DSOClear

April 2025

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DSOClear is a supplemental tool intended to provide general information in response to questions relating to O. Reg. 299/10 Quality Assurance Measures (QAM), made under the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008* (SIPDDA), associated policy directives and the Developmental Services ("DS") DSO Indicator List.

DSOClear includes,

- QAM or policy directive requirements;
- Intent of the requirement;
- issue identified or feedback from the sector; and
- clarification, including evidence to support compliance or examples of non-compliance.

Note: Information in DSOClear is not legal advice. Application entities may wish to consult with their own legal counsel for specific interpretation or advice.

Going forward, DSOClear will be accessible at https://www.onboardkhub.ca/ and will be updated from time to time. You are encouraged to sign up for any new updates on the website.

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*This indicator pertains to Staff and Volunteer Records.

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
1. Following Policies & Procedures			
Where an application entity is required to have policies and procedures in respect of its quality assurance measures, the application agency shall follow the policies and procedures and shall ensure that its staff members, volunteers and members of its board of directors follow them, to the degree that is appropriate given the role of the staff member, volunteer and board member. O.Reg.299/10 , 1(3)(a)	Application entity staff, volunteers and board members are aware of the agency policies and are informed of how these policies are applied in practice. Easy access to the policies and procedures ensures staff/volunteers are able to refer to them as necessary.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant for not following its policies and procedures that <u>are not </u>QAM-related?	No. Only policies and procedures related to QAM (as well as any related to policy directives) will be reviewed for compliance during an inspection.

Policies and Procedures

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
2. Writing, Date, Current Practice			
Where an application entity is required to have policies and procedures in respect of its quality assurance measures, the application entity shall ensure that the policies and procedures are in writing, are dated and reflect the application entity's most current practice. O.Reg.299/10, 1(3)(b)	Written policies set out the framework within which the application entity must operate. The written procedures specify how the policies are to be applied in practice. To ensure the application entity has written policies and procedures that contribute to a consistent understanding of the quality assurance measures, including the role, function, and services carried out by staff.	Will an application entity be cited non-compliant if its policies and procedures need to be approved or be signed off by the board of directors/senior management?	No. QAM does not require that policies and procedures be signed off. If the application entity's policies and procedures are dated, reflect current practice, and are posted on the agency website or otherwise readily accessible for all staff, board members and volunteers, then the application entity will be considered in compliance.

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
16. Training Ongoing			
Each application entity shall have policies and procedures for staff members and volunteers that address regular ongoing training for staff members and volunteers as may be appropriate or required. O.Reg.299/10, 34(1)(2)	To ensure that the application entity has policies and procedures for staff and volunteers related to regular, ongoing training to enable staff and volunteers to fulfill their duties and support persons with a developmental disability.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if its policies and procedures do not list the specific training required for staff or volunteers?	No, an application entity would not be cited as non-compliant if its policies and procedures do not list all of the specific training required by staff and volunteers. The application entity can choose to include any training that they deem necessary or appropriate for their staff and volunteers.

Policies and Procedures

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
2. Mission Statement, Service Principles, Statement of Rights, Annual Review			
Each application entity shall ensure that its board of directors conduct an annual review of its mission statement, service principles and statement of rights, which shall include updating as necessary. O. Reg. 299/10, 29(2)(b)	To ensure mission statement, service principles and statement of rights are reviewed annually to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness and are updated as needed. The intent of the requirement is that the mission statement, service principles and statement of rights are completed annually and updated as necessary to ensure that they are appropriately reflective of the current status of the application entity.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if an annual review was not completed within a 12-month period? Will an application entity be cited non-compliant if there is no evidence that each board member reviewed the mission statement, service principles, statement of rights on an annual basis?	Yes, an application entity will be cited as non-compliant if an annual review is not completed every 12 months. Application entities will be required to provide board records confirming completion of an annual review from the current year and the previous year. No, individual sign offs are not required for each board member to confirm compliance, if reviewed at a Board meeting and noted in the minutes. The application entity must also record the dates of these reviews.

Board Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
7. References			
The application entity shall arrange for a personal reference check and require a police records check for new board members where they will have direct contact with the persons with developmental disabilities. O. Reg. 299/10, 34(2)	To ensure that the application entity screens new board members who will have direct contact with persons with developmental disabilities in order to promote safety and security.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if all board members do not have police record checks?	No, the application entity will not be cited non-compliant if a board member does not have a police record check, provided the Board Member does not have any unsupervised, direct contact with any persons with developmental disabilities.

Board Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
7. Emergency Preparedness Plan, Training			
Each application entity shall have training for its staff members and volunteers in the procedures outlined in the emergency preparedness plan. O. Reg. 299/10, 33(1), para 3.	To ensure that each staff person and volunteer receives training in the procedures of the emergency preparedness plan in order to be aware of the specific course of action to take to handle emergencies effectively.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if staff have not received training on the emergency preparedness plan annually?	No, the application entity is not required to provide evidence of annual training on the procedures set out in the emergency preparedness plan.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
8. Orientation and Initial Training, P&Ps			
In addressing quality assurance measures respecting human resource practices, each application entity shall have policies and procedures for staff members and volunteers that address the orientation and initial training on the application entity and its policies and procedures. O. Reg. 299/10, 34(1), para 1	To ensure that human resource practices of the application entity reflect the availability of policies and procedures for staff and volunteers that provide information about orientation and initial training about the application entity and its policies and procedures.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if staff did not receive orientation on the Policies & Procedures within a certain period of time?	Yes, an application entity will be cited as non-compliant if it does not follow its internal policies and procedures regarding timelines for the orientation and initial training of staff and volunteers on the application entity and its policies and procedures.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
14. Administration, Application Package			
The Application Entity shall assign responsibility to qualified assessors for the administration of the ministry mandated Application Package to collect data on the support needs, priorities and circumstances of persons with developmental disabilities. The Application Package consists of the Application for Developmental Services and Supports (ADSS) and the Supports Intensity Scale -Adult Version™ (SIS-A™). Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Will the application entity be cited non-compliant if an assessor has not completed the Ministry's assessor training and data quality assurance program within the last 18 months?	Yes, the application entity will be cited non-compliant if an assessor's training falls outside of the 18 month requirement.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
16. Assessor Qualifications			
The Application Entity shall ensure that assessors who administer the Application Package have the following qualifications: • completed formal education of an undergraduate degree or equivalent, in a field related to human services (such as psychology, sociology, or social work) • a minimum of five years recent experience working directly in the field of developmental services, or equivalent experience working in an occupation related to human services • experience in intake, case management, service coordination, direct support and/or advocacy roles • relevant computer skills as required to use ministry documents, and ministry-mandated information technology systems, including SIS-A™ electronic form for collecting support needs assessments information of people applying for ministry funded developmental services and supports, and • successfully completed training on the administration of the Application Package through the ministry's assessor trainer and data quality assurance program. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To identify qualifications that relate to skills and abilities needed by assessors to complete their work, which, in turn, aims to promote provincially consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Will the application entity be cited non-compliant if an assessor's qualifications do not meet the list outlined in the Policy Directive for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs?	Yes, the application entity will be cited non-compliant if an assessor's qualifications do not reflect those outlined in the Policy Directive for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
18. Assessor standards, Administration of application package			
Assessors shall meet the following ongoing training and experience requirements to ensure that their skills continue to meet the ministry's standards: Ongoing administration of the Application Package with applicants on a regular basis. The assessors should administer at least 36 Application Packages in the 18-month (as a best practice at least 2 assessments per month) period between each successful completion of the interviewer reliability review through the ministry's assessor trainer and data quality assurance program. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially-consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act. To meet requirements specified by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities regarding the use of the Supports Intensity Scale - Adult".	Will the application entity be cited non-compliant if an assessor has not administered at least 36 Application Packages in the 18-month period between each successful completion of the interviewer reliability review through the ministry's assessor trainer and data quality assurance program.	Yes, it is the ministry's ongoing expectation that qualified assessors, except those on a documented leave of absence, administer at least 36 Application Packages in the 18-month period between IRQRs (two SIS-A assessments per month as a best practice). This includes assessors who are in the role as a partial full-time equivalent (FTE) and those who hold dual roles within an agency (i.e., their job description includes conducting assessments).

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
19. Assessor standards, Return from leave of absence			
The Application Entity shall ensure that assessors who administer the Application Package have the following qualifications: Assessors who return from a leave of absence are required to follow the ministry guidelines for maintaining assessor qualifications provided through the ministry's assessor trainer and data quality assurance program, specifically the sections that pertain to 'leave of absence'. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Need	To ensure provincially consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Will the application entity be cited non-compliant if an assessor returns from leave and does not complete the Ministry's guidelines for maintaining assessor qualifications?	Yes, when an assessor returns from a leave of absence the application entity is to connect with the Provincial Trainers to develop a plan to help guide the assessors return to work. The assessor's supervisor and the assessor training and data quality assurance program (ATDQAP) ministry trainer must agree on a plan to ensure quality assessments are conducted once the assessor resumes duties. This plan depends on the unique circumstances, including, but not limited to: the length of time away, the length of time the assessor has been in their role and the amount of time since their last IRQR.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
20. Assessor standards, Independent from direct provision of developmental services			
The Application Entity shall also ensure that assessors who administer the Application Package are independent from direct provision of developmental services (are not employed in a service agency that delivers supported group living services and supports or community participation services and supports under the authority of the Act). Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially consistent information gathering by assessors employed by application entities who should be independent from direct provision of developmental services (to avoid conflict of interest).	Will an application entity be cited non-compliant if one of the assessors is employed by a service agency that delivers supported group living services and supports, or community participation services and supports under the authority of the Act.	No. In January 2024 a memo was sent to all DSOs providing written confirmation that a temporary suspension of the enforcement of the requirement that assessors are independent from the direct provision of developmental services, as contained in the Policy Directives for Application Entities 5. Assessor qualifications and service standards for the assessment of support needs, is in effect **until further notice**, while a policy review is conducted by the ministry. However, DSOs must disclose to the ministry, without delay, any situation that could be considered an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. During the period of the ministry's policy review, it is expected that DSOs will continue to take all reasonable steps to comply with the requirement for all assessors to be independent from the direct provision of developmental services.

Staff Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
5. Adult DS Services and Supports/Ministry Approved Tools			
The Application Entity shall review required documentation to confirm whether an applicant is eligible for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 2.0 Confirmation of Eligibility form Ministry-Funded Adult Developmental Services and Supports.	To outline the procedures used by application entities to confirm the eligibility status for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if they do not review the required documentation to confirm eligibility for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports?	Yes, an application entity will be cited as non-compliant in the event that it does not review supporting documentation provided by the individual or representative of their choice. Required documentation may include: • Birth certificate • Baptismal certificate • Passport • Driver's license • Ontario photo card • ODSP direct deposit statement • Pay stub • Rental agreement • Proof of Canadian Citizenship • Landed immigrant status

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
11. Eligibility for Ministry Funded Adult DS Services and Supports/Advise in Writing			
The Application Entity shall advise the individual, or representative of their choice, in writing whether the individual is eligible for Ministry funded adult developmental services and supports in accordance with the Act and Regulation, within 20 business days of receipt of all documentation. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 2.0 Confirmation of Eligibility for Ministry-Funded Adult Developmental Services and Supports	To outline the procedures used by application entities to confirm eligibility status for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports.	Would the Ministry cite non-compliance if the application entity did not advise the individual or representative of their choice, within 20 business days and in writing, regarding the applicant's eligibility status for Ministry funded adult developmental services and supports in accordance with the Act and Regulation, upon the receipt of all documentation?	Yes, the application entity would be cited as non-compliant if it did not advise the individual in writing and within 20 business days regarding the applicant's eligibility status, assuming receipt of all documentation.

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
36. Assessors/Interviews			
The Application Entity shall establish and maintain the following service standards for assessors to follow in administering the Application Package: Administration of the Application Package shall involve two semi-structured interviews held by an assessor with the eligible applicant as well as at least one additional respondent, but no more than four respondents, following the approach described in the assessor training and quality assurance program and the Application Package training manuals (Best practice standard is that the interviews happen on different days. Assessments scheduled on the same day should be exceptional and the justification must always lie with the best interests of the applicant). Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if an assessor facilitates the Application Package within one semi-structured interview?	Yes, the application entity would be cited non-compliant if the application entity facilitated only one semi-structured interview without documentation indicating the extenuating circumstances that necessitated a single interview.

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
39. Assessors/interview, Applicant Present			
The Application Entity shall establish and maintain the following service standards for assessors to follow in administering the Application Package: Every effort should be made by the Application Entity to ensure that the applicant is included and present at both Application Package interviews. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act. The requirement aims to gather information from the individual so as to hear, firsthand, their thoughts, ideas, skills, abilities, etc.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if an assessor proceeds with an interview if the eligible applicant chooses to leave before the process is completed?	An application entity would not be cited as non-compliant if the eligible applicant decides to leave part way through the interview. In all cases the application entity should document the level of participation of the applicant. **AS PER THE JUNE 9, 2017 MEMO:** **If, in exceptional circumstances, the applicant is not available to be present for either interview, in person or by videoconference, the DSO must follow up with a minimum of two professionals familiar with the person to directly verify that the person's circumstances are as reported. This verification must be documented through a note in the person's DSCIS file.**

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
40. Assessors/Interview Timelines			
The Application Entity shall establish and maintain the following service standards for assessors to follow in administering the Application Package: Only in exceptional circumstances, or if the applicant requests or requires it, should there be more than 15 business days between the first and second interview. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially-consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate and comprehensive information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Would the ministry recognize situational circumstances that prevented the second semi-structured interview from occurring within 15 business days of the first interview?	Yes, the Ministry will recognize **documented** exceptional circumstances that prevent the meeting from occurring within 15 business days. The rationale must be documented in the applicant's file.

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
42. Assessors/record validation			
The Application Entity shall establish and maintain the following service standards for assessors to follow in administering the Application Package: The assessor must record a valid response for all questions included in the Application Package. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 5.0 Assessor Qualifications and Service Standards for the Assessment of Support Needs	To ensure provincially- consistent information gathering by application entities so that decisions and planning for ministry-funded adult developmental services and supports are based on accurate information on the needs, priorities and circumstances of persons determined to have developmental disabilities in accordance with the Act.	Will the application entity be cited non-compliant if the application package has not been filled out completely?	Yes, the assessor shall make every effort to completely fill out the application package. Where there are questions which cannot be provided with a valid response, due to "skip logic" (where applicants are sent to a future point in the application based on how they answer a question in the questionnaire), the application entity will not be cited non-compliant.

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
57. Record, Individual Support Plan			
At a minimum, the record shall include a copy of the person's individual support plan. O. Reg. 299/10, 35(2)(c)	To ensure that the application entity maintains a record on each person who has applied for services and supports or funding.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if a copy of an Individual Support Plan is not kept or retained by the DSO?	**Until further notice, this low risk program requirement will not be a priority for QAM compliance.** **This is a temporary adjustment until further communication is provided to Service Agencies re: clarification for including a copy of the person's individual support plan.**

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
58. Record Retention			
The application entity shall retain a person's record for a minimum of seven years after the application entity has assessed the person's needs for services and supports. O. Reg. 299/10, 35(3)	To allow for consistent and appropriate retention and storage of applicant records.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if applicant's files are deleted more than seven years after the application entity has assessed the person's needs for services and supports?	No, the application entity would not be cited non-compliant if files are destroyed after more than 7 years following the assessment. Application entities are required to keep all files for a minimum of 7 years.

Individual Records

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
23. Standard Information, Protocols for Revision Dates			
Application Entity shall: develop and implement protocols for the provision of standard information, as set out in a Ministry approved service plan that includes requirements to: include clearly visible, effective and revision dates on all forms, protocols, and in published website content. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 1.0 Provisions of Information	To ensure that Application Entities provide appropriate information and quality customer service to adults with a developmental disability, those who support them, and the general public in a provincially-consistent manner.	Will the application entity be cited as non-compliant if forms, protocols, and website content are missing both the effective date and the revision date?	Yes, the application entity will be cited as non-compliant if 'effective' and 'revision dates' are not indicated on forms, protocols, and website content.

Records and Documentation

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
50. Approved Fire Safety Plan, Document			
Upon the request of a Director, an application entity shall produce to the Director its approved fire safety plan where required under Ontario Regulation 213/07 (Fire Code) made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. O. Reg. 299/10, 33(2)	To ensure that application entity premises meet all provincial fire and health and safety requirements.	Will an application entity be cited as non-compliant if there is no approved fire safety plan in place, where one is required?	Yes, the application entity will be cited as non-compliant if the Fire Department indicates that an approved Fire Safety Plan is required under Regulation 213/17 (Fire Code). However, if the Fire Department provides documentation stating that the application entity does not require an approved Fire Safety Plan, the application entity would be considered compliant.

Records and Documentation

Regulation	Intent	Issue	Clarification
52. Ministry Specified Information Technology			
The Application Entity shall: use ministry mandated information technology for the collection, use and maintenance of information about people applying for ministry funded developmental services and supports. Policy Directives for Application Entities: 8.0 Ministry Reporting and Data Collection	To ensure efficient and transparent communication between the ministry and the application entity and to ensure the collection, use and reporting of accurate, consistent, and timely data to inform community planning, ministry forecasting, performance measurement, and program and policy development.	Will the application entity be cited as non-compliant if the application entity uses a data collection computer system that is not Ministry-approved to store and maintain applicant information?	No, an application entity will not be cited non-compliant if another system, other than the Ministry-specified Information Technology System is used to collect and maintain applicant information, provided the application entity ensures all information technology systems are appropriately updated. However, an application entity must utilize the Ministry-specified Information Technology system to document the eligibility of applicants.

Records and Documentation