

# QACE PROCEDURE

**PROCEDURE No.:** QACE P-03  
**VERSION:** 1.0  
**APPROVED DATE:** 2012-03-23  
**PREP. BY:** HF

## Procedure to observe ACB Audits of Recognised Organisations

### 1 PURPOSE

The primary purpose for QACE to observing audits conducted by Accredited Certification Bodies (ACBs) of Recognised Organisations (RO) recognised by the European Union Commission, is;

- To ensure the audits and the certification processes of the EU recognised ROs are conducted consistently and are being carried out to a satisfactory level according to EU Regulation 391/2009 Art. 11.2, and compliant with the relevant QACE procedures.
- To collect information in order to adopt individual and collective recommendations for the improvement of the ROs' Quality Management System certification processes.
- To enhance the ability of the ROs to identify rapidly and correct weaknesses in their rules, processes and internal controls for the safety of the ships they inspect and certify.
- To propose common action for the sustained improvement of all EU ROs.

### 2 OBSERVATION SCOPE

The scope of observed audits shall be representative of:

- the number of ACB's involved with assessment and certification of ROs;
- the type of audits being conducted, i.e. head office, controlling offices, plan approval centres, survey location and Vertical Contract Audits ; and
- the geographic spread of the audit function.

Observed audits during a 3 year period shall be representative for the full scope of audit programme in a certification cycle and representative for the audits of all the ROs the ACB is contracted to.

The audits to be observed should also take due cognisance of:

- the profile of the individual RO's fleet, and Survey network and organisation;
- the experience of the ACB in auditing ROs against the QSCS;

QACE will observe for each Work Program year:

- for each ACB<sup>1</sup>:
  - one head office audit (HO), plus
  - one plan approval centre (PA) or a controlling office audit (CO) (as applicable), plus

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<sup>1</sup> The observation may be waived if an audit is carried out by auditor(s) previously observed to sufficient degree.

- one survey location audit (SL), plus
- one VCA new construction, and/or one VCA on an existing ship

QACE will further observe:

- At least one audit for each RO.

It is recognised that that the observations have to be selected among the already fixed date audits – and to a varying degree of advance notice and with limited observation resources. This makes it sometimes difficult to achieve all parts of the observation program each year. The observations during a 3 year period for any individual ACB and RO shall be aimed to be representative for the full scope of audit programme in a certification cycle and representative for the audits of all the ROs this ACB is contracted to.

QACE will advise the RO of a specific audit or audit type which QACE desires to observe. The RO will work with the ACB and its clients to accommodate the request by scheduled audits, to minimize inconvenience to all.

### **3 THE OBSERVATION PROCESS**

The observation activity will involve observing the audit, with the focus on the performance of the audit process and the auditor(s). During the audit the observer may ask to see documentation related to the survey or plan review for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of the audit rather than of the survey or plan review.

Feedback on the audit process will be communicated immediately after the audit to the concerned ACB auditor. While the RO may discuss the suggested finding with the observer and ACB auditor, the RO shall in no way attempt to influence the observer.

### **4 REPORTING**

The Observer shall provide a written report, in the format specified in the Appendix to this Procedure, to the QACE Executive Secretary within 5 days of the audit. QACE will submit the final report to the RO within 30 days of the audit's closing meeting.

The RO is responsible for taking appropriate follow-up actions to the observations of QACE, if any, with the ACB depending on the nature of the observation. Possible actions shall be reported to QACE.

If QACE concludes that the RO's QMS and /or the appointed ACB is not in compliance with the standards or the QACE requirements, and if the RO has not responded satisfactorily to findings, the QACE Executive Secretary shall so advise the QACE Board of Directors, with his recommendations. The Board of Directors shall review the matter. If no further improvements are reported the QACE Board of Directors will inform the interested parties, including Flag States and the Commission, on its findings and recommendations, particularly with regard to situations where safety might have been compromised.

### **5 GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION**

QACE is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. For the avoidance of doubt, relationships between QACE and any third parties (including but not limited to contractual relationships) are governed by English law, and the courts of England and Wales shall have jurisdiction in respect of any dispute that might arise between QACE and any such third parties.

## **REPORT ON OBSERVING ACB AUDIT**

<b>1. General information</b>	
ACB: _____	RO: _____
Place and Date(s) _____	Audit type: HO,SL,PA,CO, VCA _____
Audit mandays (nearest half day) _____	ID of VCA object _____
ACB Auditor(s) _____	
QACE Observer _____	
Other Observer(s) _____	
<b>2. ACB Auditor(s)/Technical expert(s) training and experience</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IACS training course where and when</li> <li>- Other training/experience relevant</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Audit Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sufficient notice and communication with RO</li> <li>- Location/site according to IAF and QACS</li> <li>- QSCS Requirements considered</li> <li>- Sufficient time allocated (IAF and QSCS recomm.)</li> <li>- Auditor allocation correct according to training and experience</li> </ul>	
<b>4. General Audit performance and robustness</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent</li> <li>- Fair and Ethical</li> <li>- Due professional care in following audit trails and concluding results</li> </ul>	
<b>5. QSCS Requirements correctly considered</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sufficient and relevant sampling, review of files, reports, drawings..</li> <li>- Relevant QSCS Requirements included in audit questions</li> <li>- Any "missed opportunities" for raising findings, audit trails not followed for QSCS requirements</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Audit findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear, concise and correctly categorized</li> <li>- QSCS Requirements correctly reflected</li> <li>- Factually based</li> </ul>	
<b>7. VCA additional matters</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection and timing correct for a meaningful audit</li> <li>- H&amp;S aspects adhered to</li> </ul>	
<b>8. Training needs detected</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any training needs detected related to QSCS requirements</li> <li>- Attended IACS training course effective?</li> <li>- Knowledge of QSCS requirements, in particular knowing "where to find what"</li> </ul>	
<b>9. Improvement needs of the audit scheme, feedback for end user workshop</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any particular concerns for improvements in general</li> </ul>	
<b>10. Consistency</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any issues with consistency in the auditing. This ACB when auditing other RO. This ACB comparing with other ACB. Explain details and give examples.</li> </ul>	

<b>11. Executive Summary</b>
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-Main conclusions of the observations, including main recommendations.
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Observer(s) sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** “QSCS Requirements” in this document refers to IQMSR, and IACS Resolutions and CSR as applicable.