

**QMS Audit / Self-Assessment Process**

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this process is to ensure that the Quality Management System (QMS) is audited on an on-going basis to ensure it is effectively implemented, maintained and improved, and that staff are mindful of the compliance requirements directly related to unit-level processes and procedures.

# RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for this process lies with the division’s Quality Team and specifically with the Audit Coordinator. The role of the Audit Coordinator is specified within the Quality Team’s Terms of Reference. All staff within the division are responsible for implementing the procedure.

# PROCEDURE

The Student Affairs division recognises the importance of quality audits in our effort to continually improve our QMS processes and procedures and to encourage best practice at all times.

## **Audit Schedule**

It is the responsibility of the Audit Coordinator to create an annual audit schedule for Student Affairs. Key business processes (selected by the auditor) and QMS processes (selected by the Audit Coordinator) are audited once a year.

In January each year the Audit Coordinator creates the annual internal audit schedule for the Division’s Quality Management System. The schedule sets out:

* QMS Processes to be audited
* Assigned auditor
* Months in which audits are to be carried out.

Each process (QMS Process, Key Business Process) is audited once a year. Audits are scheduled for Semester Two only (i.e. early in the calendar year). Auditors do not audit their own areas and units are audited by different auditors each time. The audit team is published as part of the audit schedule.

Supporting operational procedures are audited in conjunction with the key business process. Working guidelines and instructions are reviewed locally by process owners. Where possible, auditors should not audit their own processes. The audit schedule is approved annually by the Director of the division.

Where inter-departmental audits are due to be scheduled for the division in any year, the annual internal audit schedule is adjusted to facilitate these.

1. **The Audit Team**

Members of the Student Affairs division are trained as QMS auditors. The audit team is published as part of the Audit Schedule on the website/SharePoint.

## **Conducting the Audits**

The Quality Team Audit Coordinator publishes the schedule on SharePoint and circulates the schedule to all staff in the division.

All auditors check the audit schedule and arrange directly with the auditee a suitable time/location for the audit within the timeframe defined. Prior to the audit, the auditor must read the previous audit report (if applicable) and check the status of any audit recommendations in the quality improvement plan (QIP). The auditor will use the documented procedure to develop a checklist of questions for use during the audit. A standard template for the audit checklist is available on SharePoint. The checklist of questions should be forwarded to the auditee prior to the audit.

The following should be discussed during every audit, in addition to the prepared questions.

* Has any risk been identified with this process?
* What internal controls have been put in place to mitigate against these risks?
* What changes have been made as a result of feedback?
* How has the process evolved since the last audit?
* Can you make any suggestions on how the process could be improved?

## **After the Audit**

On completion of the audit, the auditor must complete the audit report. The audit report should include objective evidence for any of the recommendations made. A standard template for the audit report is available on SharePoint. A copy of the audit report is sent electronically to the auditee and the Audit Coordinator. The Audit Coordinator will upload audit checklists and reports onto SharePoint and record each recommendation in the quality improvement plan (QIP).

Progress on the completion of audit actions is monitored at Quality Team meetings. Quality is a standing agenda item for all Student Affairs division management and unit meetings.

# DOCUMENTATION

[Quality Team Terms of Reference](https://ulcampus.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/StudentAffairs/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B5AF65F8B-9746-4682-B8A4-BE10331C545E%7D&file=Terms%20of%20Reference%20SA%20Division%20Quality%20Team_Rev%203.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

[Audit Schedules and Templates](https://ulcampus.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentAffairs/Student%20Affairs%20Quality%20Management%20System/Forms/AllItems.aspx?newTargetListUrl=%2Fsites%2FStudentAffairs%2FStudent%20Affairs%20Quality%20Management%20System&viewpath=%2Fsites%2FStudentAffairs%2FStudent%20Affairs%20Quality%20Management%20System%2FForms%2FAllItems%2Easpx&id=%2Fsites%2FStudentAffairs%2FStudent%20Affairs%20Quality%20Management%20System%2FAudits&viewid=87583020%2D214c%2D418c%2Da83d%2Df25b2b4f988b)

[SA Audit Team](https://ulcampus.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/StudentAffairs/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BEF5C45FC-7D70-4378-B4E9-A173CA172CAF%7D&file=Student%20Affairs%20Audit%20Team%202023.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

[SA QIAP](https://ulcampus.sharepoint.com/%3Ax%3A/r/sites/StudentAffairs/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB116D4F4-E7BB-4385-B670-FFFC1E305772%7D&file=QIAP.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

# RECORDS

All records of audits (reports and checklists) are stored on SharePoint for a period of 3 years. All members of staff operate in accordance with the [University’s Records Management and Retention Policy](https://www.ul.ie/policy-hub/sites/policyhub/files/user_media/documents/RecordsManagement%26RetentionPolicy_0.pdf). Any personal data that is used as part of this process is processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and the [University of Limerick Data Protection Policy](https://www.ul.ie/policy-hub/sites/policyhub/files/user_media/documents/policies/Data%20Protection%20Policy.pdf).

# PROCESS VERIFICATION

Evaluation of process effectiveness is carried out using a combination of QMS audits / self-assessments and inter-department audits.

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| **Revision No.** | **Date**  | **Approved by:** | **Details of Change** | **Process Owner** |
| 1 | Sept 13 | Quality Team | Initial Release | Quality Team |
| 2 | May 15 | Quality Team | * Preparation of Audit Schedule to facilitate inter departmental audits
* Change to Quality Team Audit Co Ordinator as main person responsible for coordinating audits
* Change to Step 8 – logging of audit actions on QIAP on Sharepoint
 | Quality Team |
| 3 | Mar 19 | Quality Team meeting 03/04/19 | * Change to timing of audit schedule
* Text changes throughout to clarify and simplify process
* Removal of Step 2 need for management team to approve audit schedule
* Update to additional questions in Step 5 based on best practice elsewhere in UL
 | Quality Team |
| 4 | Aug 23 |  | Process reviewed and updated to include QSU revised process templates | Quality Team |