

PM-03

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Replaces:
IT Policy 132 Project Quality Assurance
March 15, 2023

PROJECT QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

See Also:

RCW [43.105.054](#) WaTech Governance
RCW [43.105.205](#) (3) Higher Ed
RCW [43.105.020](#) (22) "State agency"

1. All Tier 2 and 3 projects are considered major IT projects and require quality assurance (QA) oversight as follows:
 - a. Agencies shall hire (or otherwise obtain) and use an external project QA provider.
 - b. Project budgets must plan for adequate and appropriate levels of QA based on the scope over the full life of the project.
 - i. Agencies are strongly encouraged to use QA during feasibility, procurement, and contracting phases, including the procurement or hiring of key project staff.
 - ii. In all cases, the QA provider must be engaged prior to requesting WaTech approval of the investment and must continue until project close-out activities are completed.
 - c. QA activities must be conducted using the minimum statement of work outlined in the [Quality Assurance Standard – Minimum Project QA Activities](#).
 - i. The State CIO may recommend additional required QA activities based on individual project risks and will communicate these to the Executive Sponsor.
 - d. QA services must be provided by practitioners with at least the qualifications outlined in the [Minimum Qualifications for Project Quality Assurance Providers](#).
 - e. Agencies shall not use the services of a QA Practitioner on any project where the QA Practitioner is, or has been used, on any non-QA activities for the same project.
 - f. Agencies will consult with WaTech on all QA solicitations and share

draft procurement documents prior to publication, posting or recruitment.

- i. A representative from WaTech will be invited to participate in the QA selection process.
 - A. If WaTech does not respond to the invitation within five (5) days or if WaTech declines the invitation, the agency is free to proceed without a WaTech representative.
 - ii. The agency will make the final determination of the QA provider.
 - iii. The agency must ensure that there is no real or perceived organizational conflict in their selection, including ensuring the existence of clear managerial independence between the QA provider, the Project Manager, and the Executive Sponsor.
- g. The QA Provider will develop a baseline QA Plan in accordance with section 1 of the [Minimum Project Quality Assurance Activities](#) and present it to the sponsoring agency for approval within the first 30 days of the engagement. The QA plan will be updated as needed over the life of the project.
- h. A project readiness assessment will be required prior to moving beyond the planning phase. The QA provider will independently deliver this assessment to the Executive Sponsor and the State CIO or designee in accordance with [Minimum Project QA Activities - Readiness Assessment](#) Within the first 45 days of the engagement.
- i. The agency must provide a written response to each QA recommendation to address an issue, a negative finding, and/or risk identified in the readiness assessment and post it on the Project IT Dashboard within ten (10) working days of receipt or the assessment.
 - ii. The results of the readiness assessment and agency's response to QA recommendations must be available prior to requesting WaTech approval of the investment.
- i. The QA Provider will independently deliver draft and final QA reports, including risks, issues, findings; and recommendations to address an issue, a negative finding, and/or a risk, to the project Executive Sponsor and to the State CIO or designee in accordance with [Minimum Project Quality Assurance Activities](#).

- i. Each recommendation must correspond to the issue, risk or negative finding it will address, and how the recommendation will support project success.
- j. The QA Provider will make QA reports available to the project Steering Committee. The QA Provider will provide regular and routine briefings at the project Steering Committee meetings.
- k. The QA Provider will independently post all final QA reports on the WA State IT Dashboard within 2 working days of delivery.
- l. If required for the project, the QA Provider may also provide QA reports or briefings to other external oversight and/or authorizing entities.
- m. Following the readiness assessment, QA reports will be delivered on at least a monthly basis.
 - i. QA reports will be finalized and delivered within ten (10) working days following the end of the report period. This allows for prompt action on findings, recommendations, emerging issues, and risks as well as timely visibility to the Executive Sponsor and Steering Committee.
- n. Following the delivery of a QA report, the sponsoring agency must provide a written response to each new QA recommendation to address an issue, a negative finding, and/or risk and must provide current status information on all open QA recommendations.
 - i. The response should clearly outline the action(s) to be taken (including additional investigation or assessment needed to determine other action(s) to be taken), by which person(s) and by what date.
 - ii. The agency must post the response to the Project Dashboard within five (5) working days of delivery of the final QA report.
 - iii. In all cases, the agency must finalize the plan of action for each new recommendation within thirty (30) calendar days of the delivery of the QA report.

2. Tier 1 Projects are considered major IT projects and require quality assurance oversight as follows:

- a. Agencies are recommended to engage a quality assurance resource over the life of the project. This resource must be independent to the project organization, unless otherwise required by statute and meet the qualifications outlined in the Quality Assurance Minimum Qualifications Standard.
- b. As a best practice, agencies should establish a QA plan and assess their readiness prior to moving beyond the planning phase.
- c. Projects should regularly assess the progress and discuss any deviations, risks and issues with executive leadership following the minimum QA standards as described in [Minimum Project QA Activities Standard](#). See [Principles of Quality Assurance](#).

REFERENCES

1. [PM-03-03-S](#) - Minimum Project Quality Assurance Activities Standard.
2. [PM-03-01-S](#) - Minimum Qualifications for Project Quality Assurance Providers
3. [PM-03-01-G](#) - Principles of Quality Assurance Guideline
4. [Definition of Terms Used in Policies and Reports | WaTech](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

- For questions about this policy, please email the [WaTech Policy Mailbox](#).
- For technical assistance, please email the [WaTech Consultant Mailbox](#).