

NDIS Practice Standards Verification Guidebook

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This Verification Guidebook is designed to assist your organisation meet the requirements for verification to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards.

1 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards overview

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission (the “NDIS Commission”) is the Federal Government regulatory body overseeing the administration and regulation of the NDIS.

All registered NDIS providers must undertake a third party quality assessment by way of either certification or verification against the NDIS Practice Standards. Verification is for all providers (excluding government entities) delivering lower risk, lower complexity supports and services only. This involves an audit against the [NDIS Practice Standards Verification Module – Required Documentation](#).

BSI is approved by the NDIS Commission to undertake quality audits against the NDIS Practice Standards. All functions related to approved quality auditors and the assessments are covered under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Act).

2 Steps to Verification

The following section outlines the steps for engaging BSI as your Approved Quality Auditor (AQA) for NDIS Practice Standard verification. BSI reserves the right to provide its clients and those that request quotations with marketing and technical information relating to standards, training and compliance services.

The delivery of verification services by BSI is in alignment with ISO/IEC 17065:2012. BSI Group is accredited by JAS-ANZ for ISO 17065:2012.

2.1 Initial inquiry

Requests for quote for verification to the NDIS Practice Standards will be handled by the BSI sales team. A BSI sales team member will send you a quotation request form so you can provide us with some details about your business and your NDIS service delivery. This will assist us in preparing a proposal that tailors our audit services to your organisation’s needs. All quotes are provided free of charge and on a no-obligation basis.

When you apply to become a registered NDIS provider on the NDIS Commission’s portal, you will be provided with an ‘initial scope of audit’ document. Please provide this to BSI along with your completed quotation request form as it outlines what your audit must include and details on your organisation and service delivery. This will also provide information on whether you are required to undertake a certification or verification assessment. Any change in the scope of the audit may impact upon the final cost.

There may be instances where a verification assessment would be more expensive than undertaking a certification assessment. In such circumstances, BSI will provide a separate quote for verification and certification. You may then decide whether to proceed with a verification audit or go through the certification audit process.

2.2 Audit planning

Once you have signed the BSI proposal we will begin planning your verification assessment. You will receive this guidebook to help you prepare for the upcoming audit.

Your requirements will be entered into our database and a Client Services Officer (CSO) will be appointed to look after your verification assessment requirements. The CSO will be your primary point of contact with BSI and is responsible for ensuring that our assessment services are delivered to your organisation in the most effective manner possible.

The CSO will contact you to discuss your NDIS service delivery in order to plan for the verification assessment including a date for the assessment to take place. The CSO will also need your NDIS application reference number (ARN) in order to be able to access your NDIS portal site as required by BSI.

2.3 Preparing for your verification assessment

The verification assessment will be carried out by a qualified auditor and is usually conducted off-site also known as a “desk-top audit”.

Prior to the verification assessment you will need to upload your documents relevant to the Verification Module of the NDIS Practice Standards on your NDIS portal file. A guide to what information the BSI auditor will need to review can be found here: [Verification Module - Required Documentation](#).

Other helpful links to assist you in preparing for your NDIS verification journey are below –

Workers orientation module: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workers/training-course>

Workers screening: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workers/worker-screening-workers>

Complaint management rule: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00634>

Incident management rule: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00633>

You will also need to complete the self-assessment responses on your file on the NDIS Commission’s portal system. Completion of the self-assessment will assist you to prepare your documentation for the verification assessment.

2.4 The Verification Assessment

During the Verification assessment, the BSI auditor will access your NDIS portal file and review the documents you have uploaded to assess whether or not these meet the requirements of the Verification Module of the NDIS Practice Standards. Although the assessment is usually conducted off-site, you will need to be contactable on the date of the verification assessment so the BSI auditor can discuss the assessment with you if required.

To demonstrate compliance with the Verification Module of the NDIS Practice Standards, the BSI auditor will assess the following during your verification assessment in accordance with [Verification Module - Required Documentation](#). Requirements vary for **Bodies Corporate (Incorporated or Pty Ltd)** or **Individuals and Partnerships** and include the below -

1. Human Resource requirements
2. Evidence of professional memberships for certain NDIS registration groups. The qualification requirements for each registration group in the verification module can be

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found here: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/document/1051>

3. Incident management processes/policies
4. Complaints management processes/policies
5. Risk management processes/policies including work health and safety policies and procedures

The NDIS Commission requires BSI to assess your documents with regard to the size and scale of your business operations and to the scope and complexity of the NDIS registration groups you are delivering. This means smaller providers with less complex supports are not expected to provide the same level of evidence as a large provider.

3 Reporting

At the conclusion of the audit, the BSI auditor will prepare a written report and complete all required fields in your record in the Commission's system.

You will receive an audit report even if the recommendation is not to verify, within 7 calendar days of completion of your verification assessment. The audit report will include:

- Executive summary
- Non-conformances, opportunities for improvement and positive finding areas
- Details of the documents and qualifications listed in Section 2.4
- Findings against all applicable and relevant requirements in the Verification Module

4 Verification Decision

The audit report along with any non-conformance closeout information (if applicable) is subject to an independent technical review process. Verification may be granted where audit ratings of 'conforming' have been identified. If non-conformances are raised, verification may be recommended after the actions stated in Section 5 are completed. Once the review is completed by the BSI technical team, a recommendation for verification is made to the NDIS Commission.

The final registration decision is made at the discretion of the NDIS Commission.

5 Non-Conformances

Non-conformances are categorised as minor and major.

It is your organisation's responsibility to respond to the non-conformances detailed in your audit report by the designated time frame. Failure to do so may result in delay in initial verification recommendation and suspension or cancellation of your verification.

5.1 Minor Non-Conformances

Minor non-conformances are audit findings that reveal an isolated incident of non-compliance.

Your organization is required to submit a corrective action plan to your BSI audit team leader within seven (7) calendar days of the verification assessment. The audit team leader will advise you in writing of acceptance of the corrective action plan.

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The corrective action plan must include the following:

- correction (how will you fix the non-conformance?)
- root cause analysis (why did the non-conformance occur?)
- corrective action (how will you fix the root cause of the non-conformance to prevent it from reoccurring?)
- timeframes and responsible people who will action the plan

Minor non-conformances are required to be closed out within twelve (12) months of the assessment. Failure to close minor non-conformances within twelve (12) months of the date of issue will result in a major non-conformance being raised.

5.2 Major Non-Conformity

Major non-conformances are audit findings that reveal the NDIS provider is unable to demonstrate quality and safety system process meet the requirements of the NDIS Verification Module and/or the gaps present a high risk.

All major non-conformances will need to be rectified or downgraded before recommendation for initial verification or renewal is made.

Existing NDIS providers are required to close out or downgrade major non-conformances within three (3) months of the verification assessment.

Where a major non-conformance is raised, the NDIS provider is required to

- Submit a corrective action plan to the BSI audit team leader within five (5) days of the assessment. The plan must meet include the information as stated in section 5.1 and be accepted by the BSI audit team leader
- Undergo a desktop closeout review of the implemented corrective action plan within three (3) months to close out or downgrade the non-conformance(s)

Your BSI auditor or CSO will contact you to book the non-conformance closeout review following which a written report will be prepared for the NDIS Commission. This will be invoiced at the usual BSI day rate.

6 Re-verification Audits

The re-verification cycle for this program is three (3) yearly. No surveillance or mid-cycle assessment is required for the verification program cycle.

In preparation for a re-verification audit, you are required to complete self-assessment responses indicating any variation or changes that have occurred since your previous self-assessment. This will be reviewed by the BSI auditor.

Your re-verification assessment must be conducted before your registration expiry but no earlier than 6 months prior to the registration renewal date. If it is not completed and processed within the required timeframe, your verification will no longer be valid. Extensions and/or changes to these timeframes will only be granted at the discretion of the NDIS Commission.

Prior to your re-verification assessment, the CSO will contact you to confirm your sites/outlets, participant and staff numbers and service delivery including changes to NDIS Registration Groups. The CSO will calculate your audit duration based on these details and notify you of the duration and cost. The CSO will work with you to plan the re-verification

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assessment to ensure the date of assessment is within the Commission's guidelines.

Any changes to your organisation from a sole trader or partnership to a body corporate, or changes to service delivery to include high risk services may require a switch from verification to certification. Your CSO will discuss this transition with you if required.

During the re-verification assessment, the BSI auditor will evaluate the continued fulfilment of all requirements of the NDIS Practice Standards, and shall confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the NDIS provider's policies, procedures and practices.

All non-conformances must be addressed as stated in Section 5.

The audit report along with any non-conformance closeout information (if applicable) is subject to an independent technical review process. Once the review is completed by the BSI technical team, a recommendation for renewal of verification is made to the NDIS Commission.

7 Auditor Team and Auditor Competency

Verification audits are generally undertaken by a single auditor. All BSI auditors are qualified and experienced and have undertaken the mandatory auditor training with the NDIS Commission. BSI ensures all our auditors are trained in quality auditing principles. We are required to regularly assess our auditors auditing skills by way of written tests and observing them during an audit. We provide our auditors with regular training to ensure consistency between auditors.

All auditors comply with the Code of Conduct as defined by the NDIS Commission and hold valid police checks.

Further information on auditor competency may be provided on request.

8 Critical Risks

Critical risk means any uncontrolled risk which may impact on participant safety.

In the event a critical risk relating to criminal acts or child protection concerns is identified at any audit or otherwise, an appropriate BSI staff will

- immediately notify the Commission and any relevant authorities (such as the police) of the risk
- cease the audit until the Commission notifies BSI that it may recommence

In all other events of critical risks, an appropriate BSI staff will

- document the critical risk, and mitigations taken to date and submit to the Commission using the Commission's system within 24 hours
- provide a written copy of the audit findings

The Commission will recommend the next course of action.

Critical risks or other serious matters would normally require an on-site follow-up or re-audit within three (3) calendar months. BSI staff will contact you with relevant information.

BSI may also be required to provide the NDIS Commission any additional information in relation to the audit process if requested.

9 Suspension, Termination or Refusal of Verification

In the event your organisation is unable to comply with the requirements of the relevant standard,
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BSI may refuse to grant verification. The decision to refuse verification, and the grounds for that decision, will be communicated to your organisation in writing. BSI is required to notify the Commission where verification is not awarded.

If your organisation's verification is suspended, terminated or refused, you must withdraw and cease to use any advertising or promotional material that promotes or advertises the fact that your organisation is verified.

Non-payment of fees may also lead to suspension of verification.

BSI will advise your organisation in writing of the verification process that will need to be completed to restore verification.

During the period of suspension your organisation shall continue to pay all fees levied by BSI.

BSI is required to notify the NDIS Commission prior to suspending or withdrawing verification as well as prior to making any decisions to resolve suspension of a verification decision.

10 Standard Owner Information

The standard owner is the Australian Government NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

11 Confidentiality

BSI will adhere to the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), the Act and instruments, Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth), Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth) or equivalent Work Health & Safety legislation in the jurisdiction of the NDIS provider, and all other relevant legislation or regulations where applicable.

12 Additional Obligations

Your organisation is required as part of the Terms & Conditions to ensure BSI has been formally briefed in a timely manner when any variations occur.

Your organisation is required to -

- Continue compliance with the NDIS Practice Standards and the conditions of verification at all times (including any changes to the scheme as advised by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission);
- Comply with the BSI Standard Commercial Terms and Conditions and obligations as specified in this document as well as other guidance documentation that may be specifically provided from time-to-time;
- Advise BSI of any changes without delay to circumstances that may affect verification including significant changes in the structure (key responsibilities and management system), ownership and operations of your organisation to enable the impact of such changes to be evaluated;

Other examples of such changes include but are not limited to;

- Authorised Representative & Key management responsibilities
- Business name (Legal entity) and Trading Name (where applicable), ABN
- Ownership

- Location, site addresses
 - Business activity/ies, scope, registration groups
 - Number of employees, covering all shifts and sites
 - Major management system changes and capability information
 - Contact details, Billing Details
- Notify BSI of any litigation or serious events or matters that relate to the scope of your verification

13 Misleading Statements

Your organisation is not permitted to use its verification in a manner that could bring BSI into disrepute. This includes making misleading or unauthorised statements. If you are unsure if a statement could be misleading you are advised to contact BSI prior to making the statement. Statements include but are not limited to advertising (including your website) and internal communication.

14 Complaints and Appeals

BSI takes complaints relating to our service delivery seriously and all complaints will be investigated and the originator of a complaint will be advised of the outcomes, as appropriate.

BSI will also investigate legitimate complaints, relevant to operation of the system, from customers of your organization. Organizations shall, at all reasonable times, provide representatives of BSI with access to its premises and records for the purposes of investigating such complaints.

If your organisation's application for verification has been refused, or your organization's verification has been suspended or cancelled, you may appeal against the decision.

If your organisation formally disagrees with the audit findings, BSI is required to notify the NDIS Commission within 10 working days of learning of the disagreement, if it has not been resolved within that time.

Should your organisation or its participants wish to raise a complaint with regard to your BSI experience or in the event your organisation wishes to appeal the audit findings or audit outcome please contact:

General Manager - Technical and Operations
Email: technical.anz@bsigroup.com
Phone: 1300 730 134

Whilst we prefer complaints and appeals to be in writing, BSI will accept complaints and appeals from a variety of platforms.

14.1 Whistle-blower Policy

BSI and our staff are committed to providing services in a safe and honest way. We will support and respect anyone who acts as a whistle-blower to draw attention to alleged abuse or harm in respect of NDIS providers audited by BSI. BSI will support whistle-blowers, who in good faith and without malice, disclose information or raise concerns about alleged improper activity.

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This is applicable to members of public, all staff in your organisation including permanent and casual, contract workers, temporary workers, and volunteers. This also applies to any feedback/complaints the auditor receives about alleged wrongdoing during an NDIS audit.

BSI encourages people to speak up, to make complaints and raise concerns about service integrity, safety and quality of NDIS providers audited by BSI.

BSI has good governance and responds appropriately to concerns about alleged harm or abuse, whether that's provided as feedback, a complaint or via a person that acts as a whistle-blower.

People who 'blow the whistle' will be treated fairly and their details will be maintained in a confidential manner.

BSI has a global internal whistleblowing procedure. The process for handling of any whistleblowing in relation to alleged abuse or harm in respect of NDIS providers certified by BSI is below –

1. Anyone can contact BSI via email technical.anz@bsigroup.com regarding alleged abuse or harm by/at a NDIS provider certified by BSI
2. BSI staff to whom the disclosure was made will secure any records or information related to the alleged issue
3. Information can be provided in any format (preferably in writing). Claims made in conversation will be documented by the BSI staff receiving the claim. The record of conversation will be shared with the whistle-blower to ensure its accuracy
4. Any information shared about the allegations raised by a whistle-blower will be de-identified to protect the whistle-blower's identity and stored securely
5. The details of the alleged issue will be provided to the NDIS Commission for investigation and action within 24 hours of receipt
6. BSI will await advice from the Commission on the next course of action in relation to the issue

The NDIS Code of Conduct applies at all times.

Where permitted, BSI will keep the whistle-blower and all other relevant parties informed about the process and the outcome of the investigation.

In the event the matter is referred to police or another investigating body, there may be limits on what information can be shared. In this instance, involved parties will be advised of any limitations on the release of information accordingly.