

TAC and WorkSafe Quality Assurance Program for Independent Medical Examiners

EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAMINERS

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and WorkSafe Victoria (WorkSafe) regularly review the quality of Reports obtained from Independent Medical Examiners (IMEs) through the Quality Assurance Program (QAP).

All IMEs will be subject to the QAP and will be selected on criteria including but not limited to the number of reports, number of complaints (if any), performance history and internal feedback. For the purposes of the QAP, an IME of both the TAC and WorkSafe will have reports sourced from both organisations.

These notes are to be read in conjunction with the flow chart detailing the QAP available under 'Independent Medical Examiners' at tac.vic.gov.au and worksafe.vic.gov.au.

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- A**
- Five reports from a single IME will be selected.
 - The IME will be notified in writing at the start of the QAP Process.
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- B**
- For each IME undergoing a QAP review there will be two peer reviewers.
 - The five reports will be split into two groups of two, with the fifth report common to both peer reviewers.
 - The five reports will be de-identified.
 - Reports will be assessed by peer reviewers using QAP criteria outlined in the Peer Reviewer's Marking Sheet (attached) developed by the TAC and WorkSafe.
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- C**
- The qualifications and experience of both peer reviewers will match the discipline of the IME whose reports are being reviewed. Where the review is of whole person impairment assessment reports, the reviewers will have expertise in impairment assessments – including impairment experience/accreditation as appropriate.
 - Where a peer reviewer cannot reasonably be procured, one of the peers may be a member of the TAC or WorkSafe Clinical Panel.
 - The reviewers will complete a Peer Reviewer Marking Sheet for each report reviewed.
 - The peer reviewer will also be required to comment on the quality of the referral letter requesting the examination, and those comments will be made available to the requesting organisation (the TAC or WorkSafe Authorised Agent).
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- D**
- Peer Reviewer Marking Sheet will be submitted to the TAC and WorkSafe IME Manager (as applicable).
 - The TAC or WorkSafe IME Manager, together with the TAC or WorkSafe Senior Clinical Advisor (as applicable), will seek to determine the degree of commonality of the Peer Reviewer Marking Sheet and the overall rating of the IME's reports.
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- E**
- Agreement will result in the QAP rating of the IME's reports as one of the following:

Category One

Where the reports meet the requirements of the QAP criteria to a high standard.

Category Two

Within category two there are two possible outcomes:

1. Where the reports are considered to meet the overall requirements of the QAP criteria, the peer reviewers may make some suggestions for areas of improvement.
2. Where the reports are considered overall to display a number of minor deficiencies against the QAP criteria.

Category Three

The sample of reports indicates that the IME has not met a number of significant QAP criteria.

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- When the TAC or WorkSafe IME Manager in conjunction with the TAC or WorkSafe Senior Clinical Advisor cannot agree on a classification of an IME's reports, they will convene a meeting with the two peer reviewers to determine a classification.
 - When the TAC or WorkSafe IME Manager, in conjunction with the TAC or WorkSafe Senior Clinical Advisor determines a classification of Category Three, they will convene a meeting with the two peer reviewers to confirm the Category Three classification, and the reasons for it. If opinions differ, the Senior Clinical Advisor will make the determining decision.
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Category One

- The IME receiving a category one rating will receive a letter informing them of the outcome and the next review cycle. No further action is required at this time.
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Category Two

- The two peer reviewers, in conjunction with the TAC and/or WorkSafe IME Manager will prepare written feedback and suggested actions to take.
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- An IME receiving a category two rating where the reports are considered overall to meet the requirements of the QAP criteria will receive an educative letter with some suggestions on areas of improvement, and advice that a further review will occur in 12 months.
 - Further review to occur in 12 months.

OR

- In the category two cases where the peer reviewers have identified a number of minor deficiencies against the QAP criteria, the TAC and/or WorkSafe will write to the IME, asking that they consider the feedback provided, and use the feedback to improve compliance with the QAP criteria.
- Following this feedback, a further three reports will be reviewed within three months (subject to the availability of reports), to determine the degree to which the IME has rectified the deficiencies as previously identified.
- The IME will be advised of the outcome, and that further review will occur in 12 months if improvement has been demonstrated.
- If there has been no improvement; then decision-making regarding follow up as category three will be at the discretion of relevant IME Manager and Senior Clinical Advisor, and consultation with the two peer reviewers as necessary.

Category Three

- An IME with a category three rating will receive a visit from the TAC and/or WorkSafe IME Manager, the Senior Clinical Advisor and as necessary a peer reviewer to discuss the outcome of the review, gain feedback from the IME as to his/her views of the situation and advise of further review of reports.
- This feedback may warrant reclassification to category two.

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- If category three is confirmed, deficiencies will be identified and improvement initiatives discussed with the IME. Both the deficiencies and improvement initiatives will be documented in correspondence to the IME.
 - The correspondence will include advice of the potential seriousness of the situation, in that without improvement, approval as a WorkSafe IME can be withdrawn or the TAC referrals will discontinue (as applicable).
 - The correspondence will also indicate that up to five further reports will be reviewed within three months (subject to availability) by the TAC and/or WorkSafe IME Manager, the relevant Senior Clinical Advisor, and a peer reviewer.
 - The additional reports will be reviewed against the QAP criteria.
 - If improvement in the reports occur (in the review against the QAP criteria), resulting in either a category one or two rating, the IME will be advised of this, and any areas of further improvement (if appropriate), and that another review will occur in 12 months.

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- No improvement will result in the TAC and/or WorkSafe considering whether the IME will receive no further referrals for medical reports from the TAC and/or that section 112 approval as an IME be withdrawn by WorkSafe.
- The IME will be advised in writing that the TAC and/or WorkSafe is considering no further referrals and/or the proposed withdrawal of approval (as applicable) from the TAC and /or WorkSafe and the reasons for this.
- The IME will be given an opportunity to respond.
- The IME response will be considered and a final decision made by the TAC and/or WorkSafe.
- The TAC and WorkSafe will make separate and independent decisions about the recommendation to receive no further referrals from the TAC or to withdraw approval as a section 112 examiner.
- A decision will be put to the IME in writing, advising of their right of review, in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Clause of the IME Declaration.

Notes

- Dispute resolution and a review of a decision will occur as per the TAC/WorkSafe IME Declaration.
 - Where an IME of both the TAC and WorkSafe has not completed sufficient reports in the previous 12 months from either organisation, then, if the TAC and WorkSafe are in agreement, the IME may be reviewed as an IME for one organisation. The IME will be reviewed for the other organisation at a later date.
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