Renewal of registration audit guide

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Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Engage
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This resource provides general guidance only. It's your responsibility to know your obligations and legal responsibilities under the *Aged Care Act 2024* and Aged Care Rules 2025.

Background

Provider Registration Policy

Under the *Aged Care Act 2024* (new Aged Care Act), to provide Australian Government-funded aged care services (aged care services), providers must be registered by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission).

Our Provider Registration Policy explains our process and principles for registering providers of aged care services.

Overview

This guide helps you prepare for and take part in a renewal of registration audit. It describes:

- the purpose of audits and how they inform (help us make) registration decisions
- the 3 stages of the audit process (initiation, delivery, reporting)
- what to expect and what to do at each stage
- the types of evidence we consider (collect and think about) during audits
- how we define the audit ratings
- the audit tools we use
- other relevant resources.

Audit purpose

If you're registered in category 4, 5 or 6, you must comply with the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (strengthened Quality Standards) as an ongoing condition of your registration.

We do an audit to assess if you can conform with relevant strengthened Quality Standards. The audit helps us make a decision about your renewal of registration application.

You can learn more about the relationships between registration categories, service types and related strengthened Quality Standards on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website.

Renewal of registration audit

We do a renewal of registration audit when a registered provider:

- intends to renew their registration in categories 4, 5 or 6.

When we do a renewal of registration audit, we first focus on collecting and assessing evidence of your governance arrangements, systems and processes.

We then collect evidence of older people's care experiences and outcomes to check if you:

- have embedded your governance arrangements, systems and processes (made them part of how you deliver your services)
- consistently apply them in the way you deliver aged care services.

We collect evidence to include the voices of:

- older people and their supporters. Under the new Aged Care Act, older people can nominate and register one or more people of their choice to support them in their decision-making
- workers delivering services.

We collect evidence about:

- relevant strengthened Quality Standards
- the types of services you deliver (the audit covers all relevant category 4, 5 and 6 service types)
- how you're delivering those services.

Evidence collection and assessment

During the audit, we:

- collect, confirm, assess and map evidence against the strengthened Quality Standards and their Outcomes
- use this evidence to give audit ratings for each Outcome and strengthened Quality Standard.

Evidence collection

Our audit team collects evidence to help them make accurate, reliable and defensible findings. This means that we can defend our findings if anyone challenges or questions them. Auditors collect evidence from 8 evidence categories, depending on the type of audit they're doing, including:

- experience of older people
- governing body feedback
- management feedback
- worker feedback

- third-party feedback
- observations
- documents and records
- care outcomes.

The evidence they collect across these categories can vary.

First, we collect evidence about governance arrangements, systems and processes. Then we collect evidence from different sources to confirm statements, issues or risks.

Evidence assessment

We assess evidence to understand and test if:

- your governance arrangements, systems and processes meet the intent of relevant strengthened Quality Standards and Outcomes
- you have methods to monitor if you deliver services in line with your governance arrangements, systems and processes
- you continuously improve your governance arrangements, systems and processes
- you embed and consistently apply your governance arrangements, systems and processes at all your approved residential care homes and/or all service types.

We value older people's experience and care outcomes when we assess evidence.

When we assess the evidence to give audit ratings, we consider:

- the totality of evidence (all the evidence), which includes:
  - the environment you work in (for example, rural, remote, metropolitan)
  - how your governance arrangements, systems and processes are performing
  - how these things affect older people
- the appropriateness of evidence, which means assessing if the evidence is:
  - relevant – it relates to the strengthened Quality Standards and Outcomes we assessed
  - current – it is within an appropriate time and context of time is considered
  - credible – it is provided by credible and unbiased sources
  - valid – it is verified through and consistent with other sources.
- the strength and sufficiency of evidence, which means assessing if there is enough information and taking a strengths-based approach to support accurate, valid and reliable findings.

We use this approach to ensure our assessment of evidence is reliable, consistent, promotes fairness and minimises subjectivity and potential bias.

Audit ratings

We give audit ratings to each Outcome in a relevant strengthened Quality Standard. We base the overall rating for that strengthened Quality Standard on the Outcome ratings.

The ratings are:

- conformance
- minor non-conformance
- major non-conformance
- exceeding (for category 6 only).

Conformance rating

A conformance rating means you have demonstrated (shown) you can:

- establish, implement, monitor and continuously improve governance arrangements, systems and processes to meet requirements of the Outcome/strengthened Quality Standard
- deliver person-centred quality care.

Minor non-conformance rating

A minor non-conformance rating means you have demonstrated you can:

- establish, implement, monitor and continuously improve governance arrangements, systems and processes to meet the requirements of the Outcome/strengthened Quality Standard
- **but** some gaps are identified.

Identified gaps are **not systemic** and **do not present high risk**. In this situation:

- **not systemic** means the gap only affects a minor (small) part of the whole system or process (relevant to the Outcome or strengthened Quality Standard)
- **do not present high risk** means the gap does not present significant risks or immediate consequences to the health, safety and wellbeing of older people or workers.

Major non-conformance rating

A major non-conformance rating means you have **not** demonstrated you can:

- establish, implement, monitor and continuously improve governance arrangements, systems and processes to meet the requirements of the Outcome/strengthened Quality Standard
- **and** it is likely to present significant risks to older people and workers.

You need to carry out significant actions to conform with an Outcome/strengthened quality standard and/or the identified risks posed to older people is high.

Exceeding rating (for providers seeking renewal in category 6)

We can give an exceeding rating to an approved residential care home when:

- you're renewing your registration in category 6
- you've demonstrated you conform with every strengthened Quality Standard and associated Outcome
- your approved residential care home meets all 3 of the exceeding criteria, showing that it's operating beyond conformance with all strengthened Quality Standards.

The exceeding criteria are:

1. Active partnerships for better outcomes

You can show that your systems, processes and practice:

- support the rights of older people
- embed cultural safety
- embed dignity of risk and supported decision making
- are trauma-aware and healing-informed.

2. Governance and clinical governance systems

You have governance and clinical governance systems that:

- exceed the strengthened Quality Standards
- support the rights of older people
- lead to better outcomes for older people at the approved residential care home.

You can show that you have:

- embedded clinical governance systems that support safe and quality aged care services
- a planned approach to workforce, including innovative workforce models
- quality and risk management processes, including incident management systems and continuous improvement.

3. Dining experience

You can show your dining experience:

- exceeds the strengthened Quality Standards
- supports the rights of older people
- provides positive outcomes for older people at the approved residential care home.

When you demonstrate that you meet all exceeding criteria, you'll receive an exceeding assessment report notifying you that you've received an exceeding rating.

Audit stages

The audit process has **3 stages**:

- Stage 1 Audit initiation: starts the audit program
- Stage 2 Audit delivery: we collect and assess evidence
- Stage 3 Audit reporting: we prepare preliminary and final audit reports.

See Appendix A: renewal of registration audit flow chart.

Stage 1: Audit initiation

We start the audit process by contacting you. This is your opportunity to:

- engage (talk) with us to understand the process
- prepare the required documentation.

What to expect

You'll receive an email

This email includes:

- a request for you to complete and submit the Audit Evidence Collection Tool (AECT) and provide supporting documentation
- how long you have to provide the AECT and other documents
- a request for details about your governing body and senior management representatives who will attend the audit meetings
- resources to help you prepare for the audit
- a reminder for you to send us updated policies and procedures when they're available
- a request for you to send us possible dates for consumer advisory board meetings
- a request for you to tell older people about the audit.

After we send you the email, we'll call you to:

- confirm you have received the AECT
- explain the AECT process and information you need to provide
- confirm a date and time for the audit initiation meeting
- answer your questions.

What you need to do

Complete and submit the AECT by the deadline

You need to:

- complete the AECT
- prepare all required documents and make sure we can access all documents
- check you've fully completed the AECT
- submit the AECT and required documents by the set time
- make sure you've submitted all the required documents.

If you **don't** submit the AECT before the deadline:

- we'll contact you to remind you and to confirm your next steps
- if delays continue, we can issue a formal notice under the new Aged Care Act requiring you to provide the documents.

How to complete the AECT

To complete the AECT, fill in the sections that apply to the category of services you deliver or plan to deliver. Each section aligns with the strengthened Quality Standards that apply to you. You can find more information in the Guidance tab in the AECT.

You will also have been given the name and contact details of a Commission officer who will be able to answer any questions you may have about completing the AECT.

If you don't complete the AECT

If you don't satisfactorily complete and submit the AECT by the deadline, we can withdraw your application. We can't renew your registration if we can't do the audit.

Audit initiation meeting

We schedule an audit initiation meeting with you. This is an online meeting and takes about 30 minutes.

We explain the purpose of the meeting in the audit initiation meeting agenda.

Stage 2: Audit delivery

In this stage we review your governance arrangements, systems and processes. We look at how you use them in your day-to-day operations. This can include:

- document reviews
- interviews
- onsite observations
- feedback sessions.

This helps us determine if you can meet, or continue to meet, the strengthened Quality Standards.

Audit delivery is divided into 2 parts:

- **Part A:** where we collect and assess evidence about your governance arrangements, systems and processes
- **Part B:** where we assess if you've embedded and consistently applied your governance arrangements, systems and processes when delivering your services, across all service types.

Part A: what you need to do and what you can expect

In Part A we collect and assess evidence about your governance arrangements, systems and processes. We do this through:

- the AECT
- a governing body meeting
- a senior management meeting.

Review of documents and evidence

We assess the AECT you submitted and any supporting documentation.
This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate how you'll conform with the strengthened Quality Standards by explaining:

- your systems and processes
- how you'll deliver safe and quality care to older people.

Governing body meeting

We meet with 1 to 3 members of your governing body. This meeting is online and takes about 90 to 120 minutes.

We explain the purpose of the meeting in the governing body meeting agenda.

Senior management meeting

We meet with 2 to 5 members of your senior management leadership group.
This meeting is online and takes about 90 to 120 minutes.

We explain the purpose of the meeting in the senior management meeting agenda.

Part B: what you need to do and what you can expect

In Part B, we assess if you've embedded and consistently applied your governance arrangements, systems and processes when delivering your services, across all service types.

If you're renewing your registration in category 4 or 5, our audit includes a sample of the aged care services you deliver in a home or community setting, covering all service types.

If you're renewing your registration in category 6, our audit includes an onsite visit to each of your approved residential care homes.

Complete and submit the Care Delivery Evidence Collection Tool (CDECT) by the deadline

The CDECT helps us collect evidence such as rosters, incident reports, infection reports or complaints for each approved residential care home and sampled aged care service delivered in a home or community setting.

You need to:

- complete the CDECT
- prepare all required documents and make sure we can access all documents
- check that you've fully completed the CDECT
- submit the CDECT and required documents by the set time
- make sure you've submitted all the required documents.

If you **don't** submit the CDECT before the deadline:

- we'll contact you to remind you of the deadline and confirm next steps
- if delays continue, we can issue a formal Notice under the new Aged Care Act requiring you to provide the documents.

If you need an extension, you must seek approval from us. We can't renew your registration if we can't do the audit.

How to complete the CDECT

You can find information on how to complete the CDECT on our website. There are instructions in the tools for renewing your registration in categories 4 & 5 and 6.

Sampling of older people and aged care workers

We use information from the CDECT to select a sample of older people, their supporters and aged care workers to participate in the audit. This sample helps us to assess how you deliver care, and how people experience the care you deliver, across different parts of your service types.

Opening meeting

We schedule an opening meeting to give you an overview of our audit approach. We meet with 1 to 3 members of your senior personnel from the home or community care, or residential care home which we're assessing.

This is an online meeting and takes about 90 to 120 minutes.

We explain the purpose of the meeting in the opening meeting agenda.

Entry meeting

If you're renewing your registration in category 6, we will attend each residential care home. If you're renewing your registration in categories 4 and or 5, where required, we will attend a sample of locations where services are delivered.

When attending onsite, we hold a brief entry meeting to give you an overview of what we will be doing while onsite. We explain the purpose of the meeting in the entry meeting agenda.

Feedback meetings

We hold daily onsite feedback meetings with your key contact. At these 30-minute meetings we:

- discuss how the audit is progressing
- share our observations
- raise any issues or concerns.

At these meetings we give you the opportunity to provide extra information or evidence about the matters we discuss. If we request documentation while we're onsite, we expect you to provide it within an hour.

Closing meeting

At the end of the audit, we hold a 30-minute closing meeting to present our preliminary audit findings and ratings. We explain the purpose of the meeting in the closing meeting agenda.

You can't provide more information or evidence at this meeting. However, you will have the opportunity to provide more evidence when you respond to our preliminary assessment report.

Stage 3: Audit reporting

This is the final part of the audit process. This is where:

- we prepare a preliminary assessment report
- you respond to our preliminary assessment report
- we prepare a final assessment report
- we prepare a final audit report.

Preliminary assessment report

We give you the following preliminary assessment reports:

- If you're renewing your registration in **categories 4 and or 5**, we give you a preliminary assessment report about the sampled aged care services delivered in a home or community setting. This report records our findings and assessment ratings for each Outcome of the relevant strengthened Quality Standards.
- If you're renewing your registration in **category 6**, we give you a preliminary assessment report for each approved residential care home. The reports record our findings and assessment ratings for each Outcome of the strengthened Quality Standards.
- You will receive each preliminary assessment report after the closing meeting conducted for each category 6 residential care home and once for category 4 and 5 sampled services.
- If you're registered across multiple categories, we give you a combination of the reports outlined above, as appropriate.

You'll have the opportunity to respond to these preliminary assessment reports.

Responding to the preliminary assessment report

We send you an email with a link to the preliminary assessment report. You can also use this link to submit your response. You need to respond within the timeframe in the email.

In your response, you can:

- describe the steps you've taken, or will take, to address (fix) any non-conformances
- include a revised continuous improvement plan.

Assessment of approved residential care homes

If you have more than one approved residential care homes, each preliminary assessment report about an approved residential care home will reflect your current governance arrangements, systems and processes at the time of the assessment.

This means when we identify an issue with your governance arrangements, systems and processes in a preliminary assessment report, you can take action to address the issue before we assess the next residential care home.

Final assessment report

We prepare a final assessment report. The assessment report will:

- include a conformance rating against the strengthened Quality Standards and Outcomes
- summarise your response to the preliminary assessment report
- describe our reason for the final conformance rating.

We send you the final assessment report by email and contact you to confirm that you received it.

Exceeding assessment report

For category 6, if you have been found conforming with all the strengthened Quality Standards for a residential care home during an audit, will invite you to demonstrate against the three exceeding criteria.

We prepare an exceeding assessment report. The exceeding assessment report will:

- include an assessment against each criteria
- describe our reason for the assessment
- provide an overall exceeding rating if all criteria are achieved.

We send you the report by email and contact you to confirm that you received it.

Final audit report

We prepare a final audit report when all of your audits have been completed:

- For category 6, when audits have been completed at each approved residential care home
- For category 4 and or 5, when we have completed the audit of sampled aged care services you deliver in a home or community setting, covering all service types.

The final audit report will:

- include conformance ratings from all audits completed
- describe your ability to conform with the strengthened Quality Standards where non-conformances were identified.

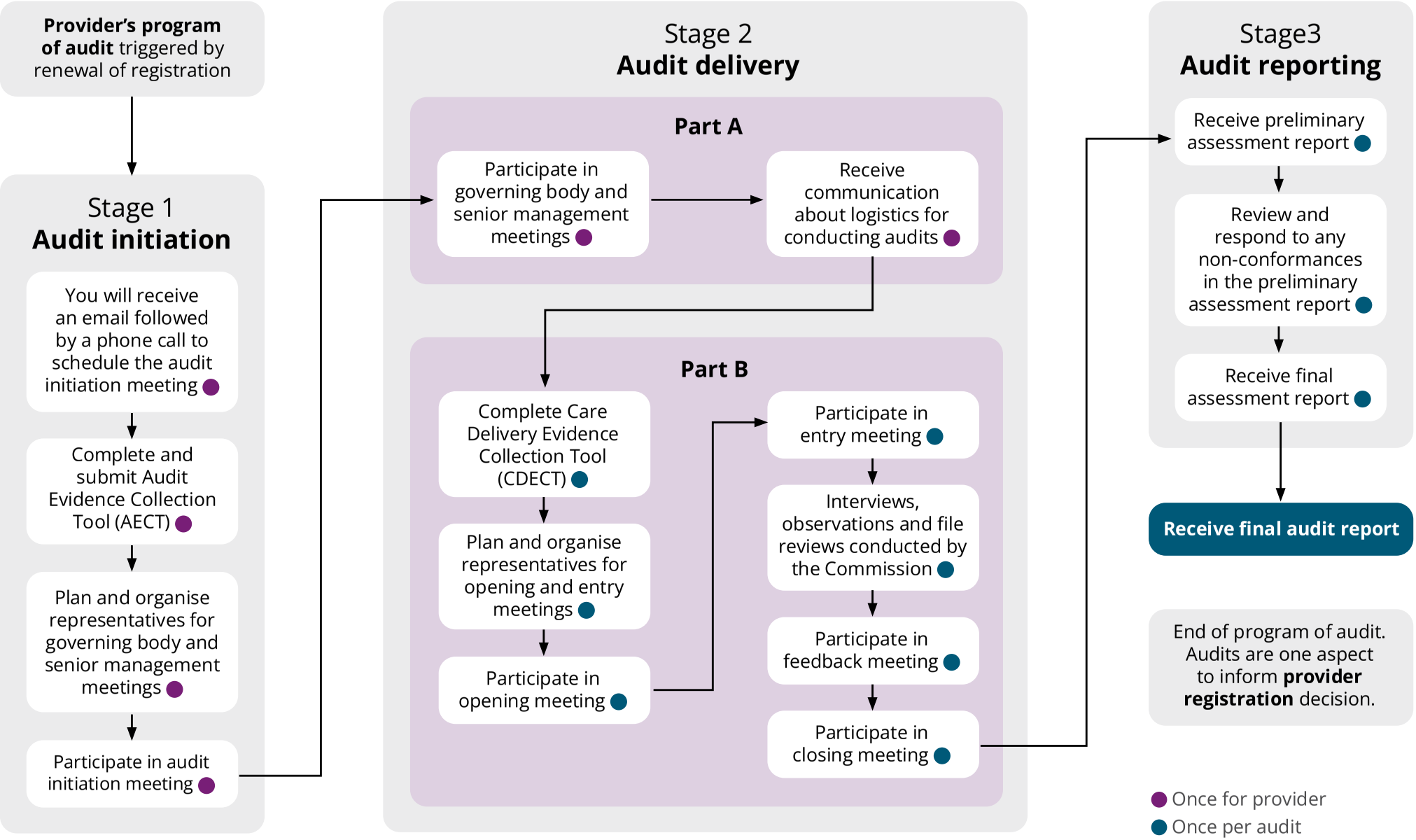
We send you the report by email and contact you to confirm that you received it. This is the end of the audit.

We base our registration decision on the final audit report.

You can read more about the end-to-end renewal of registration process, and your obligations as a provider of Commonwealth funded aged care services, on our website.

Appendix A

Renewal of registration audit flow chart



The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

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