



Hearing Services Program – Provider audit guide

The Department of Health and Aged Care takes a responsive regulation, risk-based approach to compliance monitoring for the Hearing Services Program. Through compliance checks, claims reviews and audits, the department works to ensure that public money is being spent appropriately.

This guide will help you understand the steps involved in provider audits.

While audit outcomes may require you to reimburse the program or clients, the audit process is not designed to be punitive. Audits can provide an opportunity to pinpoint areas for staff training and process improvements within your organisation to ensure ongoing compliance

Key documents

There are a several key legislative and contractual documents that govern the program. These documents are important to stay up to date with and should be applied to your operations.

Key documents include:

- [Hearing Services Administration Act 1997](#)
- [Hearing Services Program \(Voucher\) Instrument 2019](#)
- [Hearing Services Program \(Schedule of Service Items and Fees\) Instrument](#)
- [Service Provider Contract](#)

Types of audits

The steps taken, timeframe and requested documents, will depend on which type of audit is being undertaken.

The 2 different types of audits under the program are:

- Full Provider Audits that look at all components of a provider's service delivery under the program. Generally, service management documents and 10 - 20 full client records are requested for these audits.

- Limited Scope Audits that focus on a specific component of service delivery (such as replacements, specialist clients, refittings or revalidated services). Specific service item documents may be requested for these audits.

Audit stages

There are generally 4 stages of an audit, outlined below.

Notification

You'll receive a letter letting you know about an upcoming audit. This letter will list the steps involved in your audit as well as the documentation you'll need to provide. The letter will also identify the departmental Compliance Officer, who will be your key contact undertaking the audit. You're welcome to request a phone call with the Compliance Officer to talk about the scope and process of the audit and to ask any questions you may have.

Audit

Your Compliance Officer will review the documentation you've provided against the program requirements.

Following this you'll receive a Summary of Findings outlining the preliminary findings of the audit. You'll be given the opportunity to respond if you'd like to.

Reporting

Once the audit is complete, you'll receive an Audit Outcomes Letter and Audit Report which will outline the outcomes of the audit. Again, you'll be given the opportunity to respond to the report and any actions that may be required by you.

Closure or compliance follow-up

If minor issues were identified in the audit, and you've been able to fix these issues, the audit will be closed. However, if the audit identified any systemic and/or serious non-compliance, you may be placed on a Compliance Action Plan and the department may require you to take further action.

You're welcome to get in touch with the department if you have any questions throughout the process.

General information about audits

- If there is a service management systems component to your audit, you may be asked to supply practitioner qualifications, insurance details, ambient noise or equipment calibration certification.
- You'll generally be given 10 business days to submit the requested documents for your audit. The department can request documentation be provided within a shorter period.
- An audit can take 3 to 6 months to complete. Timeframes can depend on the type of audit, number of clients being reviewed, and the time needed for you to address any issues.
- You may need to complete some compliance activities after your audit. These may include revising policies and procedures, updating templates, program reimbursements and client reimbursements.

Compliance support

Your Compliance Officer is happy to answer any questions you may have throughout the audit process. You can email them to hearing@health.gov.au or call on 1800 500 726.

There are a range of resources that can help you to comply with program requirements. These include the Schedule of Service Items and Fees, the program website, call centre, provider factsheets and guides. You can find out more information about the program's compliance approach in the [Compliance Monitoring and Support Framework](#).

You're always welcome to give any feedback you may have about the program's compliance approach. You can share your feedback with your Compliance Officer or, if you'd prefer it to be anonymous, there is an online survey link which will be given to you in your Audit Closure Letter.