

QUANTUM CORE INSTITUTE

Independent Assessment under QCI-QS1

What an independently assessed result means, and what it does not

Field	Value
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Applies to	QCI-1.2-01 to 1.2-04; QCI-4.8-02; Clause 3
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1 Two kinds of result

QCI-QS1 requires any conformance claim, and any reported Q-Risk Score, to say who assessed it and whether it was a self-assessment or an independent assessment (QCI-1.2-03). A self-assessment is the organization's own determination against the standard. An independent assessment is one where a competent reviewer who did not design, implement or operate the controls has examined the conformance record and the evidence and issued a written statement. Both are legitimate. The rule exists so that the two are never confused.

Two things are always reported side by side and never merged: the conformance result, which says whether every applicable requirement is met, and the Q-Risk Score, which measures evidence-supported readiness maturity (QCI-1.2-04). An organization can be nonconforming and have a score. It cannot report a score as if it were conformance.

2 What the independent assessor checks

- That the assessment boundary is declared, with exclusions and their rationale (QCI-1.1-01, 1.1-02), and the critical population reconciled.
- That the conformance record covers every requirement identifier with evidence, and that conditional requirements are marked not applicable only where the condition is evidenced absent (QCI-1.2-01).
- That a risk-based sample of claims, including every high-impact exception, every representative critical pathway, every pillar level of 3 or above and every gate, can be walked from the claim to attributable, dated evidence (QCI-4.8-01, 4.8-02).
- That discovery-sourced evidence carries the provenance the standard requires, that supplier attestations are signed by an officer on the standard's form, and that agility tests meet the test and acceptance rules.
- That the gates at 60, 70 and 80 are applied against the artifacts, and that two assessors reach the same levels after reconciliation on the exact criterion in dispute.

3 What the independent assessor does not do

- It does not certify. The standard says its use may not be described as QCI certification unless a separate QCI certification scheme authorizes it, and none exists at this version.
- It does not assess the organization's security, test its systems, or predict when a quantum computer will exist. A score is not a probability of compromise.
- It does not rank the organization against others or disclose the result. Publication is the organization's decision.
- It does not assess claims outside the declared boundary.

4 What the statement says

The statement gives the boundary, the period, the assessors and their independence declarations, the conformance result with any nonconforming identifiers, the pillar levels and gate determinations with their deciding artifacts, the final score and band, the coverage numerators and denominators, how many claims were sampled and traversed, numbered findings, limitations, and the date it lapses. It applies to one quarterly assessment.

HOW TO READ AN INDEPENDENTLY ASSESSED RESULT

“Independently assessed: nonconforming on three identifiers; Q-Risk Score 61, Advancing” is a precise statement. It says the 61 is supported by evidence a stranger could reach, and it says what is not yet met. A self-assessed 74 beside it is not a higher score; it is a different kind of number, and the standard requires it to be labelled as such.

5 How to request one

Independent assessment is requested from the Quantum Core Institute with the assessment boundary, the conformance record, the current worksheet, the prior four worksheets, the obligations register and the assessment-pack index. Assessors who took part in producing the results, or who worked on the organization’s program in the previous four quarters, are excluded. Independent assessment is a service separate from the standard, which remains free to read, cite and adopt.