

# Training of auditors information

HQAI is a young and rapidly growing NGO. Since 2016, more than 60 organisations worldwide have used HQAI's services and we contracted 40 independent auditors from 18 different countries to create a significant auditing capacity.

HQAI's business projections for the next five years are promising and we are looking to increase our global pool of registered auditors.

Are you an **independent consultant**? Do you have experience of **quality assurance** in the **humanitarian & development** sector or in **quality/ethical standards**? Do you have experience in financial auditing?

Read more about what it takes - and what it means - to join our team of independent auditors.

## 1. About HQAI

HQAI provides organisations with third-party quality assurance services grounded in feedback from vulnerable and at-risk people and communities. HQAI verifies that organisations work according to defined standards throughout an organisation - from policy to practice level. HQAI's services are intended to build capacity in the sector and provide consistent measurable data on the delivery of quality action. HQAI aims to support improvements in principled, accountable and efficient provision of humanitarian programming for vulnerable and at-risk populations.

Professional independent quality-assurance is generally considered the most robust means to generate a reliable and objective assessment of the extent to which a standard is applied. This benefits affected populations and communities, audited organisations, donors and the entire sector.

To all its stakeholders, HQAI is an accountable, open and trustworthy partner, which applies internationally recognised ground rules of auditing which are impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints. Our policies, procedures and tools for independent quality assurance follow relevant ISO standard requirements.

## 2. What does it mean to be an auditor at HQAI?

Auditors are the backbone of HQAI and are often our most visible representatives. We value their work and we are very attentive to the recruitment and training process of auditors. Auditors conduct third-party audits as per HQAI's independent quality assurance procedures and the requirements of the applicable standards. Currently, HQAI works with the [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability \(CHS\)](#). Tools related to other standards may be developed in the future.

We operate with a pool of independent auditors who are registered with HQAI, which means that they have successfully completed HQAI-specific training (see chapter 4). Our auditors are qualified professionals from different backgrounds and with different experiences as auditors and/or in the humanitarian and development sector. HQAI offers regular opportunities for trainings and joint auditor meetings (virtual and online) to foster exchange and mutual learning. In addition to this peer support, HQAI's quality assurance team offers constant support during audits and beyond and conducts regular quality-controls to ensure each auditor remains up-to-speed.

Auditors working with HQAI are active members of the humanitarian and development eco-system. Through the audits, they have unique opportunities to thoroughly assess organisations of different sizes and types, in various contexts. Auditors travel to different countries and locations for onsite visits as part of the audit process. HQAI has security policies in place and offers its auditors a comprehensive travel and risk insurance. HQAI has policies & procedures for the prevention & protection of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, which all auditors are required to adhere to.

### 3. Auditor profile

#### Qualities:

The attitude and performance of auditors strongly influences HQAI's image and the professionalism of its services. A number of essential qualities are therefore critical in the selection process and are assessed regularly during the training path and beyond. HQAI auditors should be:

- Ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet
- Open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view
- Diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people
- Perceptive and observant, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations
- Decisive, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis
- Impartial and objective, i.e. ability to make unbiased audit observations and conclusions
- Professional, i.e. exhibiting a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like conduct in the workplace.

#### Experience:

Auditors with HQAI should have:

- At least 10 years work experience in the humanitarian & development sector in strategic levels implementing quality or accountability management systems; or, as an auditor in ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 37001, ISAE 3000, institutional donors due diligence assessments and other relevant quality management system standards.
- Have experience working in a variety of geographical locations and in different contexts.
- In principle, auditors need to be able to prove their status as independent consultant. We request that candidates provide two credentials from previous recent employment positions or consulting assignments.

HQAI is currently developing its capacity to audit against new sets of standards and core donor due diligence criteria. Applications from consultants with proven financial auditing experience will be given priority. Experience with ECHO, DFID, DANIDA assessments would be a plus.

#### Skills:

We require auditors to have the adequate skills to:

- Apply audit principles, procedures and techniques;

- Plan and organise their work effectively so as to conduct the audits within the agreed schedules;
- Prioritise and focus on matters of significance while collecting information through effective interviewing, listening, observing and reviewing documents, records and data;
- Apply a risk approach to the audits and understand the appropriateness and consequences of using sampling techniques;
- Verify the accuracy of collected information, and ensure the sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence to support audit findings and conclusions;
- Assess effectively all factors that can affect the reliability of the audit findings and conclusions;
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders involved in each audit.

Furthermore, applicants in the training path must be highly proficient in spoken and written English. French, Spanish, Arabic and other languages are a plus. **Priority is given to candidates who are fluent in more than one language.**

## 4. Becoming an HQAI auditor

### 4.1 What is the training path to become an HQAI registered auditor?

Becoming an HQAI auditor is a multistep process:

#### Step 1: Enrolment

1. Send a cover letter explaining why you are interested in becoming an HQAI auditor, as well as a current CV, two credentials/references from previous employment or consultancy positions.
2. Pass an **aptitude interview** with HQAI.

#### Step 2: Pre-requisites

3. Provide proof of successful completion of an internationally recognised ISO 19011 Lead Auditor course; - course duration approximately 3h  
We recommend (if you want to use another training please check with HQAI if it would be accepted): <https://www.sae.org/learn/content/PD531952C/>  
**Note that proven experience as management system auditor, finance auditor or similar can be taken into account in replacement of this requirement.**
4. Take an online introductory course on the CHS - course duration approximately 3h. You can find the course here: <https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=260>. Proof of successful completion of the training will be required for registration to HQAI's e-learning module. If you deem your past experience satisfies this requirement, please contact us.

#### Step 3: HQAI e-learning

5. Take HQAI e-learning modules - approximate course duration 8h (please see Annex A for more information)
6. Pass the **final test** of the e-learning course. Success in the test will be required for registration to HQAI's online auditor training.

#### Step 4: HQAI online training (remote)

7. Successfully complete an **online auditor training - course duration 5 days**, delivered by HQAI. A **final test** has to be passed at the end of the training (please see Annex A for more information).

Only those who pass the final test at a sufficient level can be registered as auditors for HQAI and continue their training through audit practice, under the supervision of HQAI senior auditors.

We cannot guarantee that all candidates will be successful. **The decision of HQAI is final.**

#### Step 5: Practical training

8. Put your training into practice by taking an active role in at **least one CHS audit for HQAI**, under the supervision of an experienced HQAI senior auditor. The senior auditor will observe and assess your performance and report back to HQAI.

## 4.2 Summary cost of the training path

1. External ISO19011 e-learning: 199 USD
2. HQAI E-learning module: 479 CHF
3. HQAI online training: 765 CHF

If costs are a barrier for you, please contact HQAI secretariat to discuss options.

## 5. Registration questions and contact

If you wish to register for the training, or have questions on the requirements, profiles or administrative issues, please reach out to HQAI's Head of Quality Assurance:

**Elissa Goucem**  
E-Mail: [egoucem@hqai.org](mailto:egoucem@hqai.org)

Registrations are accepted until **February 28th, 2022**.

The final test of the HQAI e-learning must be taken **before March 15, 2022**.

Confirmation of the registration in the online training will be provided at the latest on **March 30, 2022**.

The online auditor training will take place virtually in the weeks of **April 18 and April 25, 2022 (TBC)**.

If you are interested, check out who our current auditors are. Every profile comes with a short bio and background information: <http://hqai.org/auditors/>

## Annex A: Contents of the courses

### A. Details of the e-learning module

#### What will you learn?

The course provides a comprehensive understanding of how to conduct a professional third-party audit in the humanitarian and development sector, in alignment with applicable ISO standards.

#### Main contents:

- Key concepts of risk based auditing;
- Introduction to the tools designed by HQAI;
- Effective collection of information;
- Communicating results and reporting efficiently;
- Post-Audit management and surveillance audits

At the end of the module you will be asked to take a test. **Only applicants who have obtained satisfactory results (80% and above) can register for the online auditor training.**

### B. Details of the online training

This is a five-days, online training course which builds on the knowledge already acquired in the e-learning module. It develops key practical aspects of auditing methodologies and puts learnings into practice through case studies, group work and exercises. The course tutors are senior HQAI auditors and bring real-life auditing experience into the training.

#### Course content:

- Planning for a successful audit;
- Risk-based approaches and techniques;
- Collection, review and analysis of evidence;
- Techniques of interview, focus groups and sampling of documents;
- Interpretation of the standard (CHS);
- Reporting on initial and surveillance audits;
- Case studies and practical exercises.

You will be tested during and at the **end** of the training through the simulation of a real audit. This is the opportunity to assess your ability to put knowledge into practice, your skills, and ability to communicate clear findings and conclusions based on facts.

After successfully completing this training you will be registered as HQAI auditor. This allows you to be enrolled in real-life audits under the supervision of senior auditors.