

Accredited Employers Programme

**Summary of changes to the Accredited Employers
Programme Assessment – April 2024**

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Summary of changes to the Assessment

Intent of this document

From 1 April 2025 the Accredited Employers Programme Assessment (the Assessment) will replace the Accredited Employers Programme audit standards (the audit standards), the ACC440.

This document starts by identifying what hasn't changed, before proceeding to highlight the major additions and changes in moving to the Assessment:

- Details about what has changed in the Claims and Injury Management section of the Assessment can be found from page [4](#).
- Details about what has changed in the Health and Safety section of the Assessment can be found from page [12](#).

Note: this document doesn't cover every change that has been made in moving to the Assessment, for example, minor changes to the structure, grammar, and/or wording of some verifications have been omitted. It is important that you read the Assessment in its entirety, as some of the wording may differ from what you're familiar with.

What hasn't changed

The Assessment continues to exist strictly for the purposes of allowing employers to meet the claims and injury management and health and safety accreditation requirements of the Programme. Complying with the Assessment should not be relied on to satisfy compliance with legal and other obligations of the employer. It is the responsibility of the individual employer to ensure these are met.

Assessments continue to be completed once per year at the employer's anniversary of entry into the Programme, unless otherwise agreed with ACC. ACC continues to select the sites for the Assessment and work with the employer on any areas that have not been met. Assessors continue to provide the Assessment report to both the employer and ACC.

The responsibility for claims and injury management remains with the Accredited Employer regardless of whether a Third Party Administrator (TPA) assists in the delivery of claims and injury management services.

What has changed

The structural components of the audit standards have been renamed in the Assessment as follows:

AEP audit standards component	AEP Assessment equivalent
Element	Assessment Area
Requirement	Assessment Requirement
Verification	Assessment Verification

Each Assessment Area has multiple Assessment Requirements, and each Assessment Requirement has one or more Assessment Verifications. Several new verifications have been added to the Assessment, while others have been amended from similar verifications in the audit standards. These changes have been captured in the following sections of this document.

Claims and Injury Management section of the Assessment

Changes to Assessment Areas and Assessment Requirements

The injury management requirements from the audit standards have been reorganised, with individual audit elements being revised to provide a more outcomes-based focus. Many of the individual requirements from the audit standards are still included in the Assessment but may be found in a different Assessment Area.

The Claims and Injury Management section of the Assessment has a new set up and is divided into six Assessment Areas:

Assessment Area 1: Claim file assessment

Focuses on reviewing a representative sample of claim files. This area combines several elements and requirements from the audit standards including:

- Cover decision
- Entitlements
- File management and administration
- Communication, rehabilitation, and return to work and
- Complaints and lodged Reviews.

Assessment Area 2: Employee requirements

Focuses on ensuring that the Accredited Employer has the right personnel, with the right knowledge and the right skills to manage claims, and that all employees are informed about the AEP and the relevant procedures.

Assessment Area 3: Reporting and continual improvement

Focuses on ensuring that the Accredited Employer has a systematic approach to reporting and reviewing their claims and injury management systems and outcomes.

Assessment Area 4: Policies and procedures

Combines several elements and requirements from the audit standards into a single Assessment Area. The policies and procedures may not necessarily be reviewed each assessment, however, if an area of concern is identified within Assessment Areas 1, 2, and/or 3, then the assessor will review the relevant policies and procedures.

Assessment Area 5: Injured employee interviews

Previously known as case study interviews in the audit standards, this area has updated requirements and verifications.

Assessment Area 6: Focus group interviews

The element of the same name from the audit standards has been updated to include additional requirements and updated verifications.

Changes to Assessment Verifications

New Assessment Verifications

Assessment Area	Reference	New Assessment Verification
1: Claim file assessment	1.2.2	New claims or injury notifications are appropriately screened to identify which injuries require a needs assessment.
	1.4.1	Verbal communication with injured employee(s) who are not rehabilitating in the workplace is made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by the employer at least once a month and • in-person, via use of video/online call, or via the phone.
	1.5.4	Options for informal resolution of lodged Reviews considered (where applicable).
2: Employee requirements	2.1.1	The Accredited Employer has identified designated personnel who have claims and injury management roles and responsibilities and can demonstrate that they have provided them with training, covering some or all the following topics (role dependent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover decisions • case management (if applicable) • needs assessment (if applicable) • support of rehabilitation and return-to-work • entitlements • weekly compensation • complaints management or • privacy and handling of confidential claim information.
	2.1.3	Induction training for all personnel with claims and injury management responsibilities is provided for those recently employed or given additional responsibilities.

Assessment Area	Reference	New Assessment Verification
	2.1.5	Where recommendations for cover or entitlement decisions are rejected by someone other than the person making the recommendation, the file demonstrates the rationale behind the rejection. Note: the rationale must be in line with legislation.
2: Employee requirements – cont.	2.1.7	Adequate knowledge within the Accredited Employer of the information required to allow accurate weekly compensation calculation. This is to be verbally demonstrated through brief explanations of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of First Incapacity • Date of Subsequent Incapacity and • identification of relevant earnings details to support correct calculations.
3: Reporting and continual improvement	3.2.3	Self-assessment and action/resolution improvement activities are occurring. This must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a self-assessment of the employers' claims and injury management system and processes is completed once every 12 months by the Accredited Employer against the Claims and Injury Management section of the Assessment and • actions (and resolutions) following the self-assessment are documented and responsibilities are assigned.
4: Policies and procedures	4.2.1	Induction and training are documented and cover the claims and injury management policies and procedures.
	4.3.1	All claims and injury management policies and procedures are reviewed at least once every 24 months, and whenever changes are made to applicable legislation or ACC Operational Directives.

Assessment Area	Reference	New Assessment Verification
4: Policies and procedures – cont.	4.6.1	<p>There is a procedure in place to screen new injury notifications to determine priorities for management. The procedure must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale for how injury notifications are triaged, considering injury type and incapacity type • who conducts the screening • how the results of the screening are actioned (for example, needs assessment) and • how medical-fees only claims are identified.
	4.9.1	<p>A procedure exists that outlines how weekly compensation entitlements are calculated and provided to their employees, this must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details for the designated personnel who have weekly compensation responsibilities • training and induction • the calculation and provision of weekly compensation and • cover for leave or sickness of designated personnel.
	4.10.1	<p>A procedure exists to ensure that information on entitlements is readily accessible to all employees which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to access the information • that information about entitlements is provided at induction and to all employees regularly (at least every 12 months) and • how employees are advised of receiving more than the statutory entitlement.
	4.10.2	<p>A procedure exists to ensure that there are internal reviews of entitlement decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least every 12 months by delegated personnel other than the decision-maker (for example, an internal peer reviewer, another case manager, or team manager) • to assess accuracy of the entitlement and

Assessment Area	Reference	New Assessment Verification
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to monitor timeliness of entitlements.
4: Policies and procedures – cont.	4.14.1	<p>Procedure covers provider management and payments and must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provider invoices must be paid in full by the 20th of the month following the issue of the invoice (in line with the Agreement), how an incorrect payment will be corrected and communicated to the provider.
	4.19.1	Procedure exists that defines roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in claims and injury management, including cover for leave and sickness of designated personnel.
5: Injured employee interviews	5.1.3	The interviewee was made aware of the range of entitlements that were available to them (for example weekly compensation, home help, transport assistance) and knew how to access these.
	5.2.2	The interviewee understood their weekly compensation payments, timeframes, and if they received the payments within an acceptable timeframe.
	5.3.1	How involved the injured employee was in developing an initial and subsequent rehabilitation plan with their manager.
	5.3.2	The injured employee was informed of any referral made, including in verbal and written form.
	5.3.3	Alternative duties were consultatively considered between interviewee, manager, and case manager, and when confirmed, were clearly documented in the rehabilitation plan.
	5.4.2	The injured employee knew about their right to formally lodge a review and how to do so if they were unhappy with a decision that was made on their claim. If they lodged a review, what was their experience with the process.

Assessment Area	Reference	New Assessment Verification
6: Focus group interviews	6.1.3	There are regular communication opportunities between senior management and employees to discuss hazard and risk management. (Employee only)
	6.2.4	Hazard management, injury prevention and training issues arising from injury investigations are reported, action is taken, and issues are communicated to staff (where applicable). (Management only)
	6.2.5	How and when employees are notified of changes to people, process, and systems following the results of an investigation. (Employee only)
	6.3.3	Employees are allocated time and resources to perform their health and safety roles.
	6.3.4	Employees feel that their management take their health and safety matters seriously.
	6.4.1	Management understands the employer's health and safety objectives, and what steps have been taken towards achieving those objectives. (Management only)
	6.4.2	How management is actively working on continually improving the organisation's health and safety practices.
	6.7.1	Employees receive appropriate training on health and safety and AEP at induction with scheduled refresher training.

Amended Assessment Verifications

Assessment Area	Reference	What has changed
1: Claim file assessment	1.2.1	Added “within two working days of first being aware of injury”.
	1.2.6	Condensed two verifications related to providing weekly compensation decisions and calculations to injured employee into one.
	1.3.5	Added “in accordance with ACC Privacy Directive and Privacy legislation”.
	1.4.4	Added “within a maximum of 28 days of the cover decision”.
	1.4.9	Added “copy of the referral letter sent to the injured employee”.
2: Employee requirements	2.2.2	Added “considers employees’ literacy, language, culture, and any other factors that may affect understanding”.
4: Policies and procedures	4.1.1	Added “is updated every 24 months”.
	4.7.1	Added “when a needs assessment is to be completed (within two working days from when the assessment was identified as a requirement by the screening policy/procedure)”.
	4.17.1	Added “compliance with any ACC Operational Directives and Operational Guidelines”.
	4.18.1	Added “in line with the Privacy Act and ACC Privacy Directive”.
5: Injured employee interviews	5.1.2	Added “If the cover decision was not made within expected timeframe, they were made aware of the reasons for this”.
	5.2.1	Reworded to “Rehabilitation needs and supports were understood by the interviewee, including the support that was available to them following a needs assessment, and if they received those rehabilitation needs and supports within an acceptable timeframe”.

Assessment Area	Reference	What has changed
	5.4.1	The interviewee's experience has been added, as has whether they were notified of the outcome.
	6.1.2	This question is now asked to management only.
	6.2.1	Near hits have been included, and use of the term 'encouraged'.
6: Focus group interviews	6.2.2	Near hits have been included, and "the outcome of the investigation is fed back to the individual who reported it" has been added.
	6.2.3	Reworded to "Interviewees know the emergency procedures for different situations and the people responsible during an emergency" added.
	6.3.1	Added "opportunities for engagement".

Health and Safety section of the Assessment

Changes to Assessment Areas and Assessment Requirements

The safety management requirements in the audit standards have been updated to either be simplified or strengthened in line with modern health and safety working practices.

The Health and Safety section of the Assessment is divided into ten Assessment Areas:

Assessment Area 7: Context and scope

A new area aimed at ensuring employers understand the environment in which they operate and can define the scope of their health and safety management system.

Assessment Area 8: Leadership, employee participation, and planning

Previously 'employer commitment to safety management practices' in the audit standards, this area has been expanded to include requirements around health and safety objectives and employee participation.

Assessment Area 9: Hazard identification, risk assessment and management

Mostly unchanged from the element of the same name from the audit standards, with one exception being the addition of a requirement for identifying legal and other health and safety obligations.

Assessment Area 10: Capability and capacity

Adds requirements relating to resourcing health and safety, communication, and document control to the 'information, training, and supervision' element from the audit standards.

Assessment Area 11: Emergency management

Mostly unchanged from a similar element in the audit standards: 'emergency planning and readiness'.

Assessment Area 12: Accredited Employers and external Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking, including contractors

Mostly unchanged from a similar element in the audit standards: 'ensuring the health and safety of employees and others in the workplace'.

Assessment Area 13: Incident reporting, recording, investigation, and corrective action

Mostly unchanged from the element of a similar name in the audit standards.

Assessment Area 14: Review, evaluation, and continual improvement

Contains the remaining requirements in what was previously 'planning, review, and evaluation' in the audit standards, with the addition of a new requirement for measuring, monitoring, and review.

Assessment Area 15: Management of change

A new area assessing whether employers have measures in place to anticipate, assess, and manage changes to their organisation.

Assessment Area 16: Workplace observation

Has been updated to include additional requirements and updated verifications.

Changes to Assessment Verifications

New verifications

Assessment Area	Reference	Verification
7: Context and scope	7.1.1	The employer has determined the context in which it operates, including the requirements of employees and any other relevant parties.
	7.2.1	The employer has determined the scope of their health and safety management system.
8: Leadership, employee participation, and planning	8.2.2	Designation at senior management level to ensure that the health and safety management system is implemented, maintained, and reported on, in terms of performance.
	8.3.2	<p>The employer's plans for achieving its health and safety objectives include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> necessary resources timeframes methods of evaluation consultation and alignment with organisational processes.
	8.5.1	<p>The employer has a plan (or plans) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions that address identified risks and opportunities, including those related to health and safety legal requirements integrating and implementing the above actions into their health and safety management system processes or other business processes and evaluating the effectiveness of any actions that have been executed.

Assessment Area	Reference	Verification
10: Capability and capacity	10.1.1	The allocation of resources to maintain and improve the health and safety management system has been assessed and provided.
	10.2.1	The employer provides an induction for employees that considers literacy, language, culture, and neurodiversity, along with any other factors that may affect understanding.
	10.4.1	The employer has established, implemented, and maintained a communication process for its health and safety management system which includes determining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what to communicate • when to communicate • who to communicate with and • how to communicate.
11: Emergency management	11.5.2	There has been a determination of emergency training requirements, including type and frequency of refresher training.
13: Incident reporting, recording, investigation, and corrective action	13.1.3	The employer has a register, or similar, of all reported incidents.
	13.3.3	The outcomes of any implemented corrective actions have been documented, monitored, and reviewed, where applicable.

Assessment Area	Reference	Verification
15: Management of change	15.1.1	<p>The employer has a process for anticipating, assessing, and managing changes to its organisation, in relation to how those changes impact, or are likely to impact, their health and safety management system. This includes changes to the organisation's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operations • processes • activities • equipment • substances • technology • design of work area • work organisation, including governance, shareholding, mergers, and disestablishment and/or • legal requirements.
16: Workplace observation	16.5.1	Contractor, other worker, and visitor induction requirements are on display or communicated when they access the workplace.
	16.6.1	Corrective actions identified in the investigation report have been implemented, where applicable.
	16.7.1	Continual improvement efforts identified through review, evaluation, and/or audit activities have been implemented.

Amended verifications

Assessment Area	Reference	Changes
8: Leadership, employee participation, and planning	8.1.1	Condensed eight verifications relating to the employer's health and safety policy into one.
	8.2.1	Condensed two verifications relating to specific health and safety responsibilities into one. These responsibilities must now be designated and documented at all levels of the organisation, not just "at the senior management level".
	8.3.1	Moved the detail from requirement 2.3 in the audit standards into this verification, describing the qualities that established objectives should have and clarifying the roles that senior management, employees, and their representatives should play in the process.
	8.3.3	Condensed two verifications relating to the review, update, or reset of health and safety objectives into one.
	8.4.3	Provided additional scenarios where employees and/or their representatives need to be consulted, beyond "development, monitoring, and review of health and safety policies, processes, and performance".
	8.4.4	Provided additional scenarios where employees and/or their representatives need to be engaged, beyond "joint involvement in injury prevention and (where applicable) injury management initiatives".
9: Hazard identification, risk assessment and management	9.1.2	Specified "legal requirements and other relevant health and safety information" while removing the requirement that it be reviewed within the previous 24 months.
	9.2.1	Now looking for a process for identifying health and safety hazards, as opposed to a procedure. The list of things that this process should consider has been updated and expanded upon.
	9.3.1	Condensed three verifications relating to determining risk controls into one.
	9.3.2	Condensed two verifications relating to developing risk controls into one.
	9.3.3	Condensed two verifications relating to implementing risk controls into one.

Assessment Area	Reference	Changes
	9.3.4	Condensed two verifications relating to reviewing risk controls into one.
	10.2.2	This verification now focuses on a specifically health and safety-focused individual employee induction; considerations relating to injury management have been removed and covered separately in the claims and injury management section of the Assessment.
10: Capability and capacity	10.3.1	This verification has been expanded to account for competency, as opposed to training needs specifically.
	10.3.2	Condensed four verifications relating to employees acquiring and maintaining the competence required to do their jobs.
	10.5.1	Updated this verification to outline what an employer's document control system should cover more explicitly.
	11.3.1	Condensed two verifications relating to the testing of emergency procedures into one. The explicit timeframes of 6 and 24 months for emergency evacuation drills and other emergency responses, respectively, have been removed.
11: Emergency management	11.4.1	Condensed two verifications relating to the review of emergency responses into one.
	11.5.1	Condensed three verifications relating to assessing the need for, implementing, and maintaining first aid and emergency equipment into one.
	11.5.3	Condensed three verifications relating to evidence of completed emergency training for first responders into one. The explicit 12- and 24-month requirements attached to this training have been removed.

Assessment Area	Reference	Changes
12: Accredited Employers and external Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking, including contractors	12.1.1	Moved the detail from requirement 8.3 in the AEP Audit Standards into this verification, expanding on what the documented selection criteria for external Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking should include.
	12.4.1	Condensed three verifications relating to overlapping duties between the employer and contracted external Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking into one. The new verification no longer explicitly looks for evidence of a procedure of how employers will approach these overlapping duties.
13: Incident reporting, recording, investigation, and corrective action	13.1.1	Now looking for a process rather than a procedure for reporting, recording, and investigating incidents.
	13.4.1	Now looking for a process rather than a procedure for early intervention of pain, discomfort, or injury.
14: Review, evaluation, and continual improvement	14.3.1	Added who needs to be involved (senior management) and what they need to do (retain records), when it comes to management evaluation.
16: Workplace observation	16.1.1	Expanded on the existing workplace observation to include other aspects of employee participation, beyond incident, injury, and illness reporting.
	16.2.2	Condensed five verifications relating to the implementation of risk controls into one.



**He Kaupare. He Manaaki.
He Whakaora.**
prevention. care. recovery.

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