

Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director/Exec. Committee of the BOD	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
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<i>Origination Date</i> 5/25/16	<i>Revision Date</i> 2020		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 Describes the process for the initial review and certification of an audit instrument by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO)

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Executive Director (ED) or designee coordinates all activities and responses with this process.

2.2 Board Liaison is a PAACO board member with subject matter expertise. They are to interact closely with the panel as well as the Qualifications & Standards (Q&S) Committee Chair to facilitate the progress of the audit review.

2.3 The Audit Owner submits the audit instrument for review and follows the minimum criteria as outlined in PAACO Audit Standards (Reference: PAACO 100).

2.3.1 The Audit Review fee and process are outlined in PAACO Form 004.5 Audit Certification Agreement.

2.4 The Expert Review Panel (Review Panel) serves in an advisory role to PAACO and follows the procedures outlined in PAACO Form 004. Expert Review Panelist Agreement.

2.5 The role of the PAACO Q&S Committee is to ensure the panel has addressed all the PAACO Audit Standards. They will review the audit after the initial panel review and then again preceding their vote on whether to present it to the BOD for certification.

2.6 PAACO maintains anonymity of the Review Panel members to the Audit Owner.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Review Panel Criteria

3.1.1 A 3-member panel should be made up when feasible from the membership of the founding organizations.

3.1.2 Members must have welfare knowledge specific to the audit instrument, and an understanding of auditing processes as well as the minimum standards expected by PAACO.

3.1.3 The Review Panel experts will include:

- At least one member currently working in animal welfare science; and
- At least one person with practical industry experience in the audit area (ideally to include knowledge of auditing).

3.1.4 When possible, Review Panels should consist of:

- At least 1 person who has served on a Review Panel previously and is familiar with the process.
- It is recommended that panels reviewing previously certified audits consist of at least 1 member of the previous panel.

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3.2 Formation of the External Review Panel

- 3.2.1** A PAACO BOD member will be selected by ED and Q&S chair, invited to serve, and appointed as Liaison to panel.
- 3.2.2** The Audit Owner is requested to submit names of qualified individuals that they believe are appropriate experts along with those people who may have a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest. The Audit Owner has the right to object, with reason, of any panel member on a broad list, as the specific identity of the panel members remains anonymous to the Audit Owner.
- 3.2.3** The ED, Q&S Committee and board members may also collect a list of potential panelists. Once the potential review panel is identified, the ED contacts them to determine availability and interest for participation.

3.3 Audit Instrument Review

- 3.3.1** PAACO personnel do an initial review of the audit instrument and guidelines to ensure all materials are present, that referenced documents are complete and that it is ready to present to the panel. This may include initial coordination between PAACO and the Audit Owner on the audit.
- 3.3.2** The audit instrument, guidelines and all supporting documents are distributed to panel by ED for initial review along with the PAACO Audit Standards and Tracker.
- 3.3.3** A conference call will be set up for the panel, Q&S Chair, and board liaison to ensure understanding of their roles, the current PAACO criteria, as well as to seek clarification on submitted material, establish a timetable and establish review timing.
- 3.3.4** Review Panel members will be instructed that they may contact the board liaison or ED at any time for clarification or guidance but NOT the Audit Owner.
- 3.3.5** Timeline Expectation: Initial Review shall be completed 30 days after panel is identified.
- 3.3.6** The Review Panel will use the PAACO Audit Instrument Review Tracker (PAACO Form 002) to document their comparisons between the audit standards and the audit instrument. The ED or designee will compile the summary of the comparison using the Audit Tracker.
- 3.3.7** The Review Panel assessment which is documented on the Audit Tracker is sent to Q&S Committee for review and their additions.
- 3.3.8** The recommendations in the Audit Tracker are sent by PAACO to the Audit Owner to address the feedback from the Review Panel and Q&S Committee.
- 3.3.8.1** Once the additional changes are complete, PAACO personnel present the changes to the Review Panel to finalize the report/recommendation. When these changes are complete to the satisfaction of the Review Panel and PAACO personnel, it is submitted for final vote to the Q&S Committee.
- 3.3.9** The Q&S committee reviews and makes recommendation to the BOD with background documents.

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- 3.3.10** The full PAACO BOD may provide additional feedback or may choose to approve the audit. Board actions may include: Full Approval, Conditional Approval, or an indication that additional changes must be made before approval is allowed.
- 3.3.11** Reviewer documentation is kept by the ED for use by future reviewers in the re-certification process. The panel identification is removed from all communication with the Audit Owner or future reviewers.
- 3.4** **Review of an Audit under ‘Conditional Approval’**
- 3.4.1** An audit may be given Conditional Approval for one year if there are more changes to be made or if data is insufficient to support full approval.
- 3.4.2** Prior to the first anniversary of this approval, the ED requests an update on the audit instrument, and the Q&S committee reviews the changes. The committee has the option to approve the changes if they address the original panel concerns, or to request further review by the panel to determine whether they satisfy the original concerns.
- 3.4.3** If the Q&S committee approves, the audit proceeds to the PAACO BOD for full certification.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- 4.1** PAACO 100. PAACO Standards for Certification of Animal Welfare Audit Instruments and Processes.
- 4.2** PAACO 300. Audit Recertification Process.
- 4.3** PAACO Form 002. Audit Tracker Form
- 4.4** PAACO Form 004. Panelist Agreement
- 4.5** PAACO Form 004.5 Audit Certification Agreement

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