

PAACO Standards for Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director & Board of Directors	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
		<i>Page 1 of 5</i>	
<i>Document Origination Date:</i> 5/25/2016	<i>Revision Date:</i> July 2025		

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 RESPONSIBILITIES and DEFINITIONS

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

2.2 The Board of Director (BOD) Primary Reviewer (liaison) is a PAACO board member with subject matter expertise who works with PAACO staff during an audit certification and serves as an ad hoc member of the Review Panel to facilitate the progress of the audit review.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

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

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Initiation of an Audit Review

3.1.1 Audit Owner Submission

3.1.2 The Audit Owner submits the audit instrument for review and follows the minimum criteria as outlined in PAACO Audit Standards (Reference: PAACO 100). PAACO and the Audit Owner review the Audit Checklist (Form 003) to ensure all relevant materials have been included and there is sufficient context for PAACO reviewers.

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

3.2 Review Panel Criteria

3.2.1 A 3-member panel should be selected and approved by the Qualifications and Standards committee

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

PAACO Standards for Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director & Board of Directors	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
		<i>Page 2 of 5</i>	
<i>Document Origination Date:</i> 5/23/2016	<i>Revision Date:</i> July 2025		

- 3.2.3** The Review Panel will be comprised of subject matter experts who have at least one of the following areas of expertise: animal welfare science, practical industry experience, and/or auditing for that species/area with the intent to have all of these areas represented on the panel
- 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.
- 3.3 Formation of the External Review Panel**
- 3.3.1** A PAACO BOD member will be selected by ED and Q&S chair, invited to serve, and appointed as BOD Primary Reviewer to panel.
- 3.3.2** 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.
- 3.3.3** 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.
- 3.4 Audit Instrument Review**
- 3.4.1.1** PAACO personnel and the BOD Primary Reviewer do an initial review of the audit instrument and guidelines. (This can be done as the panel is being secured and scheduled). This review will ensure all materials are present; that referenced documents are included; and that it is ready to present to the panel. (This may require additional communication between PAACO and the Audit Owner).
- 3.4.2** A conference call will be set up for the panel, staff, and BOD Primary Reviewer to ensure understanding of the process and standards as well as to seek clarification on the audit and to establish review timing.
- 3.4.2.1** The audit instrument, guidelines and all supporting documents are distributed to panel by PAACO Staff for their initial comparison to the PAACO Audit Standards.
- 3.4.2.2** Review Panel members will be instructed that they may contact the staff or BOD Primary Reviewer at any time for clarification or guidance but NOT the Audit Owner.
- 3.4.2.3** Initial Panel Review shall be completed 30 days after the panel is initially convened.
- 3.4.3** The Review Panel, Primary Reviewer (BOD), and Staff will compile all comments into a combination of the PAACO Audit Instrument Review Tracker (PAACO Form 002) and as track changes in the submitted audit documents.

PAACO Standards for Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director & Board of Directors	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
		<i>Page 3 of 5</i>	
<i>Document Origination Date:</i> 5/23/2016	<i>Revision Date:</i> July 2025		

- 3.4.4** The PAACO Staff will compile the summary in the Tracker, and the panel will apply one of the following ratings to each component of the audit standard:
- a. Yes-fully meets the description of the standard.
 - b. Clarification Required-most aspects of the standard are met, but minor changes are needed.
 - c. Needs Improvement-further development of the audit to meet this standard is required
 - d. No-does not meet any aspect of the standard.
- Additional, specific comments may be captured in the audit documents submitted by the audit owner.
- 3.4.5** After the review by the panel, BOD Primary Reviewer and Staff, is complete, the materials are sent to the Q&S Committee for review and their additions to the Tracker summary and specific comments in the audit documents.
- 3.4.6** The Audit Owner is provided with all feedback on the Tracker and audit materials and the Primary Reviewer and staff review this with them to ensure understanding.
- 3.4.6.1** The Audit Owner provides a response with input, changes, or the justification for not making a particular change and PAACO Staff shares this information with the Review Panel and BOD Primary Reviewer. PAACO Staff, the Review Panel and BOD Primary Reviewer should determine if ratings for ‘Needs Improvement’ or ‘No’ are now met, and if not, the audit is returned to the owner.
- 3.4.7** When these changes are complete to the satisfaction of the Review Panel, BOD Primary Reviewer, and PAACO Staff, it is submitted to Q&S for final review and recommendation to the PAACO Board of Directors. If necessary, Q&S could request further changes or responses from the Audit Owner prior to submission to the full BOD.
- 3.4.8** The PAACO BOD may provide additional feedback or choose to approve the audit. Board actions may include Full Approval, Conditional Approval (rarely), or an indication that additional changes must be made before approval is allowed.
- 3.4.9** Reviewer documentation is kept by PAACO Staff for use by future reviewers in the re-certification process. The panel’s identification is removed from all communication with the Audit Owner or future reviewers.
- 3.4.10** In unique cases, an audit may be given Conditional Approval for only one year if there are more changes to be made or if data is insufficient to support full approval. After that time, it would need to complete the process with PAACO BOD for full certification.

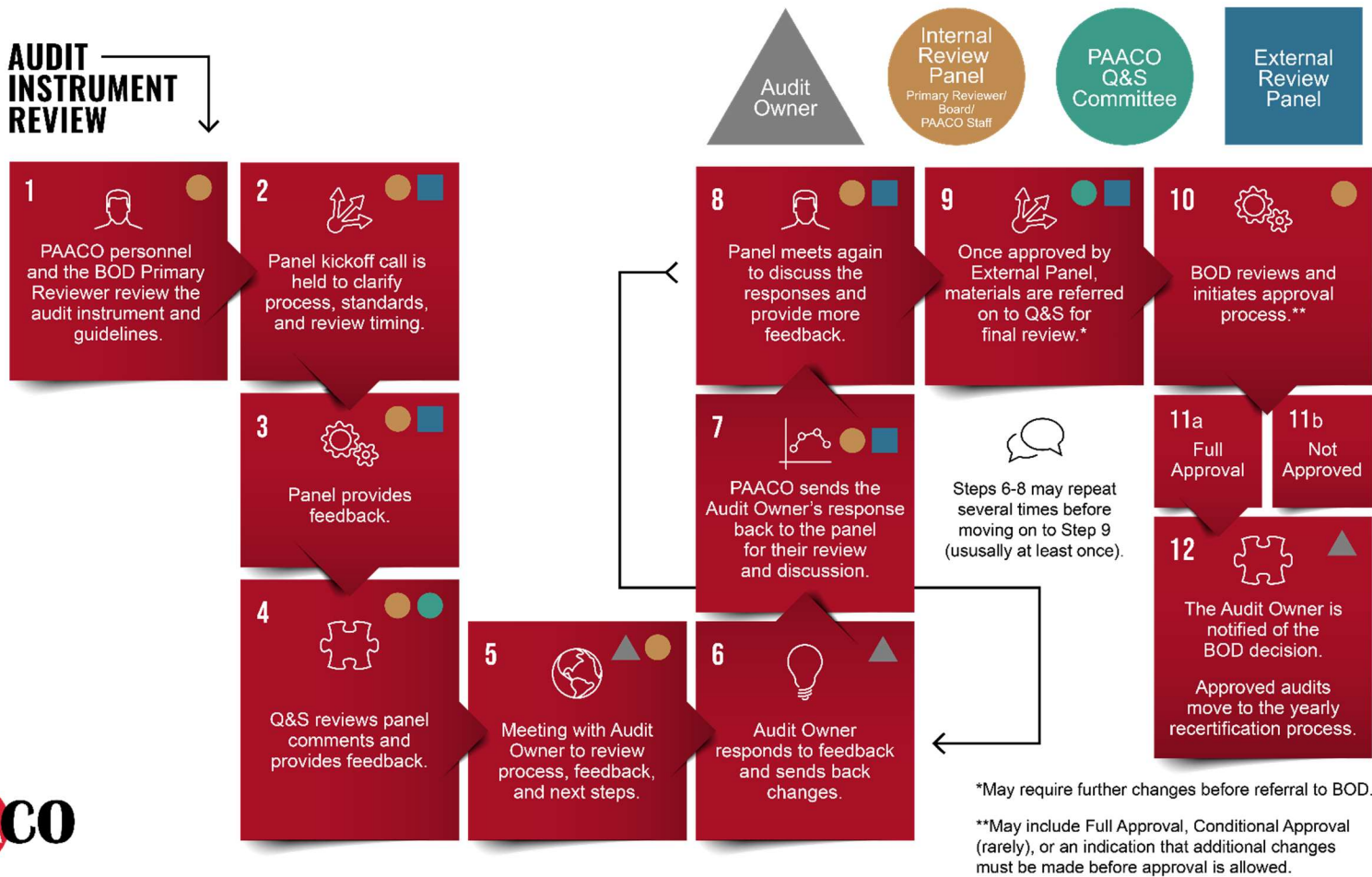
4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- 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 003. Audit Certification Submission Checklist

PAACO Standards for Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director & Board of Directors	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
		<i>Page 4 of 5</i>	
<i>Document Origination Date:</i> 5/25/2016	<i>Revision Date:</i> July 2025		

- 4.5 PAACO Form 004. Panelist Agreement
- 4.6 PAACO Form 004.5 Audit Certification Agreement

AUDIT INSTRUMENT REVIEW



PAACO Standards for Audit Certification Process		<i>Approved By:</i> PAACO Executive Director & Board of Directors	<i>Document Number:</i> PAACO 200
		<i>Page 5 of 5</i>	
<i>Document Origination Date:</i> 5/25/2016	<i>Revision Date: July 2025</i>		