



Oifig an Ard-Reachtair Cuntas agus Ciste  
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

2025

# Statement on the system of quality management



## 1. Introduction

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Office) conducts financial and performance audits in accordance with international auditing standards as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

INTOSAI introduced a revised standard for Supreme Audit Institutions' systems of quality management titled ISSAI 140 — *Quality Management for SAIs* with effect from January 2025. ISSAI 140 (revised) requires an annual evaluation of the system of quality management together with the conclusion on the effectiveness of that system.

## 2. Leadership Responsibility and Culture of Quality

The Office's Audit Board comprising the Comptroller and Auditor General and the three Directors of Audit is responsible for the overall development and implementation of strategy and performance of the organisation. Senior leaders across the organisation share responsibility for cultivating a strong culture of quality, supporting ethical behaviour, and promoting professional excellence.

The Office reinforces this culture through

- Clear communication of ethical and professional expectations
- Setting an organisational tone that prioritises independence, objectivity, and public interest
- Embedding quality considerations into strategic, operational, and resource decisions
- Encouraging open communication, professional scepticism, and continuous improvement at all levels of the organisation.

This culture supports the Office's role to improve the management and use of public money and resources, and strengthen public accountability.

In 2025, the Office continued to emphasise the importance to staff of its *Speak Up Policy* for raising concerns, including in relation to the quality of financial or performance audit work.

The importance of financial and performance audit quality continues to be a major component of the Office's annual staff conference.

## 3. Quality Objectives and the Risk-Based Approach

The Office's system of quality management reflects the risk-based model envisioned in ISSAI 140. The Office has established quality objectives across the key components of governance and leadership, ethics, performance of audit engagements and resourcing.

Risks that may adversely affect the achievement of these objectives have been identified and assessed with particular focus on

- The evolving nature of government programmes, public spending, legislation and public sector reforms
- Technological change affecting public service delivery and audit
- Pressures relating to the Office's staffing, capacity, and specialist expertise.

For each identified risk, we implement targeted responses designed to reduce the likelihood of quality deficiencies and support consistent delivery of high-quality audits.

#### 4. Ethical Requirements and Independence

The Office applies ethical requirements grounded in the principles referenced by ISSAI 130 — *Code of Ethics* and reinforced by ISSAI 140. These requirements underpin our responsibility to act independently, impartially, and in the public interest.

To ensure compliance, the Office maintains

- Annual and engagement-specific declarations of staff independence
- Processes for identifying, evaluating, and mitigating independence threats
- Confidential reporting mechanisms for ethical concerns or breaches.

These measures support the credibility of our work and safeguard the Office's independence.

All ethical threats were appropriately managed during the year.

#### 5. Human, Technological, and Organisational Resources

The system of quality management is designed to ensure that the Office has adequate and appropriate resources to meet its quality objectives. This includes

- Recruiting and training professional accountants and developing their expertise in financial and performance audit
- Reviewing audit and performance methodologies and maintaining up-to-date technical manuals
- Providing robust continuing professional development, including training in changes to professional accounting and auditing standards, new technologies, and awareness of emerging risks
- Deploying secure and efficient technology platforms that support audit work, documentation and data analysis

- Maintaining an organisational structure that supports effective supervision, review, and knowledge-sharing.

In 2025, the Office reviewed the major risks to quality including from staff capacity constraints. While the staff turnover rate was high during the year, vacancies arising were filled on a timely basis through competitive recruitment and promotions processes.

During the year, the Office also continued to engage with and support the project to modernise accounting standards in the central government sector.

The Office continued to raise awareness with audited bodies on cyber-security threats and the importance of timely communication of any incidents to the Office.

## 6. Engagement Performance

The Office's policies and procedures are designed to ensure that each financial and performance audit is planned, conducted, and reported in accordance with international auditing standards.

This includes requirements for

- Comprehensive planning and risk assessment tailored to each audit and which emphasise the importance of professional scepticism
- The design of appropriate audit approaches to address risks identified
- Appropriate direction, supervision, and review at all levels of each engagement
- Engagement quality reviews for high-risk or strategically significant work
- Clear, evidence-based reporting that communicates findings accurately and transparently.

## 7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Remediation

The Office operates a structured internal monitoring programme designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the system of quality management. This includes both ongoing monitoring activities and quality reviews of completed engagements to determine whether any deficiencies exist, either at the engagement or system level.

Any deficiencies identified are evaluated to determine their severity, pervasiveness and root causes. Measures to address any deficiencies are implemented which may include updates to guidance, additional training, enhancements to processes, or improvements in standard documentation.

The results of monitoring activities are reported to senior leadership and incorporated into strategic decision-making, ensuring that lessons learned inform continuous improvement across the organisation.

Issues arising from the quality monitoring programme are communicated to staff. In 2025, staff at the annual Office conference participated in audit risk assessment workshops and emerging technical themes. The importance of professional scepticism and good quality audit documentation continued to be a focus for improvement.

## 8. Conclusion and Statement of Effectiveness

Based on my review of the system of quality management for 2025, including the results of internal monitoring and evaluation activities conducted during the period, I conclude that the Office's system is designed, implemented, and operating effectively, consistent with the principles set out in ISSAI 140.

The system continues to evolve and respond to changes in the public sector and the audit environment. The Office remains firmly committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality, upholding our independence, and strengthening accountability in the use of public resources.



Colette Drinan

Secretary and Director of Audit

28 April 2026