



# Self-Assessment Guide

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## RECORD OF REVISIONS

<b>Rev.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Self-assessment is a continuous process of evaluating performance. The key objectives of the self-assessment process are monitoring effectiveness of controls (administrative, engineering, etc.) during performance of work and providing feedback that promotes improvement in work processes and programs. This Self-Assessment guide describes and provides guidance on planning and performing self-assessment at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL).

This manual supports that program implemented by LBNL organizations and is intended to describe the following:

- Roles and responsibilities for the self-assessment process
- Division self-assessment program elements:
  - Selecting risk-based self-assessment focus areas
  - Determination of self-assessment scope
  - Planning and conducting effective self-assessments
  - Tracking and reporting self-assessment results

Self-appraisal processes may be formal. Together, formal and informal assessments comprise the bases of the overall self-assessment program.

Lab organizations conduct formal self-assessments to systematically identify program deficiencies. Formal self-assessments focus on areas of interest to cognizant management. They may be conducted by teams and involve advance planning to ensure that appropriate resources are available during the self-assessment.

A variety of resources are available for review and may be useful during the planning, implementation, and close-out stages of the self-assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Operations Business/ Strategic Plans
2. External requirements (e.g. DOE Orders, industry or consensus standards),
3. Institutional and organizational implementing documents (e.g. policies, standard operating procedures, test or inspection procedures)
4. Previous assessment reports (e.g. internal or external audits, self-assessments, peer reviews, etc.)
5. Relevant Lessons Learned and/or Best Practices briefings

Self-assessment Team Members should be familiar with and understand Laboratory requirements that apply to division operations.

Completed documents generated by performance of self-assessment activities are maintained in accordance with the Regulations and Procedures Manual (RPM) include:

- Self-Assessment Plan,

- Completed Line(s) of Inquiry/Checklist(s),
- Self-Assessment Report, and
- Close-out Meeting attendance sheet, minutes, notes, etc.

## **2.0 REFERENCES**

### **2.1 Baseline References**

- Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231, H Clause
- DOE O 414.1C, *Quality Assurance*
- LBNL/PUB-3000, *Health and Safety Manual*
- LBNL/PUB-3111, *Operating and Quality Management Plan (OQMP)*
- LBNL/PUB-5520, *Contractor Assurance System (CAS) Description*
- 04.02.002.000, *Organizational Self-Assessment Policy*

## **3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 Cognizant Manager**

- Ensures that the Self-Assessment Program activities conform to LBNL requirements
- Allocates staff resources to implement self-assessment program activities
- Determines the focus areas and the schedule on which they need to be assessed
- Selects the Team Leader and team members for each self-assessment
- May participate in self-assessment activities
- Ensures that corrective actions are documented and effectively implemented
- Ensures that Lessons Learned are developed, entered into the LBNL Lessons Learned/Best Practices Database and shared, as appropriate

### **3.3 Team Leader**

- Is responsible for the integrity and credibility of self-assessments
- Reviews the requirements to which the focus area will be assessed
- Establishes the methodology (ies) to be used during self-assessment activities
- Prepares the Self-Assessment Plan
- Prepares, in conjunction with the team member(s), the lines of inquiry
- Coordinates self-assessment activities with the team members, including planning, pre-/post-assessment meetings, preparation of self-assessment reports
- Acts as the liaison between the assessment team and the cognizant management whose processes or programs are being assessed.
- Leads opening and closing meetings, if applicable
- Prepares and issues the final Self-Assessment Report

### 3.3 Team Member

- A. Participates in the self-assessment.
- B. Reviews the requirements to which the focus area will be assessed
- C. Assists in the preparation of the draft Self-Assessment Report
- D. Assists in the development of assessment methodologies and the lines of inquiry
- E. Coordinates assessment activities with the managers/supervisors/work leads whose operations are being reviewed
- F. Brings to the attention of the Team Leader findings or potential findings that may warrant immediate attention
- G. Performs duties as assigned by the Team Leader during the assessment

### 3.5 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

- A. Participates in the self-assessment at a technical expert, as requested
- B. Provides technical support during self-assessment activities, as requested
- C. Provides consultation or training
- D. Assists in the development of assessment methodologies and lines of inquiry, as requested

### 3.6 Office of Contract Assurance

- A. Develops and publishes the requirements for the LBNL Self-Assessment Program
- B. Provides technical guidance regarding the Self-Assessment Program
- C. Provides assessment training
- D. Assists with self-assessment planning efforts, as requested
- E. Validates self-assessment activities and documents, as necessary

## 4.0 PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 Self-Assessment Planning

The key objectives of the self-assessment process are monitoring effectiveness of controls (administrative, engineering, etc.) during performance of work and providing feedback that promotes improvement in work processes and programs.

Self-assessment focus areas should be selected and scheduled on the basis of their importance in your organization's overall mission and objectives.

Consult with the appropriate personnel during the planning stages (especially during development of methodology and/or lines of inquiry) well in advance of beginning assessments. Reviewing higher tier requirements documents, internal implementing documents, forms, reports, etc. In order to gain an understanding of the process or program that is being assessed.

The expertise of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and OCA may be valuable in developing assessment methodology and lines of inquiry. The aforementioned elements comprise a Self-Assessment Plan, which could be helpful to clearly state what the assessment is trying to achieve, the scope and the methodologies that will be used to conduct the assessment.

Attachment A contains a sample Self-Assessment Plan template.

## **4.2 Self-Assessment Preparation**

In general, the following preparatory activities should be considered, as applicable, to facilitate the initiation of self-assessment activities:

- Meeting with Team Members to review the self-assessment plan. This meeting should include a discussion of applicable Laboratory policies, division-specific requirements, assessment techniques, lines of inquiry, etc.
- Conducting an opening meeting with personnel who will be involved in interviews, walkthroughs, document/ record reviews, etc.

## **4.3 General Considerations**

Self-assessment teams should follow a systematic approach when conducting self-assessments. The self-assessment plan provides the scope, methodology, and lines of inquiry the team should use (and, as necessary, adjust) during the course of the assessment.

If performing work place inspections, the Team Leader to become familiar with the operations to be inspected and associated policy and procedures. The manager/supervisor/work lead should have advance notice of the purpose of the inspection and what requirements and areas are being evaluated, and be advised when the team arrives. It is preferable for the manager/ supervisor to accompany the inspection team.

## **4.4 Self-Assessment Techniques**

Established methodology and lines of inquiry will guide the self-assessment, and a sound approach plan (techniques) will help complete it as efficiently as possible. The following basic guidelines will be useful while performing self-assessments:

- Start with the methodology and lines of inquiry developed for the focus area being evaluated, but make adjustments as the self-assessment progresses.
- Hazards may be missed if there is too much focus on checklists. Simply checking off items does not constitute an effective self-assessment. A deficiency noted during an assessment should be recorded, even if it is not on the checklist.

#### **4.5 Conducting Interviews**

Interviews with employees and laboratory management may, depending on the focus area, be a key component of the self-assessment. They are an efficient way to gather information and are a credible source of facts and perceptions that could complement written information and work observations collected by the self-assessment team.

In general, the following interview guidelines should be considered, as applicable:

1. Define the desired outcome, and tailor the questions you will be asking accordingly.
2. An interview is not an interrogation. It is important that interviewees be comfortable in their responses. This is an assessment, not an investigation.
3. Organize thoughts prior to beginning any formal or informal interviews, and be prepared for distractions.
4. Be considerate of peoples' time and stick to the interview plan.
5. Style, flow, and tone will impact the efficiency of the interview and the value of information gathered. Be calm, courteous, and patient, and let the interviewee complete his/her thoughts.
6. Don't rush the interview, and don't debate points with the interviewee. Avoid using sarcasm or humor, and don't jump to conclusions.
7. Thank the person(s) interviewed, and let them know that they can contact the Team Leader if they have additional information they believe will be of value to the self-assessment process.
8. It's OK to take notes during the interview. Summarize the key points obtained during the interview for later review.

#### **4.6 Closing the Self-Assessment**

If appropriate, consider holding a close-out meeting with applicable managers/supervisors/work leads to acknowledge noteworthy practices and discuss deficiencies. Take the opportunity to recommend corrective actions (particularly for complex processes or equipment where a corrective action could affect a process or experiment). Identify deficiencies that can be corrected immediately, and encourage the managers/supervisors/work leads to make those corrections.

Do not specify names when describing a deficiency unless it involves working in an unsafe and potentially dangerous manner.

#### **4.7 Reporting Self-Assessment Results**

Self-assessment results should be documented (see Attachment B, *Sample Self-Assessment Report Template*). Prior to issuance of the report, the cognizant management of the area assessed should have opportunity to review the report for factual accuracy.

Categorize self-assessment results according to the following definitions:

- **Finding** – A term that is interchangeable with “Issue”. A program or performance deficiency where there is a noncompliance with an established external or internal requirement. It is a generic term used to refer to programmatic or performance deficiencies, nonconformances, regulatory or procedural noncompliances, procedure inadequacies, assessment findings, external oversight findings, and associated actions that require formal corrective action.
- **Observation** – A practice or condition that is not technically noncompliant with an external or internal regulation or requirement, but could lead to noncompliance if left unaddressed.
- **Noteworthy Practice** – Practices or conditions that are recognized for their excellence and should be considered for lab-wide application.

The responsible organization should record findings identified during self-assessment activities (except for those that are immediately corrected) into the LBNL Corrective Action Tracking System (CATS) database. The CATS database is the primary tool used to identify, track, manage and resolve issues and associated corrective actions.

In some instances, there may be conditions discovered during the course of a self-assessment that warrants broader communication of Lessons Learned or Best Practices. Lessons Learned and Best Practice briefings are initiated and documented in the Lessons Learned and Best Practices database.

## **ATTACHMENT A, Self-Assessment Plan Template**

- 1.0 **Assessment Title**  
Identify the title of the assessment.
- 2.0 **Assessment Date**  
Identify the date(s) the assessment will be performed.
- 3.0 **Assessment Location, if applicable**  
Identify the location the assessment will be performed.
- 4.0 **Assessment Team**  
Identify the Team Leader and each team member on the assessment team.
- 5.0 **Assessment Purpose**  
State the purpose of, or the reason why, the assessment is being performed.
- 6.0 **Assessment Scope**  
State the scope of the assessment. The scope may describe:
  - Primary concerns addressed by each assessment,
  - Locations to be assessed,
  - Population to be assessed, and
  - Work practices to be assessed.

The scope should also include the methodology used to perform assessment activities, such as document and record reviews, personnel interviews, work observation.

- 6.1 **Identify focus area**  
Identify the focus area(s) to be assessed. Possible focus areas may be potential impact on operations or an area of interest to the cognizant management.
- 6.2 **Requirements to which the focus area is assessed**  
Identify the requirements, external or internal, that will be used to assess the focus area.

## ATTACHMENT B, Self-assessment Report Format Template

### 1.0 Self-Assessment Title

State the title of the self-assessment.

### 2.0 Executive Summary

Summarize the self-assessment so that senior division management can rapidly understand the content without necessarily having to read the entire report. The Summary should contain a brief statement regarding the focus area covered in the report, background information, concise analysis of Findings, and key conclusions.

### 3.0 Assessment Scope

Provide a brief statement describing breadth/scope of the self-assessment. State the external and/or internal requirements to which the focus area was assessed. The self-assessment may address a focus area that is extensive (i.e., broadly covering the organization) or very focused (i.e., focusing on a specific operation, process, or issue).

Assessment breadth/scope might address:

- Controls,
- Work practices,
- Population,
- Location, and
- Equipment/ Property.

### 4.0 Assessment Results

Summarize the information obtained during the self-assessment and present conclusions (i.e., what it all means). Analyze and evaluate what was learned during the ES&H self-assessment and briefly discuss what are believed to be the consequence(s) and general impact(s).

For example, “Through performance of this self-assessment, it was determined that the program is adequately described and implemented.”

List Findings, Observations and/or Noteworthy Practices identified during performance of the self-assessment.

### 6.0 Conclusion

Provide a statement of overall conclusion. Summarize the information obtained during the self-assessment and present conclusions (i.e., what it all means). Analyze and evaluate what was learned during the self-assessment and briefly discuss what are believed to be the consequence(s) and general impact(s).

## 7.0 Supporting Documentation

Provide a listing of documentation reviewed and personnel interviewed during the performance of the assessment that support the results and conclusions of the report.