Quick Guide: External Quality Assessments

An External Quality Assessment (EQA) is an independent and objective activity designed to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of internal audit.

Purpose of External Quality Assessments

An EQA provides an independent opinion of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization’s internal audit activity. Whether your company has an internally staffed audit department, co-sourced, or entirely outsourced internal audit activity, the assessment provides the audit committee, senior management and the CAE with an unfiltered opinion on:

- The extent of internal audit activity alignment with the overall company strategic business plan and enterprise risk management.
- Whether the audit plan adheres to the requirements set by the audit committee.
- The maturity and credibility of the internal audit activity.
- The effectiveness of the entire spectrum of assurance and advisory work performed by the internal audit activity in conformance to the Standards.
Catalysts for External Quality Assessments

Change in CAE leadership
In the event of change in CAE leadership, an EQA creates a benchmark for measurement of CAE performance.

Regular evaluation of internal audit activity
An EQA works as tool to evaluate ongoing performance of internal audit leadership and staff.

Requirement by governing body or within the Standards
An EQA measures conformance with the Standards or adherence to other requirements.

Types of External Quality Assessments

Full Scope Quality Assessment (QA)
A QA is performed by an independent team led by a qualified audit professional.

Self-assessment with Independent Validation (SAIV)
A SAIV is an independent validation of the self-assessment and report completed by the internal audit activity.

Readiness Assessment (RA)
A RA is an independent review focused on the internal audit activity's current level of risk to conformance with the Standards prior to a QA, followed by recommendations for remediation of identified gaps.

For more information about External Quality Assessments, go to www.theiia.org/quality.