

Australian Community Industry Alliance (ACIA) Policy - Audit Time and Duration

This Policy is provided to Certification Bodies for use when undertaking ACIS audits.

This document shall be read in conjunction with the Australian Community Industry Certification Scheme 5.0 (ACICS 5.0) - in particular the definitions and requirements relevant to Audit Time and Duration. An extract of key clauses is provided in this Policy document.

The Audit Time and Duration outlined in this Policy document are considered to be the benchmark minimum time and duration required. As outlined in ACICS 5.0, there may be circumstances where Audit Time and Duration is increased or decreased.

Note that Client interviews are additional to the times calculated for Core and Supplementary Standards.

Planned Audit Duration					
Row	Item	WITHOUT Equivalence		WITH FULL Equivalence	
		Certification	Surveillance	Certification	Surveillance
Minimum Audit Duration allowance for Standards					
Core Standards (1 to 5)					
1	Minimum Audit Time in total for the Standards under Core Standards	6 hours in total	3 hours in total	3 hours in total	2 hours ¹ in total
Supplementary Standards – minimum Audit Time for each individual Standard within the relevant Standard²					
2	Standard 6 – Complex Physical Support	20 minutes per standard	20 minutes per standard ³	10 minutes per standard	10 minutes per standard ³
3	Standard 7 – Complex Behaviour Support	20 minutes per standard	20 minutes per standard ³	10 minutes per standard	10 minutes per standard ³
4	Standard 8 – Mental Health Support	30 minutes per standard	30 minutes per standard ³	15 minutes per standard	15 minutes per standard ³

Planned Audit Duration					
Row	Item	WITHOUT Equivalence		WITH FULL Equivalence	
		Certification	Surveillance	Certification	Surveillance
5	Standard 9 – Assistive Technology	20 minutes per standard	20 minutes per standard ³	10 minutes per standard	10 minutes per standard ³
Minimum Audit Duration allowance for site visits					
6	Time for each additional Site ⁴ (where ACIS Relevant Clients receive services) to be visited during the audit	1 hour per site	1 hour per site	1 hour per site	1 hour per site
Minimum Audit Duration allowance for Client/staff interviews and file reviews⁵					
7	Time for each Client interviews and file reviews to be conducted during the audit ⁶ (30 min for interviews and 15 minutes for file reviews)	45 minutes per Client		45 minutes per Client (when not a joint Client) ⁶ 20 minutes per Clients (when interviewing a joint Client or other Clients) ⁷	
8	Time for each staff interviews and file reviews to be conducted during the audit (30 min for interviews and 15 minutes for file reviews)	45 minutes per staff member		45 minutes per staff member	
Other items Certification Bodies should allow for, that impact Audit Duration⁸					
9	Review of previous non-conformances	Determined by Certification Body			
10	The need for CALD/interpreters, etc	Determined by Certification Body			
11	Other items, where considered relevant by the Certification Body to increase or decrease Audit Duration	Determined by Certification Body			

¹ Surveillance Audit Time for the Core Standards (as categorised in ACIS) with full equivalence has not been reduced by 50% to acknowledge the expected focus on the Clinical Standard.

² The number of Supplementary Standards is determined by the standards within the scope of the audit.

³ Audit Time has not been reduced for Supplementary Standards during Surveillance audits as the risk-based approach permitted in the scheme will reduce the number of standards audited and resulting time allowance.

⁴ Calculation of the number of Sites to be visited shall be in accordance with the requirements of ACICS.

⁵ ACICS 5.0 outlines a minimum 30 minutes for interviews and a minimum 15 minutes for file reviews).

⁶ The minimum times for interviews and file reviews for a Client who is not also a NDIS/Aged Care Client has not been reduced under full equivalence as the equivalence policy operates to reduce the number of interviews/file reviews or site visits required (in relevant circumstances) rather than reduce the time required. Sites visits are in addition to the head office visit.

Planned Audit Duration					
Row	Item	WITHOUT Equivalence		WITH FULL Equivalence	
		Certification	Surveillance	Certification	Surveillance
<p>⁷ If a Certification Body is interviewing/file reviews in the following circumstances, the Certification Body should allow the specified time IN ADDITION to the time allowed in the other audit. This is intended to allow the Certification Body to ask questions relevant to ACIS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the interview/file review is conducted with the Client who is being interviewed/file reviewed in the NDIS/Aged Care audit. • If the interview/file review is conducted with a Client who is not an ACIS Relevant Client because there are insufficient numbers of ACIS Relevant Clients to meet sampling requirements (e.g. less than 5 ACIS Relevant Clients). <p>⁸ No allowance has been specified for these items as Certification Bodies shall determine what is appropriate in the specific circumstances.</p>					

Extract from Australian Community Industry Certification Scheme 5.0

Note: the extracts below are provided for information only. The Certification Body shall ensure all relevant requirements of ACICS 5.0 are complied with, regardless of whether they are provided below.

Audit Day	The duration of an audit day is 8 hours, including 1 hour for lunch and excluding all other activities other than auditing.
Audit Duration	<p>Part of Audit Time spent conducting audit activities from the opening meeting to the closing meeting, inclusive.</p> <p>Note: Audit activities normally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting the opening meeting. - Performing document review while conducting the audit. - Communicating during the audit. - Assigning roles and responsibilities of guides and observers. - Collecting and verifying information. - Generating audit findings. - Preparing audit conclusions. - Conducting the closing meeting. <p>Audit Duration does not include travel time (e.g. en-route or between sites) or breaks (other than the lunch break).</p>
Audit Time	<p>Time needed to plan and accomplish a complete and effective audit.</p> <p>Audit Time includes the total time on-site at a client's location (physical or virtual) and time spent off-site carrying out planning, document review, interacting with client personnel and report writing.</p>

7.4.7 Audit Time and Duration

- 7.4.7.1 Audit Durations should typically not be less than 80% of the Audit Time calculated rounded to the nearest whole number. This applies to initial Certification, Surveillance, Provisional and subsequent Certification Audits.
- 7.4.7.2 A Certification Body shall allow the following minimum times for file reviews and interviews:
 - a) An additional 30 minutes for each Client identified in the Total Client Sample for interviews.
 - b) An additional 15 minutes for each Client identified in the Total Client Sample for file reviews.
 - c) An additional 30 minutes for each staff member interviewed.
 - d) An additional 15 minutes for each staff file reviewed.
- 7.4.7.3 Audit Days shall be rounded to closest whole number.
- 7.4.7.4 Audit Time and Duration shall be calculated in accordance with ACIA's published policy.

7.4.7.5 Audit Time:

- a) Should be increased by the Certification Body where the Certification Body considers it appropriate to do so, after considering such factors as:
 - i. Complicated logistics involving more than one building or location where work is carried out or very large Sites relevant to the audit scope.
 - ii. The sample of ACIS Relevant Clients speaking in more than one language that require interpreters or other factors preventing auditors from working independently.
 - iii. A high proportion of ACIS Relevant Clients with high risk or complex needs.
 - iv. The need to review and close non-conformities from previous audits.
- b) Shall be reduced where the Certification Body considers it appropriate to do so, after considering such factors as:
 - i. Applying Equivalence with other Standards, consistent with Scheme requirements.
 - ii. Relying on Client and staff interviews and file reviews from other Scheme Certification audits, consistent with Scheme requirements.
 - iii. Prior knowledge of the Service Provider's systems (e.g. previously audited against ACIS by the same Certification Body).

7.4.7.6 Reductions in Audit Duration shall not exceed 50% of the full duration outlined in the Audit Time and Duration policy documentation provided by ACIA.

7.4.7.7 Additional time required for the stage 1 audit or report writing shall not be used to reduce time planned for stage 2 audit auditing activities.

7.4.7.8 The audit plan shall include the duration of each major component, including associated rationale, and advised to the Service Provider. The Service Provider will ensure that the most appropriate organisational individual is scheduled to meet the requirements of each component in the plan.

7.4.8 Planning

7.4.8.1 As part of planning the evaluation activities, the Certification Body

7.4.8.2 The number of staff interviews and file reviews shall be based on a risk assessment by the Certification Body, after considering the following factors:

- a) The number of ACIS Relevant Clients.
- b) The number of sites to be audited.
- c) The complexity of services provided to ACIS Relevant Clients.
- d) Other factors considered relevant by the Certification Body.

7.4.8.3 In planning and undertaking its evaluation activities of Clients, Certification Bodies shall be cognisant of the vulnerabilities of Clients and shall confirm the Client received the Opt-Out communication from the Service Provider and was still comfortable participating in the audit process. Certification Bodies shall advise Clients selected for interview that, to support the interview process, they may have an independent person of their choice present at the interview.

7.4.8.4 In developing the audit plan for Certification and Surveillance audits, the Certification Body shall consider (where applicable):

- a) Any parts of the Standard that were identified as non-conformities in the previous and relevant Certification or Surveillance audit.
- b) The ACIA Self-Assessment document, completed by the Service Provider.
- c) Relevant documents provided by the Service Provider.
- d) Review of any material changes to the Service Provider.
- e) Results from internal audits and management review.
- f) The approach taken by the Service Provider in relation to its management system, operational control and service delivery.
- g) The Service Provider's scope of service, including Client complexity.
- h) The Service Provider's size.
- i) ACIA Equivalence Policy for relevant Service Providers.
- j) Accuracy of advertising claims made by the Service Provider, including websites and social media as per ACIA Guidelines re Use of ACIA Logo.
- k) Other information available to the Certification Body relating to the Service Provider and relevant to the audit, including information from ACIA, Scheme Funders or Government Agencies.
- l) Risk based considerations, as outlined in clause 7.1 (General – Process Requirements).

7.4.8.5 The Certification Body shall advise the Service Provider of its audit plan in enough time for arrangements to be made to visit and interview Clients.

7.4.9 Unless otherwise agreed with ACIA, the Certification Body shall prioritise face to face Client interviews rather than virtual or telephone interviews, after taking into account such factors as Client preferences, significant travel distances, pandemic, etc. The rationale for not conducting Client interviews face to face shall be documented in audit records.

Audit Time and Duration Guidance – Examples

Examples are provided for information purposes only.

Examples to show how clauses are intended to work	Audit Time and Duration Guidance		
<p>Example 1: Service Provider undertaking Certification Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider is undertaking a NDIS audit at the same time as the ACIS audit Supplementary Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex phy - 5 (med mgt, wound care, TBI, palliative, altered nutrition) Complex behaviour – 3 Mental health – 1 No additional Sites 5 Client interviews and file reviews required for audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 ACIS Relevant Clients are also NDIS participants and were included in interviews and file reviews 4 staff interviews and file reviews required for the audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews and file reviews of 2 of the staff are relevant for the ACIS review Other items allowed for by the Certification Body (without equivalence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of previous non-conformances – none CALD/Interpreters – none <p>Other items - none</p>	Audit Duration (from opening to closing meetings)	Audit WITHOUT equivalence	Audit WITH full equivalence
	1. Core standards	6 hours	3 hours
	Supplementary Standards		
	2. Complex Physical Support (2 of the Quality Outcomes in scope do not have equivalence with NDIS – TBI and palliative)	2.67 hours	1.67 hours
	3. Complex Behaviour Support (1 Quality Outcome does not have equivalence with NDIS – complex cognitive)	1 hour	0.67 hour
	4. Mental Health Support (mental health Standard does not have equivalence with NDIS)	0.5 hour	0.5 hour
	5. Assistive Technology	-	-
	Site visits		
	6. Additional Site Visits	-	-
	Client/staff interviews and file reviews		
	7. Client interviews and file reviews	3.75 hours	
	a. Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client		2.25 hours
	b. Client is a joint Client or other Client		0.67 hour
	8. Staff interviews and file reviews	3 hours	1.5 hours
	Other items Certification Bodies should allow for, that impact Audit Duration		
9. Review of previous non-conformances	-	-	
10. The need for CALD/interpreters, etc	-	-	
11. Other items, where considered relevant by the Certification Body to increase or decrease Audit Duration	-	-	
Audit Duration Total – Hours	16.92 Hours	10.26 Hours	
Audit Duration Total – Audit Days	2.11 Audit Days	1.28 Audit Days	
Noting that Audit Duration should typically not be less than 80% of Audit Time, Audit Time (including Audit Duration) is calculated as (Audit Duration x 100 / 80): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Time – Without equivalence – 2.64 Audit Days (rounded to 3 Audit Days) Audit Time – With full equivalence – 1.6 Audit Days (rounded to 2 Audit Days) 			
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the Equivalence Policy and the Service Provider’s scope of service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 2 (complex physical support) is calculated at 3 Quality Outcomes at full equivalence and 2 Quality Outcomes without equivalence. 			

Examples to show how clauses are intended to work	Audit Time and Duration Guidance																																									
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Item 3 (complex behaviour support) is calculated at 2 Quality Outcomes at full equivalence and 1 Quality Outcome without equivalence. ○ Item 4 (mental health support) is calculated at 1 Quality Outcome without equivalence. • Clients are living in own home, which does not qualify to be counted as a Site. • Client interviews/file reviews are calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Certification Body considers it appropriate that, of the 5 Client Interviews/file reviews that are required, the 2 interviews/file reviews of the joint NDIS/care Clients can be relied on, with some time added for ACIS specific questions. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are 3 interviews/file reviews to be conducted where the Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client (3 X 45 minutes). ▪ There is additional time allocated to the interviews/file reviews of the Clients who are joint Clients (2 X 20 minutes). • Staff interviews/file reviews are calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Certification Body considers it appropriate that, of the 4 staff Interviews/file reviews that are required, the 2 staff interviews/file reviews completed under the NDIS review can be relied on. This means there are 2 interviews file reviews to be conducted when equivalence is considered (2 X 45 minutes). • This example shows the application of full equivalence. A Certification Body may consider it appropriate to not apply full equivalence – in which case the Audit Duration and Audit Time will be greater than the example shown for full equivalence. • Audit Time does not include travel time for Client Interviews. • The Audit Time and Duration outlined in this document is generally considered to be the minimum time and duration required. There may be circumstances where the Certification Body increases or decreases Audit Time and Duration if it considers it appropriate to do so, after considering Scheme requirements. 																																									
<p>Example 2: Service Provider undertaking Certification Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider is undertaking a NDIS audit at the same time as the ACIS audit • Supplementary Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complex phy - 8 (med mgt, wound care, catheter, bowel, enteral, airway, spinal, palliative) ○ Complex behaviour – 3 ○ Mental health – 1 • No additional Sites • 9 Client interviews and file reviews required for audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 ACIS Relevant Clients are also NDIS participants and were included in interviews and file reviews • 6 staff interviews and file reviews required for the audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interviews and file reviews of 4 of the staff are relevant for the ACIS review • Other items allowed for by the Certification Body (without equivalence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of previous non-conformances – none ○ CALD/Interpreters – none ○ Other items - none 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Audit Duration (from opening to closing meetings)</th> <th>Audit WITHOUT equivalence</th> <th>Audit WITH full equivalence</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Core standards</td> <td>6 hours</td> <td>3 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Supplementary Standards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Complex Physical Support (2 of the Quality Outcomes in scope do not have equivalence with NDIS – spinal and palliative)</td> <td>2.67 hours</td> <td>1.67 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Complex Behaviour Support (1 Quality Outcome does not have equivalence with NDIS – complex cognitive)</td> <td>1 hour</td> <td>0.67 hour</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Mental Health Support (mental health standard does not have equivalence with NDIS)</td> <td>0.5 hour</td> <td>0.5 hour</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Assistive technology</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Site visits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Additional Site Visits</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Client/staff interviews and file reviews</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Client interviews and file reviews</td> <td>6.75 hours</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>a. Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client</td> <td></td> <td>5.25 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Client is a joint Client or other Client</td> <td></td> <td>0.67 hour</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Audit Duration (from opening to closing meetings)	Audit WITHOUT equivalence	Audit WITH full equivalence	1. Core standards	6 hours	3 hours	Supplementary Standards			2. Complex Physical Support (2 of the Quality Outcomes in scope do not have equivalence with NDIS – spinal and palliative)	2.67 hours	1.67 hours	3. Complex Behaviour Support (1 Quality Outcome does not have equivalence with NDIS – complex cognitive)	1 hour	0.67 hour	4. Mental Health Support (mental health standard does not have equivalence with NDIS)	0.5 hour	0.5 hour	5. Assistive technology	-	-	Site visits			6. Additional Site Visits	-	-	Client/staff interviews and file reviews			7. Client interviews and file reviews	6.75 hours		a. Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client		5.25 hours	b. Client is a joint Client or other Client		0.67 hour
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Examples to show how clauses are intended to work	Audit Time and Duration Guidance			
	8. Staff interviews and file reviews	4.5 hours	1.5 hours	
	Other items Certification Bodies should allow for, that impact Audit Duration			
	9. Review of previous non-conformances	-	-	
	10. The need for CALD/interpreters, etc	-	-	
	11. Other items, where considered relevant by the Certification Body to increase or decrease Audit Duration	-	-	
	Audit Duration Total – Hours		21.42 Hours	13.26 Hours
	Audit Duration Total – Audit Days		2.68 Audit Days	1.66 Audit Days
<p>Noting that Audit Duration should typically not be less than 80% of Audit Time, Audit Time (including Audit Duration) is calculated as (Audit Duration x 100 / 80):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Time – Without equivalence – 3.35 Audit Days (rounded to 3 Audit Days) Audit Time – With full equivalence – 2.08 Audit Days (rounded to 2 Audit Days) 				
<p>Notes:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the Equivalence Policy and the Service Provider’s scope of service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 2 (complex physical support) is calculated at 6 Quality Outcomes at full equivalence and 2 Quality Outcomes without equivalence. Item 3 (complex behaviour support) is calculated at 2 Quality Outcomes at full equivalence and 1 Quality Outcome without equivalence. Item 4 (mental health support) is calculated at 1 Quality Outcome without equivalence. Clients are living in own home, which does not qualify to be counted as a Site. Client interviews/file reviews are calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Certification Body considers it appropriate that, of the 9 Client Interviews/file reviews that are required, the 2 interviews/file reviews of the joint NDIS/icare Clients can be relied on, with some time added for ACIS specific questions. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 7 interviews/file reviews to be conducted where the Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client (7 X 45 minutes). There is additional time allocated to the interviews/file reviews of the Clients who are joint Clients (2 X 20 minutes). Staff interviews/file reviews are calculated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Certification Body considers it appropriate that, of the 6 staff Interviews/file reviews that are required, the 4 staff interviews/file reviews completed under the NDIS review can be relied on. This means there are 2 interviews file reviews to be conducted when equivalence is considered. This example shows the application of full equivalence. A Certification Body may consider it appropriate to not apply full equivalence – in which case the Audit Duration and Audit Time will be greater than the example shown for full equivalence. Audit Time does not include travel time for Client Interviews. The Audit Time and Duration outlined in this document is generally considered to be the minimum time and duration required. There may be circumstances where the Certification Body increases or decreases Audit Time and Duration if it considers it appropriate to do so, after considering Scheme requirements. 				

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Complex Behaviour Support (1 Quality Outcome in scope has equivalence with NDIS – positive behaviour support)	0.33 hour	0.17 hour	4. Mental Health Support (mental health standard does not have equivalence with NDIS)	0.5 hour	0.5 hour	5. Assistive technology	-	-	Site visits			6. Additional Site Visits	-	-	Client/staff interviews and file reviews			7. Client interviews and file reviews	3.75 hours		a. Client is an ACIS Relevant Client and not a joint Client		2.25 hours	b. Client is a joint Client or other Client		0.67 hour	8. Staff interviews and file reviews	3 hours	1.5 hours	Other items Certification Bodies should allow for, that impact Audit Duration			9. Review of previous non-conformances	-	-	10. The need for CALD/interpreters, etc	-	-	11. 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Item 4 (mental health support) is calculated at 1 Quality Outcome without equivalence. Clients are living in own home, which does not qualify to be counted as a Site.
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<p>Example 4: Service Provider undertaking Surveillance Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider is undertaking a NDIS audit at the same time as the ACIS audit Supplementary Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex phy - 8 (med mgt, wound care, catheter, bowel, enteral, airway, spinal, palliative) Complex behaviour – 3 Mental health – 1 After considering risk and other factors, the following standards are included in the surveillance audit (3 – med mgt, positive behaviour support and mental health) No additional Sites 7 Client interviews and file reviews required for audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 ACIS Relevant Clients are also NDIS participants and were included in interviews and file reviews 5 staff interviews and file reviews required for the audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews and file reviews of 3 of the staff are relevant for the ACIS review Other items allowed for by the Certification Body (without equivalence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of previous non-conformances – none CALD/Interpreters – none Other items - none 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Audit Duration (from opening to closing meetings)</th> <th>Audit WITHOUT equivalence</th> <th>Audit WITH full equivalence</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. 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Examples to show how clauses are intended to work	Audit Time and Duration Guidance		
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	Audit Duration Total – Hours	13.16 Hours	8.76 Hours
	Audit Duration Total – Audit Days	1.65 Audit Days	1.10 Audit Days
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