
Audit Waiver Policy

Version 2.0

Approval



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Acting Electoral Commissioner

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Version history

Version	Notes	Author	Date of Change
1.0	Issued for use	Director, Elections, Disclosure and Spatial	February 2017
1.1	Review	Director, Elections, Disclosure and Spatial	August 2018
2.0	Issued for use	Director, Elections Disclosure and Spatial	August 2018

Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** from the approval date, or if the relevant regulatory frameworks change in a way that means this policy is no longer contemporary.

Purpose

To provide guidance to the Electoral Commission of Queensland (the Commission) in dealing with requests received from political entities to waive the requirement to provide an audit certificate with their periodic disclosure returns.

Rationale

Section 310 of the *Electoral Act 1992* (the Act) requires registered political parties, associated entities and State candidates to provide a certificate from an auditor with their periodic disclosure returns. Section 310 of the Act also provides that the Commission may waive compliance with the requirement to give an audit certificate if the Commission considers the cost of compliance with the requirement would be unreasonable.

Audit certificates provide a high level of assurance to both the Commission and the public regarding the compliance of certain political entities with their disclosure obligations under the Act. At the same time, granting a waiver of the requirement to provide an audit certificate can also serve the public interest by encouraging a range of political entities to participate in the political process.

Guiding Principles

1. A consistent framework for dealing with audit waiver requests supports open, transparent and accountable governance.
2. In order to approve an audit waiver request, the Commission must be satisfied that the cost of an audit would be unreasonable.
3. Procedures for assessing and determining audit waiver requests should take into account not only the financial position of the entity making the request and the contents of their periodic return, but also relevant public interest factors.
4. The final decision on whether or not an audit waiver is granted is at the Commission's discretion.

Policy

- Any entity required to give an audit certificate with their periodic disclosure return may submit a request to the Commission for an audit waiver.
- The Commission will provide assistance to entities wishing to submit an audit waiver request.
- The Commission will assess audit waiver requests on a case by case basis using the guidelines in the established Audit Waiver Procedure.
- The Commission will be open and consistent in its decision making, and will provide reasons for its decision.
- Entities may request a review of the Commission's decision to reject an audit waiver request.
- The Commission will reflect on reviewed decisions and identify improvements to policies and procedures as appropriate.

Delegations

The following persons are authorised to determine whether or not an audit waiver should be granted in accordance with this policy and the Audit Waiver Procedure:

- Principal Elections Officer, Funding and Disclosure
- Manager, Elections, Disclosure and Spatial
- Director, Elections, Disclosure and Spatial
- Assistant Electoral Commissioner
- Electoral Commissioner

Appendix 1 — Definitions

Definitions

Term	Definition
Audit certificate	<p>A certificate from an auditor stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the auditor was given full and free access at all reasonable times to the accounts and documents of the agent responsible for giving the return and of the party, elected member or candidate relating directly or indirectly to a matter required to be disclosed in the return; and • the auditor examined the accounts and documents mentioned above that the auditor considered material for giving the certificate; and • the auditor received all the information and explanations the auditor asked for in relation to any matter required to be stated in the certificate, subject to the qualifications, if any, stated in the certificate; and • the auditor has no reason to think any statement in the declaration is not correct.
Audit waiver	A waiver of the requirement to give an audit certificate with a periodic disclosure return.
Periodic disclosure return	A disclosure return that is required to be given within a specified timeframe after an electoral event or the end of a reporting period.

Appendix 2 — Regulatory Framework

Regulatory framework

Electoral Act 1992, section 310
Electoral Regulation 2013, section 6