

Purpose of quality framework

The overall purpose of a quality framework for any component of the review process is to increase New Zealand's trust and confidence in ACC and the independent review services.

Trust and confidence are based on the customer experience and journey. The customer experience and journey are influenced by both ACC and the Independent Review Services.

ACC has specific controls in place to monitor quality which include:

- Regular quality checks by leaders and Senior Review Specialists
- Regular audits of risk areas by Senior Resolution Specialists
- ACC Heartbeat feedback from customers
- Accountability and feedback from Ministers, ACC Board reporting (i.e. Corporate Measurements), ACC Executive reporting, Customer Group reporting (including Issues Management), Client Recovery reporting, Review Advisory Panel, Legal Services.

Suppliers also have controls in place to monitor quality which include:

- Internal peer reviews
- External quality checks or peer reviews
- Key Performance Indicators and reporting on timeliness
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Minimum contractual requirements (i.e. health and safety and privacy)



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Objective of external quality check

The overall objective of an external quality check for independent review services is to *develop an objective and external metric to identify, improve, and measure various elements of the review process to provide a great customer experience while still maintaining reviewer independence.*

The external quality check will achieve this by:

- Addressing each of the main touch points in the customer experience and journey
- Basing criteria on what customers can reasonably expect from engaging with the suppliers
- Having an objective set of criteria that is clear and easy to understand to ensure consistency
- Ensuring independence in the process through having an external provider completing the quality check.
- Promoting learning and growth through feedback and comments.
- Focusing on what the suppliers can directly influence

Assessment and Scoring Guide

The external quality check will assess the process, effectiveness, and efficiency of each major touch point area that the customers experience: review case management, case conference, review hearing, and the decision.

The Assessment Guide sets out what major touch points will include to successfully meet expectations.

The Scoring Guide sets out expectations for fair and consistent scoring.

Score	Standard
9-10	Exceeds expectations
7-8	Successfully meets expectations
5-6	Meets expectations
3-4	Partially meets expectations
1-2	Does not meet expectations

The Assessment and scoring Guide will be contained in ACC’s Reviewer Services Operational Guidelines and may be subject to change in agreement with the Review suppliers.

Category 1 – Review Case Management – 15%

The purpose of assessing the case management of the review by the supplier is to ensure that the customer is kept well informed of the review process and the progress of the case.

Assessment Guide	Scoring Guide
Review case management that successfully meets expectations will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2: The customer had to follow up with the supplier more than once for progress on the case or next steps in the process, or there was a delay to progress

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear introductory communication with the customer within 5 days of the file being received by the supplier. • Provide updates to the customer on the progress of the review and next steps. • Ensure that any delays to progress the case are not caused by supplier or Independent Reviewer • Case information such as minutes are provided within 7 days of the request or case conference taking place • Case conference and hearing notices are provided to the parties at least 7 days prior to the meeting, where practical. 	<p>the case that was directly caused by the supplier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4: The supplier may have missed one or two timeframes but overall, the customer had the required information in time and was informed of the process. The supplier may have missed opportunities to update the customer on the progress of the review. • 5-6: All timeframes were met, and the customer was informed of the review process. The supplier may have missed opportunities to update the customer on the progress of the review. • 7-8: All timeframes were met, and the customer was informed of progress of the review. • 9-10: All timeframes were exceeded, and the customer was informed of progress of the review throughout the management of the case.
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Category 2 - Case Conference – 10%

The case conference is an instrumental piece in the customer experience as it is often the first interaction with the independent reviewer, and it sets the tone for the rest of the review journey.

Assessment Guide	Scoring Guide
<p>A case conference that successfully meets expectations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the issue at review and explain the legal test that must be met. • Set reasonable expectations for the parties with timetabling such as obtaining further evidence and setting a hearing date. • Identify and address any jurisdictional barriers or issues. • Have minutes that are clear and easy to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2: Minutes were not supplied to either party. • 3-4: Case conference minutes were supplied but they did not accurately capture the issue at review or did not record other essential elements of the case conference. • 5-6: Case conference minutes were supplied. All essential elements are captured but one or more elements may be brief or not complete. • 7-8: Case conference minutes were supplied. All essential elements are captured with the audience in mind. Timetabling instructions are clear.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10: Case conference minutes were supplied. All essential elements are captured with the audience in mind. Timetabling instructions are clear and easy to follow. Any jurisdictional barriers have been sufficiently managed. The legal test for the decision has been explained in plain English for the benefit of the customer. <p><i>Note: If a case conference was not booked by ACC or did not take place because of reasons outside of the control of the supplier, score this section 10.</i></p> <p><i>If there were multiple case conferences, provide a score that assesses all of the case conferences.</i></p>
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Category 3 - Review Hearing – 15%

The review hearing is a fundamental stage in the overall review process. A review hearing that provides a positive customer experience will ensure that all parties have the opportunity to be heard and to present their case.

Assessment Guide	Scoring Guide
<p>A review hearing that successfully meets expectations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence in the review decision that the reviewer has followed an investigatory approach by capturing the arguments of all parties. • Follow the principles of natural justice including allowing customers to be heard and to present their case. Any adjournment requests are considered on their own merits and are awarded or declined with appropriate rationale. • Accommodate cultural or disability related needs where identified in the case conference, supplier engagement form, or review application form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2: There is no evidence that the reviewer has followed the principles of natural justice. There may be reference to the argument of only one party in the decision or a cultural/disability need was not met to the extent that it would have likely prevented the customer from adequately presenting their case. • 3-4: The reviewer has referenced arguments from the parties in the decision but may not have considered one or both in the overall analysis. An adjournment request may have been accepted or declined without adequate consideration or rationale. • 5-6: The reviewer has referenced arguments from the parties in the decision and has considered both arguments in the overall analysis. • 7-8: The reviewer has referenced arguments from the parties in the decision and has considered both arguments in the overall analysis.

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	<p>Cultural or disability related needs have been identified and met. Any adjournment requests have been accepted or declined with adequate consideration and rationale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10: The reviewer has referenced arguments from the parties in the decision and has considered both arguments in the overall analysis with clear rationale. Cultural or disability related needs have been identified and met. Any adjournment requests have been accepted or declined with adequate consideration and rationale. <p><i>Note: If a review was conducted on the papers without a formal review hearing, the scoring will remain the same. Marks may be deducted if the hearing was conducted on the papers inappropriately (I.e. by doing so, the customer was not provided with the opportunity to be heard and to present their case). If there were multiple review hearings, provide a score that assesses all of the review hearings.</i></p>
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Category 4 - Decision – Analysis and Conclusion – 30%

The requirements of a reviewer to issue a decision are set out in Section 144 of the Accident Compensation Act 2001.

Assessment Guide	Scoring Guide
<p>A decision that successfully meets expectations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the issue/s being considered succinctly and with clarity. • Clearly identify the outcome reached under section 145 of the Act. • Address all of the elements necessary to support the decision reached in a logical way and with reference to specific evidence by quote or summary to support conclusions. • Integrate the evidence and the law into the explanation, so the parties can understand how the law has been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2: The decision fails to state rationales or applies the wrong law that has a material impact on the outcome of the review. • 3-4: The decision does not adequately state the reasons for a decision or makes minor errors in the application of law that does not materially impact the outcome of the review. • 5-6: The decision adequately identifies the relevant issues and elements of the review. The relevant law has been referred to and applied correctly. • 7-8: The decision adequately identifies the relevant issues and refers to

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<p>applied to the facts of their case to reach the conclusion that is reached.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is necessary to prefer one professional view against another, state the reasons for preferring one over the other. 	<p>evidence to support conclusions. The relevant law has been referred to and applied correctly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10: The decision adequately identifies the relevant issues and sets out the rationale behind the decision and conclusions. Evidence and the law have been integrated so that the parties can understand how the law has been applied to the facts of their case to reach a conclusion. The relevant law has been referred to and applied correctly.
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Category 5 - Decision – Writing Style – 30%

The audience for the review decision is the parties to the review and it is important that the decision is easily read and understood by the parties.

Assessment Guide	Scoring Guide
<p>A decision that successfully meets expectations will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clearly structured and adopt a logical flow throughout the decision. • Be written with the audience in mind, and generally avoid or explain technical, legal, and clinical jargon. • Summarise the background to the decision in a narrative style, with a focus on incorporating facts and assertions that are relevant to the issue under review. • Explain the law economically, summarising rather than extensively quoting the law. • Include direct quotations from evidence when necessary for the sake of precision or where the original words best convey the professional’s view on an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2: The writing style of the decision is confusing or is unable to be understood. There may be several structural or flow issues. • 3-4: The writing style of the decision may be difficult to follow, although the overall premise can be understood. There may be use of jargon or extensive quoting that is not helpful to the understanding of the rationale. • 5-6: The decision has logical flow and is structured well but includes jargon or quoting that is not helpful to the understanding of the rationale. • 7-8: There may be some jargon that is not explained but this is not material to the overall understanding of the decision. • 9-10: The decision is written with the audience in mind and is structured well. The decision is clear, concise, and written in plain language. Any jargon is

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	explained, and quotes are used appropriately.
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Process

- 15 files will be chosen each quarter by ACC using a random selection tool and invoicing data.
- Only files that have been to review hearing and received an outcome will be entered into the selection tool.
- A maximum of one file per Independent Reviewer will be selected for external quality checking each quarter.
- Each quarter, the suppliers will provide redacted files to the external quality assessor. This will contain the case information and decision document as well as any relevant correspondence with the parties and notices. Internal correspondence between the suppliers will not be provided to the external peer reviewer.
- The external quality assessor will complete a quality check using the Weighted Quality Check tool and the above Assessment and Scoring Guide.
- The overall scoring will be weighted based on the 5 categories:

Category	Weighting
Category 1 – Review Case Management	15%
Category 2 – Case Conference	10%
Category 3 – Review Hearing	15%
Category 4 – Decision – Analysis and Conclusion	30%
Category 5 – Decision – Writing Style	30%

- The external quality assessor will send the relevant copies of the Weighted Quality Check tool to each supplier with comments. ACC will be sent **scoring only** by the external peer reviewer.
- If the external quality assessor notes any errors or learnings about ACC’s management of a review, the quality assessor may (and is encouraged) to send these comments to ACC directly.
- If there is any disagreement about the scoring, the supplier will contact the external quality assessor to discuss.
- If the suppliers receive any scores below 5, the suppliers will discuss the reasons for the score and measures taken with ACC at the relevant quarterly meeting or monthly operational meeting.