

Topic:	Guide to Good Evidence
Document type:	How-to-Guide This Module should be used together with <i>Module 2: Planning ASES</i>

1. MODULE 4: GUIDE TO GOOD EVIDENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The first three Modules (*1. Orientation, 2. Planning and 3. The Self-Assessment and the ASES Workplan*):

- Introduced the ASES content and steps to accreditation
- Provided a guide to developing an ASES Project Plan
- Provided a guide to undertaking a self-assessment and gathering evidence to support your organisation in demonstrating how you meet the standards and requirements.





By working through the first three Modules, you will have:

- Informed and engaged the staff and governing body about the ASES and the steps to accreditation
- Developed a strategy about how the work involved in ASES will be managed, shared and delegated
- Developed an ASES Project Plan with strategies for client and stakeholder engagement
- Completed your initial self-assessment
- Developed and completed your ASES Workplan, and
- Updated your self-assessment.

In this Module we are going to:

1. Take a closer look at what constitutes good quality evidence in accreditation
2. Outline the different types of evidence that External Assessors use to inform their ratings in external assessment reports
3. Provide some examples of the application evidence, and
4. Identify common problems with evidence submitted in ASES assessments.

2. KEY MESSAGES




-  While both the BNG SPP Portal and the Certificate Level Evidence Guide provide prompts and suggestions about the kind of evidence you can submit for each of the requirements, bear in mind that these are **suggestions only**.
-  **Use your own best judgment** about what evidence you think best reflects your organisation's unique ways of meeting the Standards and requirements so long as it is accurate and relevant.
-  Use the **guidance in this Module** to **check** whether the evidence you are uploading is robust enough to be tested by an External Assessor.
-  Use as **wide a range of evidence** as is appropriate for your organisation. Evidence is not limited to written documents such as plans or policies. Some organisations are including posters, flyers, DVDs and MP3s made with clients and staff about quality and client artwork in their ASES assessment evidence base.

3. BUILDING YOUR ORGANISATION'S EVIDENCE BASE

Regardless of how you chose to do the self-assessment, whether you used the BNG Online SPP Portal or you worked off-line using the ASES Certificate level Workbook, it involves identifying, linking and collating your evidence. This the first step in establishing your evidence base for your ASES accreditation. The second and final step is the evidence that the External Assessor will observe and collect during your external assessment site visit.

Throughout the self-assessment process, you will need to make decisions for each piece of evidence as to whether to include and submit it with your self-assessment or whether it is best saved for the site visit.

In making this decision, you may consider the following:

-  Is it documented evidence that can easily be provided to the External Assessor via electronic upload or by saving it to a flash drive? Generally, the types of evidence that are provided with the self-assessment are policies, procedures, plans, stakeholder survey reports, registers and audit reports.
-  Is it feasible/possible to physically provide the evidence via upload, or is it better provided at the site visit? For example, the SPP BNG Portal does not allow for the upload of video or audio files.
-  Does the evidence contain personal or private information about a person or confidential information about an organisation (yours or another organisation)? This kind of evidence is best kept for the site visit.

You can note in your self-assessment where a piece of evidence will be provided at the site visit and not attached to the assessment, e.g. *"Client records can confirm that service planning provides for assessments, planning, evaluation and exit in a way that meets individual needs. Client records are best accessed on site"*.

4. TYPES OF EVIDENCE

The evidence that is usually submitted and considered in accreditation assessments fall broadly into four types as described in the table below.

Table 1: Types of Evidence Used in ASES Assessments and Examples

Evidence type	Examples
Documentary – any evidence that is on paper and not verbal	Policies, procedures, client files, staff files, meeting minutes, posters, flyers, letters, written contracts.
Digital – a subset of documentary evidence that is in digital form	Client databases, financial and other data systems, electronic filing systems, emails, apps, social media, DVDs, Mp3s, the organisation's website.
Verbal/observational – observed evidence of conversations, interviews and testimonials	Interviews with staff, the Board, the management team, clients and client representatives and partner organisations. Observations of conversations and interactive behaviour among staff and between staff and clients. Some interviews with clients and partner organisations can also be similar to testimonials, i.e. people voluntarily sharing their experience about their contact and history with the service.
Physical/observational – most commonly this takes the form of the External Assessor observing the physical environment	Tours of the facilities, the WH&S induction at the start of the Assessor's visit, observation of the physical environment, observations of how staff and clients relate to and interact with the physical environment.
Artefacts and symbols – objects or symbols that express the values and purpose of the organisation	Aboriginal flags and signage. The use of canoes with word carvings capturing the values of the organisation that were displayed in the organisation. The use of a symbol of a 'tree of life' to show the strategic direction of an organisation.

5. QUALITY OF EVIDENCE

Evidence must be:

- **Relevant:** relates to the practice under examination
- **Current:** recent enough to confirm the practice still exists
- **Reliable:** delivers consistent results over time
- **Corroborated:** supported by more than one source
- **Systematic:** part of a demonstrable system of work
- **Sustainable:** able to be practised over the long term.

Let's look at how to apply this in practice by examining the type of evidence to prepare for the appointment of Board members.

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|------------------------|---|
| ▪ Relevant: | Use only information related to the Board appointments. If it is part of a longer document draw, the Assessors attention to the specific pages that deal with the appointment of the Board. |
| ▪ Current: | Board appointment policy is still current; the last AGM minutes show the practice of Board appointment still exists and follows the rules laid out in the policy or constitution. |
| ▪ Reliable: | AGM minutes are signed by Chairperson and are in the official minutes book. |
| ▪ Corroborated: | This is something that the Assessor will do. They may corroborate the evidence you provided at the Board interview. |
| ▪ Systematic: | The Board appointments policy or constitution outlines the system of Board appointments. |
| ▪ Sustainable: | The turnover of Board members is captured in the annual report, which shows it happened in a timely fashion. There are systems in place to demonstrate that membership turnover is planned for and monitored. |
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6. HOW DO WE KNOW IF OUR EVIDENCE IS SYSTEMATIC?

To establish that evidence is systematic, consider whether:

1. The system is described in **writing**
2. The system is **evident in practice**
3. Those who are affected by the **system know about it**
4. The system is **evaluated**/monitored/reviewed
5. The **responsibility** or responsibilities for the system are **assigned**?

Let's look at how to apply this in practice by examining the type of evidence to prepare for a staff orientation process.

System element	Staff Orientation
Where is the system described in writing?	We have a policy that outlines our commitment to giving staff an induction. There is a procedure and a checklist to guide how the orientation happens.
What shows the system is evident in practice?	The CEO does a periodic audit of staff files which includes checking that orientation checklists are completed and included in the file.
How are those affected by the system informed about it	When new staff commence on duty, the induction program is explained to them. Supervisors' position descriptions include identifying responsibilities for inducting staff.
How is the system reviewed?	Staff complete a feedback form which is returned to the CEO. This information is used to inform continuous improvement of the process as well as staff development.
How is responsibility assigned?	Induction Procedure identifies that supervisors are responsible for conducting the induction of new staff and that the CEO is responsible for reviewing the feedback sheets to inform quality improvement.

7. EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

Fire safety audits	Program evaluations
WHS worksite inspection records	Financial audits
Staff surveys	Reports against Strategic Plan
Client record audits	Board evaluations
Client satisfaction surveys	Interagency meeting minutes
Membership of peak bodies	Staff meeting minutes
Board meeting minutes	Annual operation plan
Budget reports	Communiques to staff
Newsletters	Recordings of yarning sessions
Complaints register	Maintenance schedules
Sample contracts	Sample MOUs
Consumer Reference Group Minutes	Workplans for CEO, staff, Board
Risk Management Plans	Compliance registers
Welcome packs for clients	Information on notice boards, e.g. a human rights poster, anti-bullying poster
Organisational website	Client feedback on an iPad app
Organisational social media posts	Asset register
Regular reports to the funding body	Program reviews that involved client participation
Documents for the last tender that the organisation undertook	An example of where a complaint led to a change of policy or practice

8. COMMON ISSUES WITH EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS IN ASES

A 2019 baseline analysis undertaken of the quality evidence uploaded into the SPP BNG portal by SHSs highlighted some significant issues including:

- Use of evidence that is 3+ years old
- Policies were undated, unauthorised or expired due to exceeding their review dates
- Policies did not always link to relevant legislation
- While templates and planning tools were excellent there was often no confirmation they were in use
- Evidence was bulked up with documents that are not relevant to that requirement
- Titles that organisations use to describe their evidence were not sufficient to describe the content of the document
- Track changes were evident in policy and other documents which deflect from the content.

These findings applied equally across small, medium and large organisations.

You can use this information to help your organisation avoid some of the common evidence shortfalls in ASES accreditation.