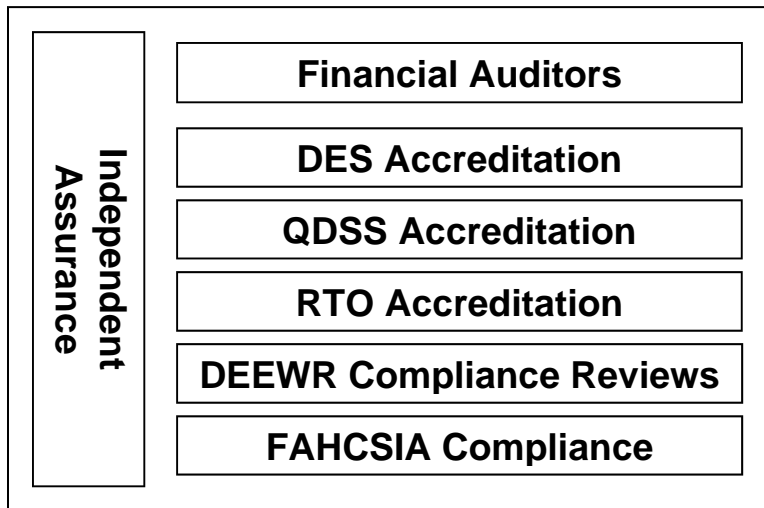


**F2708 OPEN MINDS INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PROCESS**

The policy document **P 2.7.8 Governance Structure** establishes the framework for the governance of all operations of Open Minds Australia. A section of this framework refers to the independent assurance processes that Open Minds Australia participates in to ensure it meets its obligations to funding bodies and achieves quality practice. This document provides the details of the independent assurance processes as identified in **P 2.7.8 Governance Structure** (see below).



**Excerpt from P 2.7.8 Governance Structure**

**1. FINANCIAL AUDITORS**

An external audit is an ASIC requirement and full Statutory accounts are due to be lodged by 31<sup>st</sup> October each year

The auditor is responsible to express an opinion on the financial report based on the completed audit under the Australian Auditing Standards

The audit is carried out annually usually comprising of an interim audit prior to financial year end and the final audit after year end.

**2. COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY SERVICES STANDARDS (DES) ACCREDITATION**

The Open Minds Disability Employment Network (DEN) program is accredited against the Commonwealth Disability Services Standards:

**Standard 1: Service access**

Each person with a disability who is seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of relative need and available resources

**Standard 2: Individual needs**

Each person with a disability receives a service that is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals

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**F2708 OPEN MINDS INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PROCESS**

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**Standard 3: Decision making and choice**

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the service he or she receives.

**Standard 4: Privacy, dignity and confidentiality**

Each service recipient's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected.

**Standard 5: Participation and integration**

Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the community.

**Standard 6: Valued status**

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

**Standard 7: Complaints and disputes**

Each service recipient is encouraged to raise, and have resolved without fear of retribution, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the service provider or the service.

**Standard 8: Service management**

Each service provider adopts quality management systems and practices that optimise outcomes for service recipients.

**Standard 9: Employment conditions**

Each person with a disability enjoys working conditions comparable to those of the general workforce.

**Standard 10: Service recipient training and support**

The employment opportunities of each person with a disability are optimised by effective and relevant training and support.

**Standard 11: Staff recruitment, employment and training**

Each person employed to deliver services to a person with a disability has relevant skills and competencies.

**Standard 12: Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse**

The service provider acts to prevent abuse and neglect and to uphold the legal and human rights of service recipients.

Certification against the standards is assessed by external audit, conducted by BSI Management Systems. Certification is issued for a period of three years with an annual post-certification review. The initial certification and re-certification audit takes 3-4 days, post-certification review requires 2 days to complete.

The Open Minds DEN program underwent a re-certification audit in October 2007, which was only signed off by BSI Management Systems 15 January 2008. The next post-certification review is scheduled for the week beginning 5 January 2009. Full re-certification is next due **15 January 2011**.

**NB:** The Personal Support Program (PSP) is not included in this certification program.

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**F2708 OPEN MINDS INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PROCESS**

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**3. QUEENSLAND DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARDS (QDSS) ACCREDITATION**

The Open Minds Client Services programs (Lifestyle Support Service; Residential Support Service; ABI Support Service) are accredited against the Queensland Disability Service Standards:

**Standard 1: Service Access**

Each consumer seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of relative need and available resources.

**Standard 2: Individual Needs**

Each person with a disability receives a service, which is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and goals.

**Standard 3: Decision Making and Choice**

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.

**Standard 4: Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality**

Each consumer's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected.

**Standard 5: Participation and Integration**

Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the life of the community.

**Standard 6: Valued Status**

Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

**Standard 7: Complaints and Disputes**

Each consumer is free to raise, and have resolved, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the agency or the service.

**Standard 8: Service Management**

Each agency adopts sound management practices, which maximise outcomes for consumers.

**Standard 9: Protection of Legal and Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse**

The agency ensures the legal and human rights of people with a disability are upheld in relation to the prevention of sexual, physical and emotional abuse within the service.

**Standard 10: Staff Recruitment, Employment and Development**

Recruitment, selection and development of paid and unpaid staff ensures they have the relevant skill, values, knowledge and competencies to support service delivery to the service users

Certification against the standards is assessed by external audit, conducted by BSI Management Systems (formerly Benchmark). Certification is issued for a period of three years with an annual post-certification review. The initial certification and re-certification audit takes 3-4 days, post-certification review requires 2 days to complete.

Open Minds Client Services programs are currently accredited for delivery against the service types 1.04 Group Homes (<7 places); 1.06 In-home accommodation support; and 3.01 Learning and life skills development. The new lifelong planning support program will need to be integrated into the accreditation program at the next review and will require accreditation to deliver against service type 6.02 Information and Referral.

The Open Minds Client Services programs underwent initial certification 18-20 April 2007. A post-certification review was conducted 30 April – 1 May 2008. The next post-certification review is scheduled to occur alongside the DES post-certification review the week beginning 5 January 2009. Full re-certification is next due **20 April 2010**

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**F2708 OPEN MINDS INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PROCESS**

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#### **4. REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION (RTO) ACCREDITATION**

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the quality system that underpins the national vocational education and training sector and outlines the regulatory arrangements in the states and territories. This framework provides the basis for a nationally consistent, high-quality vocational education and training system. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) has been revised with changes implemented on 1 July 2007.

In July 2007, all RTOs were required to sign a declaration to declare that the RTO will operate in accordance with the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000, guidelines made under the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Standards for Registration, which include the Conditions of Registration.

A component of the Essential Standards for Registration is the quality indicators. The indicators provide a way of measuring the RTO's performance against the standards. Information gathered against these indicators is used by RTOs to support continuous improvement and by registering bodies as part of their risk assessment.

The three quality indicators agreed by the National Quality Council are:

- Employer satisfaction (this includes competency development and training & assessment quality). This indicator will focus on employer evaluations of learner competency development, its relevance to work and further training and the overall quality of the training & assessment.
- Learner satisfaction (this includes learner engagement and competency development). This indicator will focus on the extent to which learners are engaging in the types of activities which are likely to promote high quality skill outcomes, as well as learners' perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive from RTOs.
- Competency completion rate This will be calculated for qualifications and units of competency/modules delivered, based on data provided by RTOs on the number of enrolments in the previous calendar year as well as the number of qualifications completed and/or units of competency/modules awarded in the previous calendar year. This suite of information will be used by RTOs to support continuous improvement, and by registering bodies as part of their risk assessment.

Performance against the quality indicators is assessed by external review conducted by the Department Education, Training and the Arts (DETA).

Open Minds was approved as a registered training organisation 3 February 2006. Registration is for a period of five years with annual performance review. Renewal of registration is due **2 February 2011**.

An annual monitoring audit has not been conducted in 2008 due to non-delivery of training.

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**F2708 OPEN MINDS INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PROCESS**

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**5. DEEWR COMPLIANCE REVIEWS**

DEEWR conducts annual performance compliance reviews for all funded programs. The Open Minds **DEN** and **PSP** programs are subject to such reviews. These reviews concentrate on compliance of the program with the service specifications and funding agreement.

Compliance reviews conducted by DEEWR largely involve the review of client files to assess that:

- Assessments have been conducted for all clients within required timeframes
- Linkages are made between assessment tools and the service delivered
- Evidence of stage progression is documented and occurs in accordance with program specifications
- Proof for claims are on file

The next DEN compliance review is scheduled to occur in November 2008

The next PSP compliance review is scheduled to occur in December 2008

**6. FAHCSIA COMPLIANCE**

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) does not currently undertake a compliance review process for the Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) program. Performance is measured through the submission of regular reports which are linked to milestone payments

Requirements to date have including the completion of the PHaMs Establishment and PHaMs Progress Reports.

Reports have been submitted/are required as follows:

- Establishment Report (for period Oct 2007 to January 2008)
- Establishment Plan and First Annual Report (for period Oct 2007 to June 2008)
- Progress Report – due on a 6 monthly basis beginning the January after establishment
- Annual Planning Report and Annual Budget
- Annual Audited Financial Acquittal Report