

Key Milestones for Achieving Initial HSQF Certification

The Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services quality strategy requires all funded non-government organisations to deliver services in accordance with the Human Services Quality Standards. Organisations that are required to demonstrate compliance with the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) to the department through *certification* have up to **18 months** to undergo an independent third-party audit and achieve HSQF certification. To help organisations with their planning and preparation, there are a number of key milestones that need to be met along the way.

Commencement Date

This is the date your organisation's legal obligations to achieve HSQF certification commence. Please refer to your service agreement or contact your contract officer to confirm your commencement date.

6 Months

Undertake initial planning and preparation – this includes: setting the scene (leadership endorsement and building engagement), setting the scope (understanding the quality requirements and allocating resources), planning for action (preparing for change and developing quality action plans) and customer/client and stakeholder engagement.

During the 6-9 month period you should choose and contract a certification body. Refer to the department's website for tips on what to consider when contracting a certifying body.

9 Months

Conduct a self-assessment to check your organisation's compliance with the standards and identify gaps to make improvements. Familiarise and use the **HSQF User Guide - Certification** to assist in this process. You will need to allocate resources, schedule timeframes and activities and develop a plan to complete the self-assessment.

12 Months

Continue planning and preparation for your audit. Work with your certification body on audit planning and your organisation's readiness for the audit. Your certification body will complete a Stage 1 audit first. This involves reviewing your documentation to assess whether your organisation is ready for the onsite (or Stage 2) audit.

After the Stage 1 audit continue planning for the onsite (Stage 2) audit and implement any improvement actions identified in the Stage 1 audit.

12-15 Months

Your onsite (Stage 2) audit will occur between 12 and 15 months. Your organisation should prepare for this in consultation with your certification body. Activities will include:

- obtaining consents from customers/clients participating in the audit process
- gathering documentation including staff and client files, organisation records, policies, procedures and registers for review by the auditors
- liaising with your certification body to confirm the audit schedule including the sites to be visited and any other requirements.

At the completion of the audit, the auditors will outline their findings and any corrective actions that need to be made before certification is granted. You will receive a copy of the audit report which will outline areas of good practice and areas for improvement. If any non-conformities are identified, the auditors will provide your organisation with a set timeframe for identifying the cause of the issues and developing and implementing corrective actions. The auditor will then assess the effectiveness of the corrective actions.

18 months

Certification Due Date
Ensure that all outstanding issues have been actioned in order to achieve certification.

Continuous Improvement

The Continuous Improvement Cycle

ACT:
Identify improvements needed

PLAN:
How to make improvements

DO:
Make improvements

CHECK:
Review results, current performance and practices

Tools and Resources

If you are in need of more information you can go to Community Door <http://communitydoor.org.au/>, HSQF website <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/funding-and-grants/human-services-quality-framework>, Quality Pathways Toolkit <http://communitydoor.org.au/quality-assurance/hsqf-tools-and-resources>.

Need more assistance?

If you are in need of more assistance contact the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) on 3004 6900 or via their website <http://communitydoor.org.au/contact-us>.