From January 2019, health service organisations will have a choice of undertaking either announced or short notice assessments.

Short notice assessments are a separate assessment pathway under the AHSSQA Scheme, with specific rules associated with its introduction and application.

Participation in short notice assessments is voluntary for health service organisations, unless directed by the relevant regulator.

The short notice assessment process requires health service organisations to fully comply with the requirements of the NSQHS Standards and have in place processes to demonstrate compliance at any time. Organisations contemplating short notice assessments should ensure their safety and quality systems are well embedded, and routine processes are in place to monitor safety and quality performance against the NSQHS Standards and conduct regular self-assessments and gap analysis.

This fact sheet outlines how the short notice assessment pathway will operate, including transition arrangements for 2019.

1. Process for the short notice assessment pathway

All eight NSQHS Standards must be assessed during the three year accreditation cycle. Each assessment will involve the review of three to four NSQHS Standards. Up to four NSQHS Standards may be assessed more than once over the accreditation cycle. This will ensure that health service organisations are not able to determine which of the NSQHS Standards will be assessed at any one visit.
The regulator, the Commission and accrediting agencies are considering mechanisms to determine which standards are to be assessed. The Commission will provide updated advice once this process has been finalised.

Health service organisations will have three assessments in each accreditation cycle with no more than two assessments in any one year. At each assessment, there is an initial assessment; if actions are not met, a final assessment after a 60-business day remediation period; and a report on the assessment within generally 20 business days. The table at Attachment 1 sets out the assessment required.

The health service organisation will be recognised as accredited while ever they continue to satisfactorily meet the requirements of the short notice assessment pathway. This includes participation in all assessment events and keeping documentation such as self-assessment current.

The process for short notice assessments also includes the following:

- Health service organisations will be given at least 48 hours notice of an assessment commencing and which standards will be assessed.
- All actions in the three or four NSQHS Standards selected will be assessed at the initial assessment, with the exception of actions that have been awarded not applicable status by the accrediting agency.
- At each assessment, the assessor will review any actions that were rated not met at the previous initial assessment or met with recommendations at the previous final assessment.
- There will be a remediation period of 60-business days for any not met actions, or as per the transition arrangements in place for 2019 (see Fact sheet 2-Transition arrangements).
- Health service organisations will be given 20-business days from the conclusion of the initial assessment to provide any additional information unavailable at assessment. For not met actions, these 20-business days are included in, not additional to, the 60-business days allowed for remediation.
- Health service organisations may nominate up to 20-business days per year when assessments are not to be conducted.
- To reduce the risk of conflict of interest, accrediting agencies will prepare a list of all assessors that could participate in assessments, to be reviewed by the health service organisation prior to commencing assessments. Potential conflicts of interest should be noted by accrediting agencies and avoided when convening assessment teams.
- Health service organisations are to make any applications for not applicable actions at the time of enrolling in the short notice assessment pathway with an accrediting agency.
- Health service organisations undergoing interim accreditation are not permitted to participate in the short notice assessment pathway until they have completed the interim accreditation process.
- Assessors are to use the PICMoRS structured assessment process.
- Annual attestation statements are to be signed by the governing body (see Fact sheet 7-Governing body attestation statement).

2. Applying to be assessed using the short notice assessment pathway

Health service organisations wishing to be assessed through the short notice assessment pathway will be required to apply to their accrediting agency.

As part of their approvals process to assess to the NSQHS Standards (2nd ed.), accrediting agencies are required to have processes in place to conduct short notice assessments, including assessor training.

Health service organisations must have current accreditation status to be eligible for the short notice assessment pathway. The first assessment must be conducted before the current accreditation award expires.

During 2019, health service organisations wishing to commence short notice assessments should seek approval from their regulator. Approval to proceed will be on a case by case basis.
3. Transferring between the announced and short notice assessment pathways

Transferring from ‘announced’ to ‘short notice’ assessment pathway

Health service organisations transferring to short notice assessments may do so at any point during their accreditation cycle, but no later than six months before their current accreditation expires. The first short notice assessment should occur before the current accreditation to the NSQHS Standards (first or second edition) expires.

The three year short notice accreditation cycle begins from the date for commencement specified in contracts between the health service organisation and an approved accrediting agency.

Transferring from ‘short notice’ to ‘announced’ assessment pathway

Health service organisations can transfer to an announced pathway, with requirements determined based on their progress in the short notice assessment pathway as follows:

- **Three required short notice assessments complete**—the next assessment visit will be announced and all eight NSQHS Standards will be assessed. This assessment must occur before their current accreditation award expires. The accreditation cycle commences from the date accreditation is awarded.
- **Two required short notice assessments completed and all eight NSQHS Standards assessed**—the next assessment visit will be announced and all eight NSQHS Standards will be assessed. This assessment must occur before their current accreditation award expires.
- **One or two required short notice assessments completed but not all NSQHS Standards have not been assessed**—the health service organisation must commence its assessment to all eight NSQHS Standards within three months.

4. Roles and responsibilities

To ensure the short notice assessment pathway operates effectively and efficiently, the roles and responsibilities for each of the groups involved are outlined below:

**Accrediting agencies**
- Establish the processes and procedures for conducting short notice assessments
- Schedule short notice assessments
- Train their assessors to undertake short notice assessments
- Work with the Commission to determine which NSQHS Standards will be assessed at each short notice assessment
- Comply with the conditions of approval relating to short notice assessments.

**Assessors**
- Assess day to day practice, largely in clinical areas
- Use PICMoRS as the structured approach to assessment.

**Regulators**
- Work with the Commission to determine which NSQHS Standards will be assessed at each short notice assessment
- Encourage and support health service organisations being assessed via the short notice assessment pathway.

**Health service organisations**
- Implement the NSQHS Standards (2nd ed.) and the systems and processes to monitor and review ongoing compliance
- Keep updated self-assessment tools
- Develop schedules and plan for short notice visits by assessors.
The Commission

- Provide tools and resources to support the implementation of the NSQHS Standards (2nd ed.) and the introduction of short notice assessments
- Coordinate the ongoing evaluation of the short notice assessment pathway.

5. Evaluation of the short notice assessment pathway

The introduction of short notice assessments is a significant departure from current accreditation processes, and has not previously been available for health service assessments.

To learn how and where this methodology can be most effective the introduction and application of short notice assessment will be monitored and evaluated. Those undergoing short notice assessments will be invited to participate in these processes.

Further information

The NSQHS Standards (2nd ed.) and supporting resources are available at nationalstandards.safetyandquality.gov.au

More information on the Commission is available from www.safetyandquality.gov.au

The Advice Centre provides support on implementing the NSQHS Standards for health service organisations, assessors and accrediting agencies.

EMAIL: accreditation@safetyandquality.gov.au

PHONE: 1800 304 056

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### Attachment 1 – Short notice assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 3</th>
<th>Assessment (s) +</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial assessment</td>
<td>Final assessment after 60/72 business days</td>
<td>Initial assessment</td>
<td>Final assessment after 60/72 business days</td>
<td>Initial assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A. No not met actions
- 3-4 standards assessed

#### B. Some not met actions
- 3-4 standards assessed
- Not met actions

#### C. 16% or more of all actions assessed or 8 or more actions from the Clinical Governance Standard not met

A health service organisation can be reassessed six months after any of the three assessments in a short notice accreditation cycle if the criteria for reassessment are met. See fact sheet on reassessments for more detail.