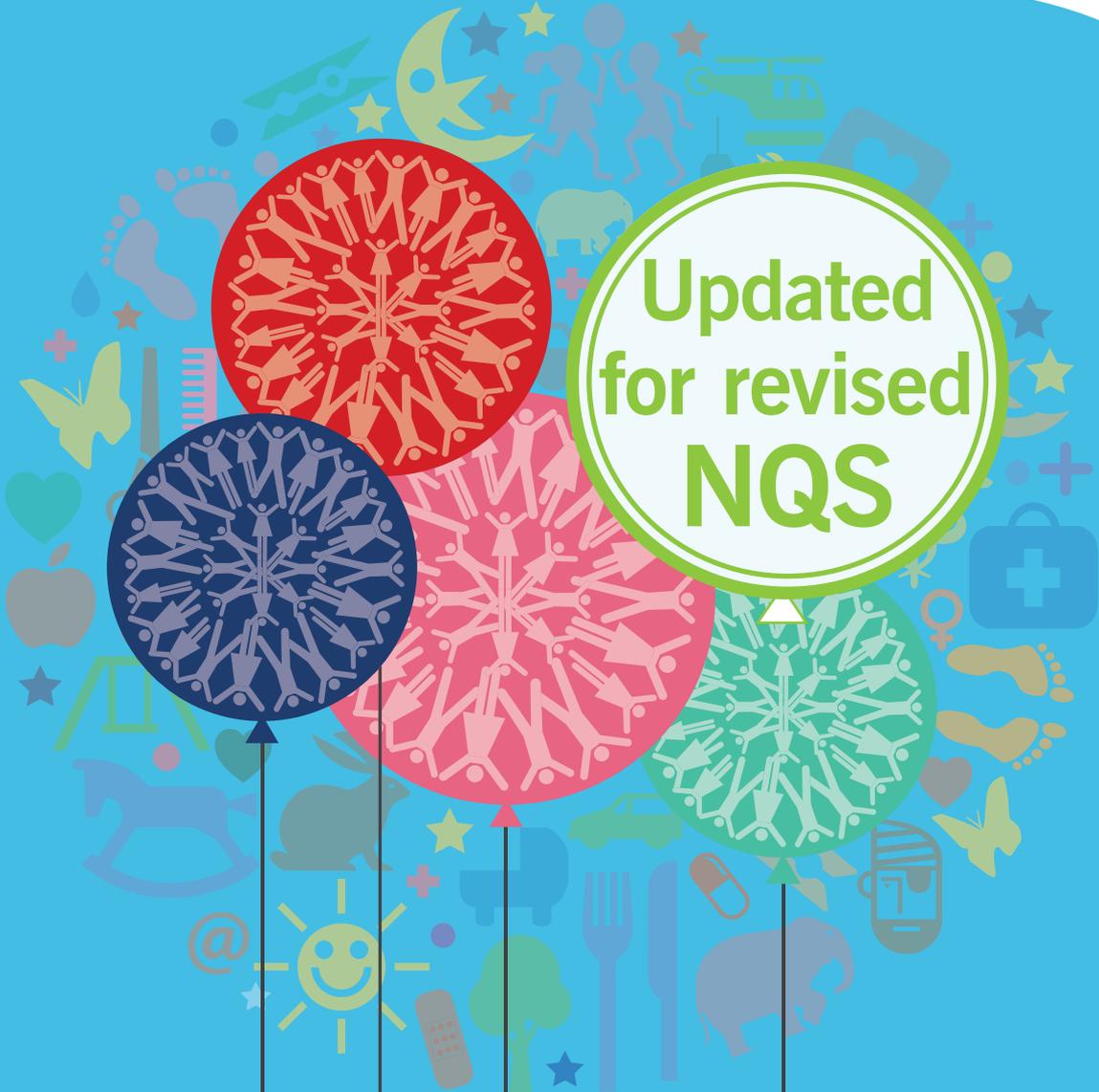


CHCECE019

Facilitate compliance in an education and care service



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



aspire
learning resources

CHCECE019

Facilitate compliance in an education and care service

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE019 Facilitate compliance in an education and care service*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Analysing and clarifying components of the NQF

1B Confirming that staff understand the NQF and the assessment and rating process

Interpreting the National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) underpins education and care practices within Australian regulated services. You need to be aware of the framework's components that are relevant to your service, and be able to navigate and interpret the appropriate standards and overall framework. In particular, you need to understand the assessment and rating process, which measures a service's ability to provide quality education and care to children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
✓	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

1A Analysing and clarifying components of the NQF

As an educator, you need to be aware of the components and application of the NQF, which provides the foundation for education and care practices within Australian regulated services.

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the independent national body that guides the implementation of the NQF. ACECQA educates and informs the community, the education and care industry, and the government about current research and best practice across Australia.



NQF overview

The NQF aims to improve education and care in:

- ▶ long day care
- ▶ family day care
- ▶ preschool/kindergarten
- ▶ outside school hours care.

The NQF brings these services together under a national approach to ensure they provide high-quality education and care, and that the education and care industry is better recognised and supported. Each service is registered through a ratings and assessment process.

Every education and care service must have the relevant NQF documents and supporting materials on-site at all times. They can also be accessed online at the ACECQA website at: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa>

Components of the NQF

The NQF consists of a number of documents, outlined in the following table.

Component	Intent
The National Quality Standard (NQS)	Provides details of what is expected in best practice.
Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations	Provides a legislative framework. Outlines the assessment and rating system.
<i>Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia</i> (EYLF)	Outlines the goals, principles, practices and outcomes representing early childhood (0–5 years).
<i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia</i> (MTOF)	Outlines the goals, principles, practices and outcomes representing middle childhood (6–12 years).

The National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) contains seven quality areas relating to all aspects of the education and care services environment. These quality areas are broken down into standards and further broken down into elements, which describe expected best practice.

For more information, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (found at <http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf>), which details the quality areas, standards and associated elements, including references, links and an assessment guide.

The NQS quality areas and standards are listed in the following table.

Quality area	Standard
1: Educational program and practice	1.1 The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
	1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
	1.3 Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
2: Children's health and safety	2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
	2.2 Each child is protected.
3: Physical environment	3.1 The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
	3.2 The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.
4: Staffing arrangements	4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
	4.2 Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
5: Relationships with children	5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
	5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
	6.2 Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
7: Governance and leadership	7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
	7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

National law and regulations

The Education and Care Services National Law forms the foundation of the NQF. A key part of this is the assessment and rating process, which is used to regulate all registered education and care services. A regulatory authority in each state and territory takes the role of assessment and, from this assessment, rates the service within the following six levels:

1. Excellent rating (the criteria for this rating level is determined by ACECQA)
2. Exceeding NQS
3. Meeting NQS
4. Working towards NQS
5. Significant improvement required
6. Provisional – not yet assessed (services that have not yet been assessed and rated)

Visit ACECQA's website at <http://aspirelr.link/nqs-ratings> to download the National Quality Standard Ratings, or to learn more access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* at <http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf>

You can subscribe to a newsletter through the ACECQA website, which provides up-to-date information on how services are working towards the assessment and rating processes, along with other information of current interest, including changes made to the NQF.

The assessment and rating process is described in more detail in section 1B.

National learning frameworks

The national learning frameworks you may work with are:

- ▶ *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF)*
- ▶ *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia (MTOF).*

These frameworks encourage educators to design each day's activities to match the children's interests, needs, personal experiences, abilities and understanding. They encourage you to see children as individuals, and to challenge yourself and those you work with to meet children's various needs through planned and spontaneous activities. The frameworks are based on a system of goals and objectives with core principles and practices.

The principles of the learning frameworks are:

- ▶ Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- ▶ Partnerships
- ▶ High expectations and equity
- ▶ Respect for diversity
- ▶ Ongoing learning and reflective practice



EYLF practices	MTOF practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Holistic approaches ▶ Responsiveness to children ▶ Learning through play ▶ Intentional teaching ▶ Learning environments ▶ Cultural competence ▶ Continuity of learning and transitions ▶ Assessment for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Holistic approaches ▶ Collaboration with children ▶ Learning through play ▶ Intentionality ▶ Environments ▶ Cultural competence ▶ Continuity and transitions ▶ Evaluation for wellbeing and learning

Overall goals and learning outcomes

The frameworks separate goals into two categories: overall goals, and broad and long-term goals, known as learning outcomes. These are outlined in the following table.

Overall goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Belonging is about how children connect to people and places. Children need to know where and with whom they belong.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Being is the art of childhood. It is about children exploring and building in the present moment, and how these activities contribute to their learning and the way they experience the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Becoming is about the changes that occur in a child's life and the processes that occur to allow them to move from now (being) to this new self that participates fully. Becoming can be identified through the emotions that are expressed or actions that you notice, such as pride, cooperation, application of skills, happiness, high self-esteem, wellbeing, achievement and mastery.
Learning outcomes
<p>Broad and long-term goals are known as the five learning outcomes, and provide for all learning that a child is likely to encounter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity. ▶ Outcome 2: Children are connected to and contribute to their world. ▶ Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing. ▶ Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners. ▶ Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators. <p>Under each of these five outcomes, there are more specific sub-outcomes that provide clarification of meaning.</p>

Other legislation, standards and policies

All educators need to understand a range of other documentation that impacts on the service and underpins the work carried out. This information includes:

- ▶ the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ relevant legislation (including privacy and health and safety legislation)
- ▶ state and territory frameworks
- ▶ codes of ethics
- ▶ service policies, procedures and position descriptions.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child makes a commitment to the protection of children by outlining children's rights and the responsibilities governments and parents have to provide for these rights.

The Australian Government has agreed to undertake the obligations of the Convention, which outlines the minimum standards governments must meet in providing adequate services and support for children and their families in the areas of healthcare, education, and legal, civil and social services. The Convention signifies the international community's recognition that children, as human beings, are entitled to the full enjoyment of human dignity.

Some developments in Australia that support the Convention include:

- ▶ implementation of a federally based access and equity policy in education and care services that has as its priorities the accommodation of children with disabilities, children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children at risk of abuse and neglect
- ▶ application of mandatory reporting in some form in most states and territories
- ▶ introduction of the NQF, including the adoption of regulations and standards, and voluntary codes of practice in education and care services
- ▶ development of and adherence to the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics.

Educators can demonstrate support and respect for children by:

- ▶ planning child-focused programs
- ▶ listening to children's views and providing information
- ▶ adapting their plans to address family structure and cultural differences
- ▶ listening to parents' views
- ▶ using positive and culturally appropriate physical contact
- ▶ remembering that children's individual capabilities differ, and planning accordingly
- ▶ allowing children to make real choices relating to activities, food and routines
- ▶ adhering to a code of ethics that provides for an effective framework for care and protection as set out in the Convention.

Relevant legislation

There are many important statutory and regulatory requirements that you need to be aware of and comply with. These requirements may be federal (Commonwealth) or state/territory specific. Legislation that impacts on your work as an educator is outlined in the following table.

Legislation area	Explanation
Child protection and guardianship legislation	<p>State and territory governments are responsible for child protection services.</p> <p>You can find the relevant Act and other legislative details at: http://aspirelr.link/child-protection</p> <p>The key principles of child protection legislation are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ act in the best interests of the child ▶ intervene early ▶ support permanent and stable care for children. <p>You may need to refer to this legislation if you deal with custody orders or if you need to report suspected child abuse.</p>
Discrimination and harassment	<p>The following are federal Acts relating to discrimination and harassment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> ▶ <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986</i> ▶ <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> ▶ <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> ▶ <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> <p>These Acts guide you in maintaining a non-biased service and in supporting others to ensure equality.</p>
Health and safety	<p>Health and safety legislation, such as the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Cth), is designed to protect the health and safety of all persons in the workplace, and sets out the health and safety rights and duties of everyone in the workplace. Each state and territory has its own health and safety legislation.</p> <p>Under health and safety legislation, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ take reasonable care for your own health and safety ▶ not adversely affect the health and safety of others ▶ comply with any reasonable instruction given by your manager ▶ cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety in the workplace.
Privacy	<p>The <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) aims to regulate and protect the handling of personal information about individuals.</p> <p>The key to effective compliance is in developing an organisational culture that respects privacy. Your service must ensure that management and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in protecting personal information from misuse, loss, corruption or disclosure.</p>

Legislation area	Explanation
Freedom of information	<p>The <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Cth) provides a legally enforceable right for any person to access information about themselves held by the government.</p> <p>In your service, records held by ACECQA are government records, which means you have a right to access most of them under the Act.</p> <p>You can find out more about the Act and ACECQA at: http://aspirelr.link/freedom-of-information</p>

State and territory frameworks

There are other relevant frameworks for each state and territory. These form an important part of how you meet children’s needs. Here are some examples.

State and territory frameworks	Website
The Curriculum Framework for kindergarten to year 12 education in Western Australia	http://aspirelr.link/wa-k10-framework
The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework	http://aspirelr.link/veyldf-pdf

Being familiar with the regulations of your state or territory will enable you to put them into practice as part of your daily work. They also allow you to:

- ▶ ensure your own legal safety
- ▶ understand your obligations
- ▶ contribute to policy and procedure development
- ▶ support others in understanding their work roles
- ▶ confidently accept responsibility for your own actions
- ▶ provide correct and clear information to parents.

Codes of ethics

A code of ethics is a written set of guidelines that educators can use to:

- ▶ maintain standards of practice for educators; for example, using positive guidance techniques rather than practices that do not comply with the National Standard or UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as smacking, force-feeding or humiliating children
- ▶ help to protect children who are powerless and vulnerable
- ▶ help to make the right decisions in difficult situations (ethical dilemmas) that have no clear right or wrong response.

The ECA Code of Ethics has been developed for people in Australia who work with young children. You may find a copy of this at your workplace, in either a published booklet or illustrated poster, or you can access it online at <http://aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics>

Service policies, procedures and position descriptions

Each education and care service develops its own philosophy, policies and procedures that are unique to the individual service, but are based on national legislation, child-centred practice, duty of care and quality assurance.

If you follow the service's policies and procedures, you can be confident that you will be meeting the requirements of legislation and standards.

A position description is a document given to staff when they are employed. It describes the boundaries of a person's job and the skills required to perform that job, including the purpose of the position, key responsibilities, specific tasks, key performance indicators, accountability structure and reporting arrangements, and the terms and conditions of employment relating to the position.

Position descriptions vary because they reflect each centre's philosophy, structure and objectives. Make sure you understand your role and responsibilities, and how they relate to the NQF and relevant legislation. Seek clarification and advice from your manager if necessary.

Watch these videos to learn more about working in line with policies and procedures.



Analysing the NQF requirements

Once you have a firm understanding of how the NQF and other legislation influences your work, and how the assessment and rating system operates, you can then consider how it impacts on your daily curriculum, as described in the following table.

Component	Related area	Workplace example
Standards	Quality improvement plan (QIP)	All stakeholders must participate in self-assessment to advise the QIP.
	Timing and preparation for scheduled visits and prepared materials	All stakeholders should be prepared and aware of the necessary procedures to undertake during visits.
	Assessment arrangements and applications	Directors and supervisors may be responsible for applications. All staff must demonstrate knowledge of the NQF and how it applies in the service.
	Partnerships with parents and the community	Educators work with parents to understand an infant's daily routine to ensure their needs are met.
	Leadership	Leaders and mentors must be in place within the service. An educational leader informs and supports curriculum development.

Component	Related area	Workplace example
Regulations and legislation	Child protection	Educators must follow their duty of care to ensure children are cared for in a safe environment.
	Privacy and confidentiality	Information relating to children must only be accessible to authorised personnel.
	Health and safety and first aid	Safety audits should be conducted regularly to ensure a safe and healthy environment.
	Emergencies	All staff, children, parents and visitors should understand the service's emergency procedures.
	Staffing ratios	Always make sure each activity and/or room has the correct staff-to-child ratio.
	Qualifications for educational leader and early childhood teaching roles	Regulations require all staff to be qualified or to be working towards an early childhood education qualification.
	Excursions	Risk assessments must be conducted prior to excursions taking place.
	Medical conditions and medication	Recording medication administration is a requirement. Staff must be trained to manage allergy and anaphylaxis.
	Space requirements	Services must provide appropriate space per child in the indoor and outdoor environment.
Frameworks	<p>Frameworks cover the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ philosophy, mission, vision ▶ educational program ▶ relationships with children ▶ relationships with parents ▶ curriculum. 	<p>The development of a holistic curriculum.</p> <p>Programs and curriculum must all reflect the service and stakeholder philosophy, goals and vision.</p>

Seeking advice

As discussed, all educators must understand the NQF and its components, and be able to identify their relevance to the service in which they are working. It is your responsibility to implement these structures and participate in an assessment and rating process. To do this you need to be able to clearly explain your practices and demonstrate your knowledge of the principles of education and care provision.

If you require support to learn more about the NQF, or have questions or concerns, there is a range of methods for finding out information, as outlined in the following table.

Type of information	Who can help	Where can you find support
The NQF	Educational leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In your service
	Professional development or training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Child Family Community Australia (CFCA): http://aspirelr.link/cfca ▶ Membership support, e.g. Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA): http://aspirelr.link/ccsa ▶ Early Childhood Resource Hub http://aspirelr.link/ecrh ▶ Conferences ▶ Registered training organisation (RTO), e.g. One World for Children
Assessment and rating system	State/territory regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact details can be found on the ACECQA website at: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-contact
Qualification requirements or approvals	ACECQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ACECQA: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa
Complaints and concerns	ACECQA State/territory regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact details can be found on the ACECQA website at: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-contact

Example

Clarifying an issue

Dora holds a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and is keen to work with school-age children, but isn't sure if her qualifications are applicable. She goes online to the ACECQA website and looks up the qualification guidelines. Dora finds that, in her state of Western Australia, she is recognised as qualified to work in a school-age service.

Practice task 1

1. Check a service's philosophy and identify whether it reflects the NQS, EYLF or MTOP. How do you think these components add depth to the philosophy?

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.....

.....

.....

2. List the **four** sub-outcomes of EYLF/MTOP Outcome 1: 'Children have a strong sense of identity.'

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3. Seek advice about the role of an educational leader. What qualification must this person hold? Are there experience requirements? Explain how you found your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1B Confirming that staff understand the NQF and the assessment and rating process

All educators must understand and implement the components of the NQF to ensure they are providing quality education and care to children.

As discussed in section 1A, a key component of the NQF is the assessment and rating process.

The assessment and rating process

The assessment and rating process is mandatory for registered services that are approved to provide education and care to children under the NQF.



There is a strict procedural format to the process, which is undertaken by the regulatory authority for each state or territory. Sufficient notice is given to the service so that it can gather the required documentation and prepare for the assessment visit.

The process is as follows:

1. Self-assessment and quality improvement occur continually throughout the service.
2. The service is contacted and informed of an impending visit.
3. The service is required to submit a quality improvement plan to the regulatory authority prior to the visit.
4. The regulatory authority nominates a date for the visit.
5. During the visit, the regulatory authority representative observes activities at the service, discusses the service practices with personnel and sights relevant documentation. The seven quality areas of the quality improvement plan are rated, and the standards and elements, which underpin the seven quality areas, are assessed. Regulations are also assessed.
6. A draft report is provided to the service.
7. The service provides feedback on the draft.
8. A final report is developed and notice of final ratings issued.
9. The service provides feedback regarding the final report and can apply for a review of the final ratings within a set period.
10. A rating is provided to the service and published on the national register at <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-registers>

Be aware of the process and what happens on a visit so that you are fully prepared. If you are unclear about the assessment and rating process, speak to your director or your educational leader, who is responsible for supporting all educators in implementing high-quality programs. These people understand the NQF and will have experience in an assessment and rating process.

To find out more about the process, visit ACECQA’s website at: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessments>

The assessment and rating process is discussed in full in Topic 4.

Communicating information

All staff need to be aware of their obligations under the NQF so they can carry out their work effectively, assist in preparing a quality improvement plan and respond to questions during an assessment and rating visit. It may be your responsibility to confirm that others understand the standards, regulations and legislation, including the assessment and rating process. This may be done through specific information sessions, discussions on how the NQF relates to work practice, asking questions and listening to co-workers’ experiences and how they implement the framework.

Sharing information in a collaborative manner fosters growth, support and professionalism among the work team. Contributing to discussions and listening to colleagues can provide support and encouragement for one another and stimulate learning and development.

There are many ways to share information and support educators and other staff to increase their awareness of the service in relation to the NQF. Some of these are outlined in the following table.

Communication method	How/why the method may be used
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To provide an overview of the NQF and people’s obligations ▶ To share information with a wide range of people ▶ To gain opinions and share ideas ▶ To reflect on ideas and questions the group has been thinking about
Electronic presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To provide accessible information when required ▶ To provide clear and focused information ▶ To provide support during a meeting
Brainstorming sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To gain a range of ideas ▶ To look at a topic or issue from different perspectives
Emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To ask specific questions ▶ To send particular information ▶ To send links to others about various sections of the NQF on ACECQA’s website ▶ To invite people to participate ▶ To prepare people for a meeting or other event

Communication method	How/why the method may be used
Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To ask specific questions ▶ To gain focused responses ▶ To gain a variety of perspectives ▶ To debate appropriate practice
Information kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To provide information with supporting documentation or resources ▶ To put together a range of linked information and resources; for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i>, which includes a range of information to better understand the NQS, as well as a full guide to the evidence that would be expected for each element – <i>Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia</i> or <i>Educators' guide to the framework for school age care in Australia</i>, which includes extended information about the goals, principles, practices and outcomes, while also providing educator stories and models for practice
Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To display particular information for view or comment
Noticeboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To display ideas ▶ To display specific messages
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To share details, outcomes or information with a large group of people ▶ To advertise offers of further information-sharing ideas
Professional development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To meet regulation criteria ▶ To gain specialist or professional guidance
Circles of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To provide the opportunity for open discussion with peers
Professional learning program videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To access outside views ▶ To access information, video and discussion plans
One-to-one discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To work together on plans or particular topics of importance ▶ To focus on a topic specifically to meet one person's needs
Graffiti sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To gain the opinions or feedback of a range of people

Communication method	How/why the method may be used
Quizzes or questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To stimulate thought and encourage interest, discussion and learning ▶ Strategies such as the following might be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – multiple-choice questions – finish the sentence – matching pairs – true or false – pick the right response – timed completion tasks – sequence activity – word hunts – crosswords – Google challenges – circle the right answer – circle the best option – cryptograms

Some questions you may consider are:

- ▶ What approach has been the most successful for you?
- ▶ How do you incorporate a particular practice?
- ▶ Which learning outcomes are you focused on for a particular child?
- ▶ Are there any aspects of the NQF you are unsure about?

SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis can be used to identify the positive aspects of the service you work in, and clarify the areas of the service that may require improvement. A SWOT analysis session may be used to engage staff in identifying how the service currently applies the NQS, and where improvements could be made. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that impact on the service, while opportunities and threats are external factors. In the context of the service, examples of the four areas are:

- ▶ Strengths – standards already being demonstrated strongly in your service
- ▶ Weaknesses – standards where change can be instigated to enhance the practices of the service
- ▶ Opportunities – areas of potential change to meet the standards more appropriately
- ▶ Threats – actions that threaten the ability of the service to meet the standards

Example

Ensuring staff understand the NQF

Edith, an educator, prepares to present information at a staff meeting. She wants to talk to the other educators about the natural environment (NQS Standard 3.2) and how their development of a vegetable garden will be beneficial to the children and help meet this requirement.

At the meeting, Edith plays a video and uses supporting documentation to create discussion that includes:

- ▶ focus points
- ▶ key EYLF concepts
- ▶ key NQS links
- ▶ a viewing guide with questions to ask to start discussion, and ways to look more deeply at the learning and teaching.

Edith asks questions to make sure everyone understands how the activity links and complies with the NQF, and how each person’s role contributes to the service’s overall obligations. This is essential knowledge that will help the educators respond appropriately to questions during an assessment and rating visit.

Practice task 2

1. What would you say if you wanted to confirm an educator’s understanding of Element 2.1.1 of the NQS?

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2. Why is the assessment and rating process important to a service, and what are the responsibilities of staff when a representative of the regulating authority visits the service?

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Summary

- ▶ All educators must be aware of the components and application of the NQF because it provides the foundation for education and care practice within Australian regulated services.
- ▶ The NQF is made up of the NQS, Education and Care Services National Law, the Education and Care National Regulations, and the national learning frameworks: the EYLF and the MTOP.
- ▶ Other relevant legislation, regulations and standards that educators must be aware of include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, privacy, and health and safety legislation, frameworks developed by the relevant state or territory, codes of ethics, and service policies, procedures and position descriptions.
- ▶ Always confirm your understanding with a higher authority if necessary, such as an educational leader, state/or territory regulator or ACECQA.
- ▶ The assessment and rating process is mandatory for registered services that are approved to provide education and care to children under the NQF.
- ▶ Once you have a firm understanding of how the NQF influences your work, and how the assessment and rating system operates, you need to be aware of how it impacts your daily curriculum.
- ▶ Provide a range of strategies to inform staff of the NQF and clarify their understanding, such as through meetings, question and brainstorming sessions, noticeboards and use of DVDs.



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Collecting information and involving others

2B Recording and using information

Facilitating an organisation's self-assessment

An important part of an education and care service's business practice is to regularly self-assess its performance in relation to the NQF to ensure its transparency and accountability, maintain the quality of the service it provides, and collect evidence for the assessment and rating process.

To be effective, self-assessment must be open and honest so that it provides, reliable information that encourages and supports the service towards continuous improvement.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

2A Collecting information and involving others

A self-assessment process is required to gather information from stakeholders (including service management personnel, staff, parents, children and members of the community) to assist you to:

- ▶ identify how the service meets stakeholder needs
- ▶ ensure the service follows appropriate standards and regulations
- ▶ prepare the service for external review
- ▶ improve the quality of care provided to children and parents
- ▶ identify areas of education and care that can be improved
- ▶ identify the skills and knowledge needed to further develop the care environment
- ▶ assess the service's readiness to develop additional skills and knowledge.



Identifying relevant information

You need to collect a range of information to determine how well your service is operating, including:

- ▶ documents relating to the NQF that identify required performance
- ▶ organisational data, including evidence of your rating from a previous assessment and rating process
- ▶ feedback from parents and children
- ▶ information from staff performance appraisals that shows how educators comply with the NQF
- ▶ comments from community members.

Watch this video to learn more about recording relevant information.



NQF information

The following table lists the documents that help you identify outcomes and performance levels, and where to access further evidence to support your service's competence in relation to the NQF.

Aspect of the NQF	Document	Where to find performance evidence examples
National Quality Standard (NQS)	<p><i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i> – this guide breaks down the quality areas, standards and elements, and provides links to other resources such as the regulations and frameworks.</p> <p>It also provides a guide to the evidence against which assessors will be measuring your service.</p>	http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf
<i>Being, belonging and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia</i> (EYLF)	<p><i>Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia</i> is the curriculum framework that supports the NQS.</p> <p>It extends on the principles, practices and outcomes, and provides examples of how services can implement the EYLF.</p> <p>It includes a variety of story types and ideas for thought and reflection.</p>	http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf
<i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia</i> (MTOP)	<p><i>Educators' guide to the framework for school age care in Australia</i> is the curriculum framework that supports the NQS.</p> <p>It extends on the principles, practices and outcomes, and provides examples of how services can implement the MTOP.</p> <p>It includes a variety of story types and ideas for thought and reflection.</p>	http://aspirelr.link/mtop-educator-guide-pdf
Education and Care Services National Regulations	<p><i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i> – this guide assists education and care service providers to understand the regulations, and provides examples of how providers, services and supervisors may meet their obligations under the regulations.</p>	http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf
Assessment and rating process	There is a range of resources related to assessment and rating.	http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessment-ratings-resources
Quality improvement plan (QIP)	QIP template and the <i>Guide to developing a quality improvement plan</i> can be used to develop a QIP.	http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans

Collecting information

Collecting information and feedback should occur on a regular, ongoing basis. Involve others as much as possible and always inform people why the information is being collected and the benefits of a self-assessment. Including stakeholders in the collection process gives them the opportunity to be involved and to share ideas with you.

For example, make sure everyone knows the process for providing feedback, including who they can go to with either a positive or negative comment. Invite people to let you know if they feel changes are required. Share ideas and information through newsletters and notices so that everyone feels acknowledged and part of the decision-making process and operation of the service.

Determine the most efficient and effective ways to collect information and feedback from stakeholders; for example:

- ▶ an informal conversation with a parent
- ▶ meetings or discussions, including team meetings
- ▶ interviews
- ▶ research
- ▶ observation
- ▶ focus groups
- ▶ questionnaires and surveys
- ▶ feedback forms
- ▶ performance appraisals.

Watch this video to learn more about gathering information and advice.



Organisational data

It is essential that your service has in place the appropriate documents and records that provide evidence of your organisation's compliance with quality assurance, regulations and other legislation. These may include business plans, policies and procedures, procedural forms, checklists, audit reports, and assessment and rating process documents.

Feedback from parents and children

Record any formal or informal feedback received from parents, other carers and children. Feedback may be the results of informal chats at drop-off and pick-up times, observation of children at play, formal meetings, interviews and questionnaires/surveys.

Staff performance appraisals

Read the results of regular performance appraisals to determine how well educators are carrying out their responsibilities, contributing to the quality of the service provided and complying with the NQF. Also consider the results of your own performance appraisal in terms of how you can improve your practice.

Comments from community members

You may receive positive and/or negative feedback about the service from people outside of it, such as public bodies, government agencies, local council members or members of the public. Community members are important to the success of your service and can contribute in many ways. Evidence of community contributions show that your service is willing and open to involve the community. You can take photos or record minutes of meetings, diarise discussions or provide thank-you certificates that you keep copies of.

Methods of collecting information

Some methods of collecting information and feedback are outlined in the following table.

Information/ feedback type	How to collect the information
Document research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Check that the service's business plan and other documents reflect current legislation, standards and guidelines. ▶ Read safety and performance audits and match the results with NQF standards. ▶ Read the quality improvement plan and identify whether improvements are being made as required. ▶ Check that organisational forms are easy to understand, and are being completed correctly and as required.
Informal interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Take notice of what is said to you during conversations and other informal situations. This type of feedback is generally honest and can be a valuable source of information about what is right or wrong with the service. ▶ You can talk to parents at pick-up time, or chat to children about an activity they have just completed.
Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Arrange formal discussions to identify strengths of the service and where improvements can be made. Brainstorming sessions can be useful in this respect.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings offer the opportunity for everyone involved to participate in decision-making, goal setting, clarifying information and sharing ideas. ▶ Be prepared with questions and encourage people to share information about their needs, changes and solutions. ▶ Ensure that everyone participates. Encourage debate and discussion and, at the end of the meeting, summarise any decisions made.
Regular team meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Team meetings provide opportunities to raise and resolve issues in relation to a particular area. ▶ Meetings can also be used for acknowledgment and praise for best practice, an idea or a solution.

Information/ feedback type	How to collect the information
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ You may wish to organise a formal interview with prepared questions for parents to investigate a specific area of complaint or a particular strength.
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Watch children as they go about their activities to identify enjoyment, that activities are appropriate and challenging and that they encourage development in all areas. Note whether NQS elements are being met, such as whether the children are exploring their interests and using their own ideas for their play (Element 1.1.2). ▶ Check that there is a balance of natural and artificial lighting, good ventilation and fresh air; appropriate areas for food preparation and storage; quiet areas for resting or sleeping; and adequate and accessible toilet and hand-washing facilities (Element 3.1.1). ▶ Checklists are useful tools when making observations.
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A focus group can target a particular issue and provide valuable feedback and insight. A facilitator provides questions to stimulate discussion. Participants should feel they can be honest and candid in their responses.
Questionnaires, surveys, feedback forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use a range of formal avenues to gather information about the service's performance. For example, the service may have a feedback sheet that asks parents to respond on a regular basis concerning their satisfaction (or otherwise) with the service. ▶ A survey may be sent to stakeholders following the introduction of a new practice or procedure to gauge people's opinions. ▶ Ensure there is an end date for receiving the feedback and that responses are collated, analysed and results provided to everyone.
Performance appraisals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use the information from performance appraisals to identify how well staff are complying with the NQF, and where skills and knowledge require improvement. A performance appraisal also provides the opportunity for staff to discuss issues relating to service procedures, where they believe improvements may be made and to identify professional development needs.

2B Recording and using information

The information you obtain from a self-assessment process must be recorded. The service should have a record of their strengths and where they may not be fully compliant with the NQF, and should make this information available to authorised officers when they visit as part of the assessment and rating process.



Recording and presenting information

Record-keeping should include:

- ▶ details of the information
- ▶ who provided feedback
- ▶ why the feedback was provided
- ▶ the date it was provided
- ▶ follow-up action taken.

Include the documentation used to gather the information, such as survey forms, the service's quality improvement plan, interview questions or performance appraisal notes. You may also wish to include photographs.

The service may have a pro forma or template into which you can enter the information you have obtained against the standards and elements in the NQF. This can help identify how the service is performing and where improvements may be made. Be aware that although all elements of the NQS are important, not all of them will be relevant to your information collection. However, each quality area should be addressed. If no pro forma is available, catalogue the self-assessment information by the collection method you used; for example, document research, interviews or surveys, so that it can be found easily.

Check that the information recorded is clear, accurate, complete, non-biased and current. Once the information is recorded, you need to analyse and summarise the information, and present it in an easy, accessible format.

Watch this video on recording information about children.



Example

Summarising information

The following example shows how an educator summarised information she recorded about Quality Area 2.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
Information	Results
Summary of strengths	Parents feel their children have developed excellent relationships with educators and that children are well supervised. The hygiene practices used are adequate as there are minimal issues related to spread of infectious disease.
Key improvements sought	Some parents feel that their cultural dietary requirements are not provided for and would prefer that their children were offered sandwiches each day (Element 2.1.3).

Making results available

The results of your self-assessment process must be made available to all stakeholders so they know their input has been acknowledged. The results are also used in discussions to develop a quality improvement plan for an assessment and rating process.

Self-assessment results may be provided in a range of ways, depending on the audience; for example:

- ▶ Management may require a comprehensive report that documents the process; the results against NQS standards and elements; implications for continuous improvement; and follow-up strategies.
- ▶ Staff members may be informed at staff meetings or specific information sessions; through information displayed on noticeboards; in emails or email attachments.
- ▶ Parents may be informed of the self-assessment results through newsletters, information sessions, or the service's website or Facebook page.

Always consider confidentiality and ensure you only include information relevant to the group you are providing it to. For example, while you may include the names of individual families in a report to a service owner, this may be inappropriate if you are addressing a parent committee.

Also ensure the language used is appropriate to the audience. For example, parents may not be familiar with the terminology and processes used in education and care services, such as NQF, elements and the assessment and rating process. Similarly, some people may speak English as a second language or have language difficulties, so make sure the information is accessible to them in easy-to-understand language using graphics or images to assist understanding, and that any specific terminology is explained.

Discussing the self-assessment

The results of the self-assessment are used to develop a quality improvement plan (see Topic 3) and to inform the assessment and rating process (see Topic 4), so all stakeholders should be given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the results.

Provide opportunities for the discussions to take place, either formally or informally, once the results of a self-assessment have been made available. This may include an information session, feedback box or conversations in a meeting room during breaks. Take note of any further ideas or suggestions that arise from these discussions.

Practice task 4

1. Use the information you gathered from a stakeholder in Practice task 3 to write a paragraph on the strengths this person identified and the areas they noted for improvement.

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2. Record this information against the relevant quality areas and elements.

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3. Explain how you could provide an opportunity for the stakeholder to discuss the results.

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Summary

- ▶ An important part of the NQF assessment and rating process is the self-assessment process.
- ▶ A self-assessment process is required to gather information from stakeholders (including service management personnel, staff, parents, children and members of the community) to assist you to identify how well the service follows appropriate standards and regulations and meets stakeholder needs.
- ▶ You need to collect a range of information to determine how well your service is operating, including documents relating to the NQF, organisational records, feedback from parents and children, and comments from community members.
- ▶ Use a range of methods to collect information, such as research, informal interactions, discussions, formal meetings, observations, focus groups, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, feedback forms and performance appraisals.
- ▶ Record the information as evidence of the service's strengths and weaknesses, and make it available to authorised officers when they visit as part of the assessment and rating process.
- ▶ The information recorded must be clear, accurate, complete, non-biased and current.
- ▶ Self-assessment results should be provided in a range of ways, depending on the audience, such as in a formal report, meetings, newsletters or on the service website, so all stakeholders are given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the results.
- ▶ Self-assessment results are used to develop a quality improvement plan and to inform the assessment and rating process.

Learning checkpoint 2

Facilitating an organisation's self-assessment

Choose one element from the NQS and use this to complete the following tasks.

1. Develop a method for gathering self-assessment information from stakeholders (parents, children, educators, community members etc.) about how the service meets the element you have chosen. Maintain confidentiality of the stakeholders and the service.

The information should identify:

- ▶ whether the service is meeting the element
- ▶ how the service meets the stakeholders' needs in regard to this element
- ▶ how the stakeholders feel their service might be improved to meet this element.

2. Include a summary showing the results of the information you gathered against the level of performance required by the NQF.

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3. Where in a service might you present a display of the information you gathered so that discussion might occur around its results?

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Creating a quality improvement plan

3B Planning to collaborate

Facilitating the development of a quality improvement plan

A quality assurance process (such as an organisational self-assessment) identifies gaps in your service's performance by highlighting the level of service currently provided, then measuring the results against the level of performance required by the NQF.

From the results of a self-assessment, a service prepares a quality improvement plan (QIP) as a framework for future practices, as well as to inform authorities of the service's intentions during the assessment and rating process.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Creating a quality improvement plan

A quality improvement plan is used to record self-assessment and quality improvement information. It is also part of the assessment and rating process, as it is the evidence that demonstrates your service's progress.

Quality improvement plans

The NQF assessment and rating process requires that all registered education and care services develop a QIP, and to have it available at the service at all times. The QIP follows this process of development:

1. Self-assessment occurs.
2. Consultation and review occurs.
3. The QIP is developed.

The QIP is requested by the state or territory authority when they commence their assessment and rating process for the particular service. The assessment and rating process is as follows:

Steps for assessment and rating:

- 1 The service is advised that the assessment and rating process has begun.
- 2 The updated QIP must be submitted within six weeks.
- 3 The service receives a receipt advising that the QIP has been received.
- 4 The assessment and rating process is undertaken.
- 5 The rating is finalised.

The QIP must reflect the information you received as part of your self-assessment. ACECQA provides a QIP template that includes:

- ▶ information about the service, its philosophy and its context
- ▶ a summary of the quality of practice and strengths identified through self-assessment for each quality area and element, matched against the national regulations and the NQS



- ▶ key improvements and how they are linked to the standards and elements of the quality areas
- ▶ an improvement plan that includes:
 - the goal or outcome
 - the priority level of the improvement
 - steps to achieve
 - success measures
 - time lines
 - progress notes.

A unique QIP may be developed by your service, as long as it contains this information.

For more information, access the ACECQA website at: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-quality-improvement-plan>. This site includes the downloadable *Guide to developing a quality improvement plan*.

Collaborating with others to develop the QIP

To develop a useful QIP, you should collaborate with families, children, educators, staff members, management and community agencies your service works with to identify the current strengths, service issues, key improvements, and goals, measures and time lines to implement these improvements.

Collaboration can take the form of:

- ▶ asking stakeholders questions
- ▶ visiting other services to see how they operate, especially in areas your service needs to improve on
- ▶ developing professional improvement workshops or visits
- ▶ attending meetings, conferences or seminars
- ▶ working with online tools, checking Facebook pages, LinkedIn and childcare, or education and care forums.

Analysing service strengths and areas for improvement

As discussed in Topic 2, you need to link the information obtained from the self-assessment to NQS quality areas and their elements, so that you can identify where the service is performing well. These should be listed in your documentation with evidence to support the conclusion.

Once you are clear about your service's strengths, and have identified areas to improve on, you can develop plans to target improvement areas with specific strategies, so these areas become strengths in the future. Consulting with others is a valuable strategy because everyone has different opinions and points of view. It is also part of an educator's responsibility to keep up to date with best practice and emerging trends in service delivery so they can contribute ideas and suggestions for improvements.

Example**Using information to inform the QIP**

During a self-assessment process, Royce, an educator, identifies that the service could improve on:

- ▶ Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
- ▶ Element 1.2.1: Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

He identifies this through conducting a performance appraisal and discussions with a number of educators, who explain that they are capable, but not confident, of implementing intentional teaching.

Royce attends a professional development session and realises that the service can improve on Element 1.2.1.

When Royce is preparing the QIP, he uses this information to target the area of improvement and identify how the improvement will be addressed.

Royce then discusses the situation with the educators to identify what they need to do to achieve this goal, and plans to have educators implementing high-quality examples of intentional teaching in the near future.

Producing a QIP

The next step in the self-assessment process is to collate all the information you have gathered and documented into a QIP.

In addition to completing the QIP form, you need to include documentary evidence to justify your plans. This may include survey results or meeting minutes that demonstrate how you identified and agreed on the strengths, issues and improvements, as well as how you involved others in the process.

Keep in mind the following questions that ACECQA has provided to education and care services when preparing their plan:

1. Does our statement of philosophy reflect a commitment to improvement?
2. Are our resources targeted to support our plans?
3. Are we collecting and using the right information to help our planning cycle?
4. How do we handle complaints?
5. How do we review our policies and procedures?

As the QIP is shared and implemented by all stakeholders so everyone can contribute to its successful implementation, make sure you use words, terms and language that everyone understands.

If it is your responsibility to prepare a QIP, ask a colleague to double check any facts and proofread the document to ensure it is correct.

To read more about QIP development go to: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans>. Here you will find a range of documents to support QIP development including templates and guides.

Example

Section of a completed QIP

Quality improvement plan

Quality area 7: Leadership and service management

Strengths	Elements 7.1.1 and 7.1.3: Educators are given an extensive induction process that provides them with a range of materials for ongoing reflection. The educators are initially given a buddy to work with, who helps demonstrate and discuss the service's policies and procedures. This ensures the new educator can form a strong relationship with staff, while learning how the service operates and how they can contribute in useful ways.
Element/s of weakness	Element 7.1.1: A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
Identified issue	Although our philosophy meets our needs, it was developed by our parent organisation and does not include aspects specific to the educators involved in the day-to-day operation of the service.
Key improvement sought	To have a service-specific philosophy that works alongside the overall organisational philosophy.
Priority	Medium
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact head office for approval and support. 2. Include discussion and analysis of methods for completing the philosophy at a staff meeting. 3. Put into place ideas for gathering philosophy information from all stakeholders. 4. Develop a draft philosophy. 5. Gain approval of the new philosophy from stakeholders and the organisation. 6. Promote the resulting philosophy to all stakeholders.
Measures of success	A new philosophy representing service-specific views and beliefs is in place.
Time line	May 2018
Progress notes	3 January 2018: Contacted head office to discuss possibility of developing a service-specific philosophy to work alongside the organisational philosophy.

Practice task 5

Access a blank template for a QIP.

Use the information you collected in Practice task 4 to complete a table similar to the following, for the particular quality area/elements you assessed.

Quality improvement plan	
Quality area:	
Strengths	
Element/s of weakness	
Identified issue	
Key improvement sought	

Consult with the stakeholder who provided information and ask them to check how you have completed the QIP details.

3B Planning to collaborate

The QIP is a living document that requires regular monitoring and review to ensure the service meets its compliance obligations, and that the plan becomes part of the service's continuous improvement cycle. A QIP begins with the self-assessment process, and is then updated regularly following an assessment and rating process to ensure it reflects areas that were highlighted as issues or requiring improvement.



A QIP that is being used effectively responds to growth and development within the service, and reflects:

- ▶ new information
- ▶ changes to service practices, procedures and priorities
- ▶ industry trends.

Scheduling collaboration

Schedule regular consultation and collaboration to ensure you remain on track, and to encourage all stakeholders to be involved. In your consultations, you should also ensure stakeholders are aware of the NQS and its impact on the service.

To keep track of scheduled events, create a calendar showing the dates you expect to implement each type of consultation, including collecting forms and surveys, and holding meetings and/or feedback events.

Example

Feedback collection calendar

Month	Information collection method/event
January	▶ Enrolment forms
February	▶ Routine update forms ▶ Cultural and lifestyle updates ▶ Staff meeting
March	▶ Stakeholder feedback night (BBQ and informal feedback opportunities) ▶ Staff meeting
April	▶ Staff meeting devoted to self-assessment
May	▶ Parent and educator meetings ▶ Staff meeting
June	▶ Continuous improvement strategies development update based on collected feedback; staff to participate in developing continuous improvement strategies
July	▶ Parents and community invited to participate ▶ Staff meeting

Month	Information collection method/event
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dreams and philosophies event ▶ Staff meeting
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Goals and objectives – How can you help? – promotion and feedback collection ▶ Staff meeting
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stakeholder information sharing night (BBQ and informal discussions) ▶ Staff meeting
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ New parent information sessions
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Staff meeting

Reviewing the QIP

Most QIPs are flexible and are changed, and adapted as goals are achieved or outcomes are altered. To ensure a QIP is responsive, include measurement and timing information (part of the template) to ensure the key improvement areas can be assessed and a new plan developed in line with current needs.

To monitor the plan effectively during its implementation, note:

- ▶ how often the QIP should be monitored
- ▶ who should monitor the QIP
- ▶ how the QIP will be monitored
- ▶ when and how the monitoring will take place.

When you monitor the progress of a QIP, you will soon notice whether or not it is achieving its goal or is not progressing. The earlier you recognise this, the more effectively you can adjust the plan and/or redevelop it to meet the service’s needs. In addition, you can intercept any negative outcomes that stakeholders have informed you of, such as:

- ▶ loss of respect or trust
- ▶ fear of or resistance to change
- ▶ in-fighting
- ▶ loss of direction
- ▶ feelings of inadequacy or misunderstanding.

When negative outcomes are experienced, discuss the situation with stakeholders to determine whether you need to:

- ▶ stop the QIP in the specific area and reconsider the goal or steps
- ▶ adjust the QIP to address any new information
- ▶ use discussion, clarification, professional development and training to continue the QIP.

ACECQA suggests that if you need clarification about QIP development, you should contact your state or territory regulatory authority.

Example

How educators review their QIPs

The following provides two examples of how educators review their QIPs.

1. Katrina develops a QIP. She tells the other educators that she will monitor the section relating to policy development, and add progress notes on a weekly basis to determine whether the policy is working and whether changes need to be made. She completes the monitoring of the QIP by speaking to each of the participants, and recording their responses in regard to progress, difficulties, delays and successes.
2. Linda develops a QIP relating to staff improving their hazard and risk assessment strategies. She indicates that the QIP will be monitored daily to check whether staff are meeting the outcomes/goals. She tells staff she will monitor the QIP by completing a checklist based on staff involvement and implementation of the strategies included in the plan. At the end of the month she will conduct a safety audit and share the results to determine whether further improvements are required.

Practice task 6

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You are reviewing part of the QIP that relates to the children’s program.

A key improvement is to involve a specialist in presenting a new planning method and to facilitate educator meetings to talk about how to implement the specialist’s ideas.

The specialist attends and demonstrates this method.

At the first staff meeting, some educators become upset as they feel the specialist has criticised their beliefs, and that the method presented is not in line with their philosophy or their understanding of the learning framework. They are not able to agree with the specialist’s ideas.

One of the staff members suggests an additional method she thinks would work well, as it is current, meets the learning framework and fits with the service’s philosophy.

1. Identify what action you would take if you were faced with this situation. Clarify if you would:
 - ▶ stop the QIP in this area and reconsider the goal or steps
 - ▶ adjust the QIP to meet any new information
 - ▶ use discussion, clarification, professional development and training to continue the QIP.

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2. Explain why you would choose the option you have selected.

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Summary

- ▶ A quality improvement plan (QIP) is used to record self-assessment and quality improvement information. It is also part of the assessment and rating process, as it is the evidence that demonstrates your service’s progress.
- ▶ A QIP provides a service with the opportunity to identify its strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- ▶ To develop a useful QIP, you should collaborate with families, children, educators, staff members, management and community agencies your service works with to identify:
 - current strengths
 - service issues
 - key improvements
 - goals, measures and time lines to implement improvements.
- ▶ Use the QIP template provided by ACECQA or your service’s own template to develop a QIP.
- ▶ Regularly review the QIP to ensure it is current and is part of the service’s continuous improvement cycle.
- ▶ Collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure reviews are comprehensive and take everyone’s ideas, suggestions and opinions into account.

Learning checkpoint 3

Facilitating the development of a quality improvement plan

Part A

Access the ACECQA QIP template at: <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans> or use the template used in your service.

1. Complete the QIP template using the quality area and elements you focused on in Learning checkpoint 2.

Include:

- ▶ a summary of strengths for this quality area
- ▶ key improvements sought for this quality area including the standard and/or element number and the identified issue/s
- ▶ an improvement plan that includes the goal or outcome you seek, the priority this plan has, how you will achieve the goal or outcome (steps) and a success measure (how you know you have succeeded).

Ensure you include best practice principles and emerging trends when focusing on key improvements.

2. Briefly outline how your completed QIP:

- ▶ correctly lists strengths
- ▶ accurately identifies improvements
- ▶ applies best practice principles and emerging trends in service delivery.

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3. Ask an educational leader or supervisor how often they would recommend the QIP be reviewed and how often they would add progress notes to the QIP. Record this information.

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Part B

Read the two case studies, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study 1

Part of a QIP relates to the children’s menu. It addresses the need for a dietitian to develop a new menu and consult with parents to identify each individual child’s needs. The plan is expected to take four weeks to implement.

The parents have identified their children’s individual needs and the dietitian has been given this information to add to the menu plan. Unfortunately, she has other commitments and five weeks later has not yet provided the new menu. When the director contacts her, she says the menu will be complete within a week, and also asks for staff to let her know their individual dietary needs.

Case study 2

Part of a QIP relates to the development of a new timetable for cleaning the bathroom; by the time educators are able to fit in this task during their work day, the bathroom often presents safety hazards such as slippery floors. The educators are involved in developing a more appropriate routine/timetable that meets everyone’s needs.

The next day a junior educator comes to you. She is upset as she thinks she hasn’t been cleaning the bathroom correctly and doesn’t understand how the procedure has changed.

1. Identify what action you would take in each scenario. Clarify if you would:
 - ▶ stop the QIP in this area and reconsider the goal or steps
 - ▶ adjust the QIP to address any new information
 - ▶ use discussion, clarification, professional development and training to continue the QIP.

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2. Explain why you chose each option.

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Being prepared for a site visit

Coordinating the service for a site visit

A key responsibility for a supervisor, educational leader or director is to coordinate the service for representatives of the regulating authority during the assessment and rating process. This involves arranging meetings to inform everyone that the service is to be assessed, ensuring everyone understands what they are responsible for and checking that all required documentation is complete and accurate.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
✓	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

4A Being prepared for a site visit

The assessment and rating process takes place according to the state or territory regulatory authority's schedule. The authorities wish to focus their resources on service improvement, so will schedule highly rated services less often than those with lower or no ratings. Factors such as change of management, reported poor practice or non-compliance can indicate to the authority that an assessment and rating process should occur early. This risk-based scheduling is sometimes called 'earned autonomy'.



What is a site visit?

A site visit involves an authorised representative of the regulatory authority in your state or territory visiting the service to collect information and evidence of the service's compliance with the NQF.

The role of the assessor is threefold:

1. The assessor observes the children, families, educators, staff members and coordinators within the service undertaking their usual routines. In particular, they are assessing whether educators are engaged in caring, friendly and respectful interactions and the children are safe, happy and involved.
2. The assessor discusses activities at the service with the provider, nominated supervisor, educational leader or director, coordinators, educators and other staff members, in relation to the quality improvement plan the service has submitted to the authority.
3. The assessor sights documentation provided by the service as evidence to support practices at the service. This may include enrolment records, policies and procedures, planning documentation, meeting minutes, safety checklists, staff and family handbooks, newsletters, feedback forms, communications books, photos, collections of children's work and documentation of child assessments or evaluations.

Before the visit, the service is notified by the regulatory authority that the assessment and rating process has begun, and is given six weeks to submit a QIP. Once the plan is received, the authority advises the service of the date of the site visit and what will happen.

The service must:

- ▶ prepare appropriate documentation for inspection during the visit
- ▶ advise and prepare stakeholders for the visit
- ▶ appoint a key contact to liaise with the regulatory authority's representative.

Visit the ACECQA website (<http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessment-ratings-process>) for details describing what a service should do before a visit, what happens during a visit and what happens after the visit.

Preparing documentation

An assessment and rating process requires specific documents to be provided as evidence of compliance. These may include:

- ▶ policies and procedures
- ▶ observation records
- ▶ continuous improvement plans
- ▶ photographs
- ▶ procedural forms, checklists, etc.
- ▶ self-assessment records.

Make sure the documentation is up to date, current and appropriate, and that any evaluation process is valid.

Tips for checking documentation:

- ▶ Check each document is accurate and complete.
- ▶ Ensure the most recent documentation is provided; use a version control system, such as date and version number: 2/4/18-1.
- ▶ Mark any documentation as 'under review' if you are in the process of updating or reviewing it.
- ▶ Keep evidence of improvements and changes, such as work plans, surveys or superseded documents.

These documents should also be easily accessed from filing cabinets, handbooks, computers, photo albums and record books. Visits are designed to ensure you are continuously and competently performing at the desired level, so it is crucial to demonstrate the service's efficiency in storing and retrieving documentation.

Advising stakeholders

All stakeholders, including owners, managers, coordinators, administrators, educators and auxiliary staff, must be informed of the date and time of the visit, what will happen and what is expected of them. Some people may be anxious about the visit, so make sure you clearly explain the purpose and benefits of it. You may be required to coordinate the arrangements shown in the following table.

Informing management	The visits may require the assessor to interview specific stakeholders, such as managers, supervisors and directors, as part of the feedback process. Ensure these people are available and notify them of the arrangements.
Informing parents	Parents should also be made aware of the visit and its purpose prior to it occurring, through newsletters, emails and posters (available on the ACECQA website in the 'Families' section). Each state and territory regulatory authority also has its own materials.

Informing educators and auxiliary staff

Schedule a meeting with educators to explain the purpose of the visit. Explain when the visit will take place and that they are to go about their regular duties while the assessor visits each area of the service. The assessor will observe educators and their interactions with the children, and may ask questions about their work. They will also observe whether the children are safe, confident, happy and involved, and whether they communicate well. Provide educators with examples of the type of observation and questions that may be used. For example:

- ▶ When assessing Standard 1.1, 'The educational program enhances each child's learning and development', assessors may ask how you use children's ideas, thinking and interests; how you get to know each child and their strengths, abilities and interests; and how you make sure experiences and routines are child-focused.
- ▶ When assessing Element 2.1.2, 'Effective illness, injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented', the assessor may check that educators are actively supporting children to learn hygiene practices and that children wash their hands and cover their mouths when coughing.

To review what an assessor may ask about, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.

Example

Notice of assessment

Upcoming assessment and rating visit

Purpose of the visit: Assessment and rating visit as part of the NQF

Date of the visit: 24 February 2018

Length of the visit: One day

What will happen during the visit:

The assessor/s will:

- ▶ have an opening discussion with the director
- ▶ view the whole service
- ▶ observe each play space, age group and session
- ▶ observe interactions inside and outside
- ▶ talk to educators
- ▶ review documentation
- ▶ have a closing discussion with the director.

Key contact: Kay Wheelan, Director

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the director.

During the visit

The duration of the assessment and rating visit depends on the type of service and the number of children, educators and age groups within the service. Similarly, more than one authorised officer may attend a visit if required.

The assessor's objective is to:

- ▶ determine whether the service meets the NQS elements
- ▶ determine whether the service meets regulations
- ▶ rate each standard
- ▶ rate each quality area and element
- ▶ determine the overall rating for the service.

The visit follows a prescribed format where the assessor:

- ▶ greets the contact person and discusses the overall visit
- ▶ views all service areas and activities
- ▶ observes each play space, age group and session
- ▶ observes interactions inside and outside
- ▶ talks to educators
- ▶ reviews documentation
- ▶ provides general feedback about the visit to the contact person.

During the visit, the service has the opportunity to make minor adjustments. For example, if issues arise during the visit, the assessor will consider how these issues are managed and dealt with, and these results will form part of the assessment and rating process.

Example

Summary of an assessor's visit

This summary is in relation to element 5.1.1.

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

Observe	An atmosphere that is generally relaxed and happy.
Discuss	Experiences and routines are organised to maximise opportunities for meaningful conversations between children, educators and coordinators.
Sight	The service's statement of philosophy.

After the visit

After the assessment and rating visit, the service receives a report that provides comprehensive details of the visit and the service rating. If the service would like to appeal the rating, this must be done within 14 days.

Once a rating is final, the results are published on the MyChild website and displayed in the service.

Once the assessment and rating process is complete, a service should still strive to improve. A continuous improvement plan forms part of a quality assurance process, and is also required if your service needs to make changes, including a situation where it does not meet regulations or other legislation.

A common continuous improvement cycle involves a plan–do–check–act model:

- ▶ Plan: Establish the objectives of what needs to be done by collecting and analysing information to develop a plan to be achieved in a given time frame.
- ▶ Do: Undertake the necessary actions defined in a QIP.
- ▶ Check: Collaborate with stakeholders again on what you have achieved to check your progress or improvement and identify what to do next.
- ▶ Act: Standardise the changes you have made by adapting policies and procedures and training staff.

Practice task 7

1. List the steps for informing educators about an assessor’s visit.

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2. What procedures should you follow to ensure that all documentation is accurate and complete before an assessor’s visit?

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Summary

- ▶ The state or territory's regulatory authority conducts an assessment of a service every two to three years depending on the service's compliance record.
- ▶ A site visit involves an authorised representative of the regulatory authority in your state or territory visiting the service to collect information and evidence of the service's compliance with the NQF.
- ▶ A QIP must be submitted six weeks before the assessment takes place.
- ▶ The service must prepare appropriate documentation for inspection, advise and prepare stakeholders for the visit, and appoint a key contact to liaise with the regulatory authority's representative.
- ▶ During a visit, the assessor will observe the actions of children, families, educators, coordinators and staff members as they go about their duties; discuss activities at the service with stakeholders; and sight documentation provided as evidence to support practices at the service.
- ▶ After the assessment and rating visit, the service receives a report that provides comprehensive details of the visit and the service rating.

Learning checkpoint 4

Coordinating the service for a site visit

Part A

Undertake online research, ask experienced practitioners and use your own experience and knowledge of the assessment and rating process to assist you in developing a hints and tips brochure or leaflet to support an educator who is about to experience the assessment and rating visit for the first time.

The brochure or leaflet should include:

- ▶ the reason for a site visit
- ▶ what educators are expected to do during a site visit
- ▶ **three** examples of the type of questions the assessor may ask
- ▶ why it is important to be prepared.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Your service is receiving an assessment and rating visit by an authorised officer in one week.

You are the health and safety representative and have been asked to prepare a talk for the authorised officer about health and safety in the service (addressing Standard 2.1 in particular).

1. How would you inform the following stakeholders about this visit?

a. Staff

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b. Parents and families

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c. Community members

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5. What could be the consequences if documentation provided to an assessor is incomplete, poorly presented or not immediately available?

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