

# Factsheet: Selecting an External Quality Assessment (EQA) Assessor

This resource reflects the 'Global Internal Audit Standards' published in 2024

Standard 8.4 'External Quality Assessment' of the 'Global Internal Audit Standards' (GIAS) requires:

*The external assessment must be performed at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team. The requirement for an external quality assessment may also be met through a self-assessment with independent validation.*

*When selecting the independent assessor or assessment team, the chief audit executive must ensure at least one person holds an active Certified Internal Auditor® designation.*

In Australia, EQA services are offered by a range of small to large service providers. It is also a primary offering of the IIA-Australia. When selecting an EQA assessor, their skill and suitability is important to ensure the appropriate comprehensive assessment of an internal audit function under GIAS. An assessor might be supported by an assessment team to provide an appropriate skills base.

The independence of the assessors within the service provider selected is critical. The assessor is expected to provide their own opinion and not be influenced by the commercial or other interests of the service provider that employs them.

## Requirements of an EQA Assessor

There are several factors to consider when selecting an assessor which are outlined in the requirements of GIAS Standard 8.4. One member of the external assessment team must be a Certified Internal Auditor® (CIA) with their CIA certification current.

As with any review, it is important that the reviewer not only have the requisite knowledge of internal auditing (as attested by holding a current CIA) but also have (or be supervised by a person with) appropriate experience in the delivery of internal audit external reviews.

Additionally, these attributes are important:

- › Experience with and knowledge of the Standards and leading internal audit practices.
- › Experience as a chief audit executive or comparable senior level of internal audit management.
- › Experience in the organisation's industry or sector.
- › Previous experience performing external quality assessments.
- › Completion of external quality assessment training recognised by The Institute of Internal Auditors.

- › Attestation by assessment team members that they have no conflicts of interest, in fact or appearance.
- › Any potential impairments of the assessor driven by past, present, or anticipated future relationships with the organisation, its personnel, or its internal audit function.

## Impairments to Independence

It is critical to ensure the independence of the assessor from the internal audit function being assessed. Standard 8.4 outlines examples of impairment to independence that should be taken into account. These include whether members of the assessment team are:

- › A former employee of the organisation under assessment.
- › Performing external audits of the financial statements.
- › Providing services to the internal audit function.
- › Have existing personal relationships.
- › Has previous or planned participation in internal quality assessments.
- › Is providing advisory services in governance, risk management, and control processes; financial reporting; or other areas.

When selecting an assessor, the following scenarios are not considered to meet the independence requirements of the GIAS:

- › The assessment team includes individuals from another department of the organisation under assessment (although organisationally separate from the internal audit function).
- › The assessment team includes individuals from a related organisation (for example, a parent organisation, an affiliate in the same group of entities, or an entity with regular oversight, supervision, or quality assurance responsibilities with respect to the subject organisation).
- › In the public sector, peer review by internal audit functions in separate entities within the same tier of government if they report to the same chief audit executive.
- › Reciprocal peer assessments between two organisations. (However, assessments rotated among three or more peer organisations — organisations within the same industry, regional association, or other affinity group — may be considered independent).

The factors that should be considered when selecting an assessor have been summarised for IIA-Australia members in an EQA Assessor Checklist.

## Conclusion

The selection of an appropriate EQA assessor to review an internal audit function's conformance with the GIAS is important, particularly in ensuring that they are suitably skilled and independent. The IIA-Australia can perform an EQA assessment for internal audit functions, and in doing so, uphold the requirements of the GIAS.

## Useful references

International Internal Auditing Standards Board, 2024. *Global Internal Audit Standards*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.theiia.org/en/standards/2024-standards/global-internal-audit-standards/free-documents/complete-global-internal-audit-standards/>

The Institute of Internal Auditors - Australia, 2025. EQA Assessor Checklist. [Online]

Available at: <https://iia.org.au/resource-library/quality>

The Institute of Internal Auditors - Australia, 2022. *Factsheet: External Assessment Options*. [Online]

Available at: [https://iia.org.au/technical-resources/fact-sheet/iia-australia-factsheet-external-assessment-options?at\\_context=2855](https://iia.org.au/technical-resources/fact-sheet/iia-australia-factsheet-external-assessment-options?at_context=2855)

The Institute of Internal Auditors - Australia, 2022. *Factsheet: Who Audits the Auditor*. [Online]

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