

Quality Assurance Team

Charter

Version 2.0 • 01 September 2023

INTENT

The intent of the Quality Assurance Team Charter (Charter) is to establish a common understanding of the authority and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Team. Adoption of the Charter indicates agreement with the purpose and content as described herein. By adopting this document, each Quality Assurance Team representative agrees to rely on the Charter as the basis for determining and fulfilling all actions executed on behalf of the Quality Assurance Team.

Adopted by the Quality Assurance Team • 01 SEPT 2023

Version History

Quality Assurance Team information is available at <https://qat.dir.texas.gov/>

Release Date	Version	Description
November-2006	1.0	QAT Charter adopted and released.
July-2023	2.0	QAT Charter revised, adopted and released

BACKGROUND:

The 73rd Legislature (1993) enacted Article V, Section 133 of the General Appropriations Act. This Act established the Quality Assurance Team (QAT) comprised of representatives from the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) Office, the State Auditor's Office (SAO), and the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to review major information resources projects and approve such projects before expenditure of appropriated funds. Approving agency expenditures for major information resources projects has an effect on SAO's compliance with certain auditing standards. Therefore, SAO delegates to the LBB voting authority on any decisions by the QAT to approve or not approve the expenditure of appropriated funds.

The 74th Legislature continued emphasis on quality assurance by including an Article IX rider in the General Appropriations Act that established a quality assurance review process that must be followed for all major information resources projects. Such a rider has been continued in all subsequent General Appropriation Acts.

The 85th Legislature added the Comptroller for Public Accounts (CPA) as a voting member of the QAT. The State Auditor's Office continues to serve in an advisory (non voting) role on the QAT.

All Texas state agencies are subject to QAT oversight. The 87th Legislature added the requirement for Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to be included in this oversight.

PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of the QAT is to review the status of major information resources projects, and to make recommendations to the legislature to reduce risk of project overruns and failures. Risk for the purposes of the QAT is defined as the likelihood that a project will not deliver a quality solution based on the timeline, budget, and scope commitments made to state leadership. When recommending actions to reduce risks, the QAT will first seek solutions that will encourage performance issues to be remediated, and the solution delivered in a manner consistent with needs identified as part of the legislative appropriations request (LAR).

The QAT fulfills its purpose primarily by executing the following strategies:

- implement a standard, repeatable, predictable, and transparent quality assurance process
- review deliverables produced by projects, including proactive monitoring of project outcomes
- require development of a corrective action plan for projects based on identification of project risks
- report annually to stakeholders (state leadership, agency leadership, agency project team) the QAT assessment of the health and overall status of projects
- elevate significant issues to state leadership and advise on alternative methods for correction

ORGANIZATION:

Representatives

QAT membership consists of one representative each from the LBB, DIR, SAO, and CPA. How each representative is appointed remains at the discretion of each entity that is represented on the QAT.

One member of the QAT serves as a facilitator to help ensure a continual focus on fulfilling QAT responsibilities.

The LBB representative provides QAT input from a legislative budgeting perspective.

The SAO representative provides QAT input from an independent advisory perspective. SAO performs non-audit service projects for QAT monitored projects at the request and on behalf of the QAT. The LBB, DIR, and CPA may be invited to participate in these reviews. Reports of results from these services are provided to QAT.

The DIR representative provides QAT input from a technology and project management perspective, including maintaining the Texas Project Delivery Framework, and the Statewide Project Reporting System (SPAR).

Although each entity performs related, separate duties apart from QAT, it is preferred that all members be present at any quality assurance review engagement held with agencies. Each QAT representative may designate one or more individuals to attend or act upon their behalf.

Analysts

Each QAT representative, or their respective entity, may designate one or more analysts to fulfill responsibilities as agreed upon by the QAT. Each analyst should possess technology subject matter expertise with project management experience within the context of state government. Each representative may at any time assume any or all of the responsibilities of the designated analysts for their entity.

Administrative Assistant

The LBB will provide administrative support to help ensure responsibilities of the QAT are fulfilled efficiently.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

QAT Roles

Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 2054, § 2055, and Article IX of the General Appropriations Act, QAT has and acts upon specific authority. In general, roles include:

- Perform project oversight activities which include reviewing major information resources projects and approving projects before expenditure of appropriated funds based on analysis of project risks.
- Report to state leadership the status of major information resources projects.
- Review list of projects that meet the criteria of a major information resources project, including determining which projects should be monitored and the frequency of monitoring.
- Require independent project monitoring, status reporting, expenditure reporting, or additional information reporting that is necessary to assess a project's on-going potential for success.

- Perform approval of contract amendments that change the total value of the contract or any element of the contract by more than ten percent for contracts that have a total value in excess of \$10 million.

QAT Administrative Responsibilities

In general, administrative responsibilities include:

- Review and adopt the Charter after every legislative session.
- Review and approve the QAT Policy and Procedures Manual after every legislative session.
- Act upon the policies and procedures included in the QAT Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Develop automated activities, processes, and tools necessary for effectively fulfilling QAT roles and responsibilities.
- Educate agencies about roles of the QAT and perform periodic training sessions on Texas Project Delivery Framework, SPAR and other topics relevant to IT project management in the State.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Other roles involve and include:

Role	Responsibility
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and preside over QAT meetings. • Prepare and forward meeting agendas. • Coordinate meetings with agencies.
Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend each QAT meeting as agreed upon with their representative. • Fulfill responsibilities as determined by the QAT and defined in the QAT Policy and Procedures Manual.
Administrative Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and distribute minutes for each QAT meeting. • Prepare and distribute meeting materials as necessary.

MEETING COMMITMENT:

The QAT will meet at least quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. The QAT representatives may agree to invite other meeting participants from their respective entity to provide pertinent information that enables them to fulfill their responsibilities.

Meeting agendas will be prepared and provided in advance, along with appropriate meeting materials.