The Role of the Observer

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Goals and Objectives

• Revisit observer requirements and best practices during an accreditation audit
• Observer Report Form
• How to support DOE CAP-AP
• Feedback to improve the observer process
The Role of the “Observer”
DOECAP Auditor to Observer

- Sites can still send observers to an Accreditation Body (AB) audit
- The number of observer slots is still limited, so early communication is important
- Continue contacting the Analytical Services Manager (ASP) Manager regarding interest to be an observer
- The ASP Manager still coordinates with the AB to get a DOE observer on the AB’s audit
• Once the AB is notified, the observer will be included on communications between the Laboratory and the AB’s Assessors.

• An observer may wish to get copies of documents sent by the Laboratory to the AB in advance of the audit.

• The laboratory’s documents are posted on the DOECAP sharepoint site. Permission to access that folder is given to the observer.
DOE’s Definition for Observer

DOECAP Program Plan:

Observer: An individual specifically authorized by the ASP Manager to observe [an audit]. An observer does not actively participate (i.e., perform auditor functions) or interfere with ongoing audit activities. An observer coordinates with the ASP Manager prior to the audit, and is subject to the direction of the lead auditor (or AB Assessor) while on site at the audited facility.
DOE’s Definition for Observer (Continued)

DOECAP Program Plan:

The opportunity for an observer to attend an audit is provided to allow an individual with a valid interest in the audited facility the opportunity to acquire first-hand information.
Criteria for an Observer

DOECAP Program Plan:

a. Does not actively participate in (i.e., perform auditor functions) or interfere with ongoing audit activities

b. Coordinates with the ASP Manager prior to the audit

c. Is subject to the lead auditor’s (or Lead AB Assessor) direction while on site at the audited facility
DOECAP Program Plan:

d. Understands that he/she may be dismissed from the audit by the lead auditor (or the AB Lead Assessor). The lead auditor will consult with the ASP Manager prior to dismissing an observer from an audit and notify the ASP Manager immediately on making such dismissal.
Observer Ground Rules

• The observer must still execute a confidentiality agreement to not disclose any information outside the audit process.
• The observer must still agree to follow the DOECAP Code of Ethics. A copy of the code of ethics is part of the confidentiality agreement.
Observer Ground Rules
(Continued)

• An observer may not engage in any part of the audit unless requested.

• The actions of the observer may not result in a finding or the elimination of a finding. It is the lead auditor’s call.

• The observer must exercise care when asking questions of assessors during “downtime.”
• The observer may still not interfere in any aspect of the audit (interference means that the observer may not interject, provide opinions, argue a finding, speak for, or speak against a finding).

• Observers should be mindful that the assessor team is working. They should minimize distractions when present.
• Any issues of concern should still be routed directly from the observer to the ASP Manager after the audit using the Observer Report Form. Serious issues require immediate notification.

• It is at the discretion of the ASP Manager on how to handle the feedback from an observer.
Observer Reports

• In order to document activities and record feedback, the DOECAP-AP Observer Form is still used and sent to the ASP Manager after the audit.

• When the observer gets the assignment, the ASP Manager’s support team sends the form.
How to Support DOE CAP-AP

There are other ways to participate in DOE CAP-AP besides being an observer:

• Data Quality Workgroup Member
• Be a TSDF Auditor
• Attend and provide feedback during webinars for DOE CAP-AP
How to Support DOECAAP-AP

There are other ways to participate in DOECAAP-AP:

- Attend and provide feedback during webinars for the TSDF Audit Guidance Group (TAGG).
- Provide feedback on QSM 5.3 or when QSM 6.0 goes out for comment.
- Provide feedback during the ASP Workshop.
Feedback on Observers

• Very positive feedback on the performance of observers from the ASP Manager:
  – Observer reports are timely. Late ones have a valid reason.
  – The reports are detailed and complete.
  – When there is an issue, action is mutually agreed upon between the observer and the ASP Manager.
Feedback to improve the observer role is welcome!