certification Audit" (which will be undertaken remotely) to be issued with a 3-year Certificate of Compliance against the National Standards for Disability Services
 - NOTE: if any non-conformities or major non-conformities are raised at this audit, then a further "Follow Up" audit will be required – all non-conformities and major non-conformities must be closed prior to issuance of your certificate.
- No Surveillance Audits are required for the NPA scheme, although Providers will need to submit a self-declaration of compliance to the DSS each year.
- A Re-certification Audit will be required prior the expiry of your Certificate, 3 years from when you passed your initial Certification Audit.
- If there are any changes affecting compliance of the organisation, the DSS may request a new audit to be undertaken.
- Audits will not exceed 2 days (not including Follow Up audit requirements to close non-conformities) and the Department has indicated reimbursements will be available up to a specified limit.

WHAT RULES DO THE AUDITORS HAVE TO FOLLOW?

- The DSS has documented its rules for auditors in the National Panel of Assessors Scheme (Issue 1, April 2024 – Human Services Scheme Part 7)
- The NPA Scheme has recently been endorsed by JASANZ, and all certification bodies will require accreditation against these rules by JASANZ.
- You do not need to know these rules as a service provider but it might help you to understand what the auditors need to do.

I AM ALSO A DES (DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES) PROVIDER - CAN I DO MY NPA AND DES AUDITS AT THE SAME TIME?

- Yes, the NPA and DES audits can be undertaken at the same time – however this is only if the audit due dates align.
- While the audits can be undertaken at the same time, each service type/program requires its own separate evidence to be demonstrated (although there may be some crossover e.g. with organisational policies), and the DSS requires separate audit reports for NPA and DES
- Unlike the DES scheme, there is no requirement for a Consumer Technical Expert (CTE) to be part of the audit team for NPA.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO HAVE MY AUDIT DONE BY?

- The DSS have initially specified 7th June 2024 as the deadline for NPA providers to have completed their audits and obtained their Certificates of Compliance by – however they have indicated due to the short timeframes, extensions may be considered on a case by case basis.

WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE INTERTEK SAI GLOBAL TO SUPPORT ME?

- Intertek SAI Global is the largest certification body in Australia, and one of the largest and most experienced providers of audits in the health, human services, and disability sectors.
- Our specialist auditors offer sensitive, expert and independent assessment of disability and human services providers.
- No matter where you are in your certification journey, we can help you to ensure that both you and your clients are fully prepared.
- We have auditors based around Australia which helps to minimise travelling costs for your audits (if applicable), particularly if you are delivering services nationally.
- Our auditors not only have to pass the qualification requirements of the Human Services Scheme, but also meet Intertek SAI Global's own standards for competency and understanding.
- Police checks, Working with Children Checks and regular performance reviews, including on site witnessing of audit work, forms part of the process.
- To find out more contact Disability.Enquiries@saiglobal.com