Preparing for Auditing Success

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This is the first in a series of articles containing auditing techniques and tools acquired over the years by leading and participating in Quality Assurance (QA) audits across the DOE complex. These techniques and tools supplement DOE G 414.1-1A, Management Assessment and Independent Assessment Guide that you can use to become a more effective auditor. We hope you improve on the tools you use and share your improvements with the rest of us. Any credit for the presented information should go to the National Spent Nuclear Fuel QA program staff. They developed most of what will be presented. I am merely the collector and disseminator.

Our primary objective as participants in the auditing process is to consistently deliver high quality, professionally conducted, value adding audits. You simply can't do this without a lot of preparation. Every hour spent in audit preparation will save the audit team at least two hours of either field investigation or report writing time. The more preparation you do as a lead auditor, the easier it is for your audit team and the auditors to produce a useful product.

I like to start with a Lead auditor checklist. It identifies the things I have found to be important for a successful audit. Although the items are numbered, I suggest working on the items in an order that works best for you. The checklist should be modified to suit your situation, primarily serving as a reminder of key items that need to be accomplished and their status. Most items are self-explanatory. The rest of this discussion will explain the use of certain key items in more detail.

Ideally, the audit notification and plan are issued to the audited organization 30 calendar days before start of field activity. This helps the Audit Team Lead (ATL) and the audited organization prepare to conduct an effective and efficient audit. The audit plan should be issued with the formal audit notification. The included assessment plan example is certainly not as comprehensive as Attachment 1 of DOE G 414.1-2A, but it does contain the key information to the audited organization. You may not always have all the information in time to issue the plan 30 days before field investigation begins. TBDs work fine, and in fact serve as good reminders of yet-to-be completed actions. As a lead auditor, the self imposed 30 days prompts me to assemble my audit team and get on with the other audit preparation in a doable time frame.

Getting your audit team what they need to succeed is one of the primary jobs of the ATL. Having team members familiar with each other is beneficial. At the first team meeting, if all the audit team members haven't worked together in the past I ask each auditor to briefly introduce themselves, explaining their auditing background and a little about their personal lives and how to contact them.

Distributing the short auditor biographical sketches used in the report makes this go even better. Conference calls work well when the team can't meet together physically. After the introductions I go over the audited organization work scope, audit type, requirements basis (i.e. NQA-1-2000), any areas of emphasis, any travel logistics and my contact information.

This is usually a good time to establish audit area assignments. My preference is to let the auditors self select the areas they want to cover, giving the ATL final adjustment authority. This is usually a good ending point for the first team meeting.

At this point the auditors can contact each other to trade audit areas. Jointly emailing what I call the Audit Staffing, POCs and Completion Status Summary Sheet works well for this. It is very easy for auditors to overload themselves, especially the good ones. To minimize this I have developed an Audit Work Load spreadsheet that calculates the percentage of NQA-1-2000 requirements assigned to individual auditors. To use it, Insert auditor names in cells G1, H1, I1 and J1, and then paste these names in the appropriate row of column C. The percentage of requirements assigned is totaled at the bottom of the column headed by the auditor name. Additional auditors can be easily added by copying column J, then pasting it and appropriately modifying it in the columns to the right of column J. I use the results of this spread sheet as part of the final ATL assignment adjustments. Distributing the final spreadsheet to the audit team helps create an atmosphere of openness and fairness.

After auditor area assignments are finalized on the Summary Sheet, I email the summary sheet to the audited organization point of contact, asking them to insert the audited area organization points of contact, their contact information; and return it me. I then e-mail it to the audit team. This contact information sharing is essential in setting up appointments, getting appropriate audited organization documents to the auditors before field investigation and gives the auditors and their audited organization points of contact the information they need to begin their informal audit preparations. I also use the status column to keep track of field investigation and report completion progress.

Before the second team meeting, I send out audit check lists and any other forms the auditors will use during the audit. Checklists are essential to auditor preparation, thorough field investigation and good use of interviewee time. The EH web site has some good check list examples.

At the second team meeting, I like having the audited organization point of contact participate. This can take the place of a pre-audit visit. By listening to and being part of this discussion they can get a better understanding of how the audit will be conducted and often have suggestions on how we can best work together. In the meeting I go over how the audit will be conducted. This includes the audit time line, which contains the audit report, meeting times, and

expectations for auditor attire. If they don't know the ATLs expectations, they can't meet them. We then go over the checklists and forms that will be used during the audit. I also use this meeting to discuss logistics with the point of contact, such as where the team should meet on the first day, any required training or other access requirements, computer needs, editorial support needs, the location and time for the Inbrief and closeout, whether I need a projector for both the Inbrief and closeout meeting, etc.
I like to conclude this meeting by asking the auditors to request from their audited origination points of contact, documents the auditor will examine during the audit. Having the audited organization point of contact participate in this discussion really helps. E-mailing the requested information or posting it on a private website works well. Where email/internet can't be used a CD containing the requested information also works. I also request that the auditors set up their interviews, using the contact information contained on the summary sheet. Again having the audited organization point of contact participate will help make this happen. Setting up the appointments ahead of time is critical to completing the field investigation with minimal impact to the audited organization. If the auditors don't have interviews set up at least a week before field investigation begins, they won't have time to prepare in advance and will lose at least the rest of the day after the entrance meeting. The attached audit interview and activity schedule example is one way of recording this schedule information.

I like to hold the last team meeting about a week before the field investigation begins. By then I will have distributed a copy of the audit report shell to the team. The report shell is the audit report in as complete a form as possible. You will know the format, audit title, number, scope, auditors, what will be in the appendices, etc. This will give the audit team a chance to see what the report will look like; how they need to complete their part and any questions they have about the report. This meeting also gives the team a final chance to fill in any information gaps and make any last minute adjustments. By this time you and your audit team should be fully prepared to begin the audit field investigation.

The next installment in this series will discuss some very useful tools for developing managing and communicating issues encountered during audit field investigations.

Credit for developing the presented information goes to the National Spent Nuclear Fuel QA program staff. Ken Scheffter with Project Enhancement Corporation, Karen Brown with Parallax, Inc., Tom Lewallen with Global Technologies Inc. and Don Armour with Battelle Energy Alliance also contributed to this article.

Lead Auditor - Auditor Preparation Checklist

Number	Item	Status
1.	Staff the Audit	
2.	Auditor Qualifications	
3.	Audit Notification & Audit Plan Issued	
4.	Auditor access issues resolved	
5.	Audit team facilities	
6.	Auditor audit areas / elements assigned	
7.	Check lists Prepared Issued	
8.	Audited Org Docs to team QPP Work plans etc	
9.	Past Audits to team	
10.	PC availability for Auditors	
11.	Audit forms to auditors People Interviewed Documents reviewed Entrance Meeting Attendance Exit Meeting Attendance, Issue Development Sheet[1] Form 1[1] Form 2[1]	
12.	Audit protocols, conduct of auditors	
13.	Entrance meeting slides	
14.	Exit meeting slide outline	
15.	Report Shell to Team	

[1] Use of this will be explained in the second article of the series

Assessment Plan Example

1. Assessment Number:
2. Assessment Title:
3. Assessing Organization:
4. Assessed Organization:
5. Schedule Dates: Field Investigation – date from – date to Entrance meeting – date, time and location Exit meeting – date, time and location Report issued by - date
6. Assessment Team: ATL – Auditor 3 Auditor 1 Auditor 4 Auditor 2
7. Assessment Scope:
8: Objective
9. Applicable Requirements/Criteria:
10. Any Special or Technical Items to be Verified:
ATL – Printed Name and Signature

Audit Staffing, POCs and Completion Status Summary Sheet

	Element	Auditor	Audited Org POC	Status
1	Organization			
2	Quality Assurance Program			
3	Design Control			
4	Procurement Document Control			
5	Instruction, Procedures and Drawings			
6	Document Control			
7	Control of Purchased Items and Services			
8	Identification and Control of Items			
9	Control of Special Processes			
10	Inspection			
11	Test Control			
12	Control of Measuring & Test Equipment			
13	Handling Storage and Shipping			
14	Inspection test and Operating Status			
15	Control of Nonconforming items			
16	Corrective Action			
17	Quality Assurance Records			
18	Audits			
2.7	Software			

Audit Work Load

Element	Title	Auditor	# of Requirements	check list pages	% of Total	A 1
1	Organization	ATL	6	2	1.5%	
2	Quality Assurance Program	ATL	34	5	8.8%	
3	Design Control	Auditor 3	75	7	19.3%	
4	Procurement Document Control	Auditor 3	19	2	4.9%	
5	Instruction, Procedures and Drawings	Auditor 3	3	1	0.8%	
6	Document Control	Auditor 3	7	2	1.8%	
7	Control of Purchased Items and Services	Auditor 2	40	6	10.3%	
8	Identification and Control of Items	Auditor 1	13	8	3.4%	
9	Control of Special Processes	Auditor 1	7	2	1.8%	
10	Inspection	Auditor 2	14	2	3.6%	
11	Test Control	Auditor 2	21	3	5.4%	
12	Control of Measuring & Test Equipment	Auditor 2	13	2	3.4%	
13	Handling Storage and Shipping	Auditor 2	8	2	2.1%	
14	Inspection test and Operating Status	Auditor 1	5	1	1.3%	
15	Control of Nonconforming items	Auditor 1	17	2	4.4%	
16	Corrective Action	ATL	4	1	1.0%	
17	Quality Assurance Records	Auditor 3	21	3	5.4%	
18	Audits	Auditor 2	16	2	4.1%	
2.7	Software	Auditor 1	65	11	16.8%	
			388	64	100.0%	

Interview & Activity Schedule as of xx/yy/zzzz

Day One				
Time	**Auditor 1**	**Auditor 2**	**Auditor 3**	**Auditor 4**
8:00 – 9:00	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350
9:00 – 10:00	Entrance Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Entrance Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Entrance Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Entrance Meeting - BLDG X RM 350
11:00 – Noon	Interviewee 1 BLDG X RM 351	Interviewee 2 BLDG X RM 352	Interviewee 3 BLDG X RM 353	Interviewee 4 BLDG X RM 354
Noon –1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00 – 2:30	Interviewee 5 BLDG X RM 351	Interviewee 6 BLDG X RM 352	Interviewee 7 BLDG X RM 352	Interviewee 8 BLDG X RM 352
2:30 – 4:00	Interviewee 9 BLDG X RM 351	Interviewee 10 BLDG X RM 352	Interviewee 11 BLDG X RM 353	Interviewee 12 BLDG X RM 354
4:00 – 4:30	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350	Audit Team Meeting - BLDG X RM 350
4:30 – 5:00	Mgmt Briefing - BLDG X RM 350	Mgmt Briefing - BLDG X RM 350	Mgmt Briefing - T BLDG X RM 350	Mgmt Briefing - BLDG X RM 350