

QUALITY, SAFETY & EDUCATION DIVISION (QSED)

A. Mission

The mission of QSED, in partnership with CMS Regional Offices (RO) and State Survey Agencies (SA), is to ensure a knowledgeable and skilled survey workforce and informed providers and suppliers throughout the United States. QSED provides leadership and oversight for the design, development, and delivery of all surveyor training and testing, to actively support the mission of CMS and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

B. Statutory Authority

The Social Security Act (The Act) obliges the HHS Secretary to “provide for the comprehensive training of State and Federal Surveyors in the conduct of standard and extended surveys”. The Act requires that “No individual shall serve as a member of a survey team unless the individual has successfully completed a training and testing program in survey and certification techniques that has been approved by the Secretary.” It mandates the “Secretary of HHS, through the CMS Administrator, [will] assure that surveyors are trained to make determinations about the Conditions of Participation (CoP) of providers”, as well as the Conditions for Coverage (CfC) for suppliers.

Authority: Section 1819G of the Social Security Act. Related authority: US Code, Section 1396 – 1396v, Subchapter XIX, Chapter 7 and Title 42. And Chapter IV, Title 42, and Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, and Section 1919(g), “Survey and Certification Process,” subparagraph (iii).

C. Survey-specific Training

QSED’s comprehensive training programs are designed to empower SA and RO surveyors with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to conduct a survey in accordance with the CMS conditions and standards. QSED plans, manages, and executes training for approximately 10,000 surveyors who survey different types of health care facility providers and suppliers. QSED provides specialized surveyor training for the following survey processes:

- Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASC)
- Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)
- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA)
- Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC)
- End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)
- Home Health Agencies (HHA)
- Hospice
- Hospitals, including:
 - Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA)
 - Psych Hospitals
 - Transplant
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID)
- Life Safety Code (LSC)
- Long Term Care (LTC)
- Outpatient Physical Therapy or Outpatient Speech Language Pathology Services (OPT/OSP)
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF)
- Rural Health Clinics (RHC) & Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- Organ Procurement Organizations (OPO)

QSED's training programs include a series of structured, organized training activities designed to help surveyors obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities they will need to conduct a survey in accordance with CMS policy. The first series of training activities lay a solid foundation of knowledge. Subsequent layers of training activities are added, like building blocks – from simple to advanced, to help surveyors learn the concepts and skills needed to conduct a survey. Training activities and requirements are outlined in a document referred to as the "Training Plan".

D. Training Plans

QSED Training Plans serve as the roadmap for training. They outline a comprehensive series of training activities that a surveyor must successfully complete before they are allowed to independently conduct a survey. Training activities are listed in order of completion.

There is a Training Plan for each survey type. State Training Coordinators (STCs), Training Managers and Regional Training Administrators (RTAs) should utilize the Training Plans to understand the training requirements for each provider and supplier type and to assure optimal training support for each surveyor.

The Training Plan should be used to schedule, coordinate and guide a new surveyor through the series of training activities and preceptor-led on-the-job observations and mentoring. The Training Plans are available online for surveyors, STCs and RTAs.

Select this link to view the Training Plans:

<https://surveyortraining.cms.hhs.gov/QSEP/catalog.aspx>

For additional information regarding the Training Plans, please see the Terms and Definitions below:

Training Plan - Terms and Definitions

Prerequisite Training (mandatory):

Prerequisite Training is the sum of all knowledge that surveyors are required to have before taking any of the Basics Training. This knowledge may be acquired through mandatory courses, required readings, orientation, on-the-job mentoring, observations, or supervised field experiences, etc.

Basics Training (mandatory):

Basics Training is the sum of all fundamental trainings that provide surveyors with the essential principles and processes of surveying for a specific provider or supplier type. Basics Training provides learners with a standard level of proficiency. Successful completion of all Prerequisite Training and Basics Training is required before learners are able to begin surveying independently.

Post-Basics Training (recommended):

The Post-Basics Training is comprised of learning opportunities designed to further enhance the skills of experienced surveyors. These trainings are available to surveyors after successful completion of all Prerequisite Training and Basics Training requirements. Post-Basics Training include Advanced Training, Refresher Training, Competency Testing, and Continuing Education.

Advanced Training:

Advanced Training is higher-level training aimed towards equipping experienced surveyors who have completed Basics Training and are surveying independently, with additional in-depth skills. The requirements (mandatory versus recommended) for taking Advanced Training vary from program to program.

Refresher Training:

Refresher Training is directed towards surveyors who have already completed all Basics Training and are proficient with the survey process. Refresher Training revisits topics such as compliance, safety, and quality procedures through simulated case-studies and scenarios. Refresher Training serves to further educate experienced surveyors, and reinforce their existing knowledge and skills on topics such as new regulations and enforcement.

Competency Testing:

Competency Testing assesses the proficiency, knowledge, and skills of surveyors based on specified and established performance standards. Competency Testing provides surveyors with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills through checklists and other readiness tools that are critical for superior job performance.

Continuing Education:

Continuing Education provides resources and activities that are designed to further enhance the skills of experienced surveyors. These trainings are intended to provide additional information related to a specific provider or supplier type.

E. Current Online Training Delivery System: Integrated Surveyor Training Website (ISTW)

Surveyors can access training on the ISTW. The ISTW houses surveyor training, archived webinars, videos, webcasts, and informational materials. All training is available on-demand, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

Learners can log on to the ISTW to locate the survey specific Training Plans to view the list of training that is needed. They can then use the search feature to locate the online training, self-register and enroll. Successfully completed trainings will be recorded on the surveyor's online transcript within the ISTW.

STCs and RTAs can access the ISTW to view training surveyor transcripts. They can use the system to create and export statistical reports for analysis.

Surveyor training on the ISTW can be accessed by the public as well. This would include surveyor training access to health care providers and suppliers, so they can increase their knowledge of the expectations from the survey process, thus enhancing quality improvement.

Select this link to access the Integrated Surveyor Training Website (ISTW):

<https://surveyortraining.cms.hhs.gov/>

Please note, the ISTW will be soon be replaced with a new and improved training portal at the end of calendar year 2019.

F. Future Training Delivery System: Quality, Safety and Education Portal (QSEP)

QSED is currently designing a new and improved online training delivery system called the Quality, Safety and Education Portal (QSEP). This new, user-friendly, learner-centered system is designed to empower surveyors to lead, manage and master their own training. On QSEP, Training Plans will provide learners with access to the full curriculum of training activities and guidance on the CMS survey process and knowledge of health care facility regulations.

Plans are in place to launch QSEP by the end of calendar year 2019.

Please refer to Section I in this document to view the computer equipment and system requirements needed to access the federal online training available on the QSEP. The requirements must be reviewed with the IT staff to be sure that all surveyors have the proper equipment and software needed to access training.

More information is forthcoming. We will provide you with more information and instructions on how to access the new QSEP online training website as we approach the upcoming launch.

For an introductory overview, please select the following: [QSEP video](#).

G. State Survey Agency (SA) Roles and Responsibilities

QSED works in partnership with CMS Central Office, Regional Office, and SA staff to ensure a knowledgeable and skilled survey workforce throughout the United States. SA survey and certification staff play a very important role throughout the surveyor's orientation, training, and testing program. They also play an important role as participants in CMS workgroups.

SA Orientation and Field Survey Observations & Experience

Newly hired surveyors and certification staff attend a SA-led orientation and training program as the very first part of their training experience. During this time, new hires must successfully complete the CMS required prerequisites and begin on the job training and mentoring with their preceptor.

During the SA-led Orientation, the new surveyor candidate pairs with an experienced preceptor / mentor to observe surveys. They observe the role of the surveyor as they mentor with their preceptor.

The new surveyor candidate continues to go on field survey observations and experiences throughout their prerequisite and basic training. At first, the new surveyor observes their preceptor as they demonstrate their skills on SA surveys and during role play. As they learn and progress, the new surveyor begins to demonstrate survey skills and abilities under the guidance of their preceptor.

The preceptor guides and mentors the new surveyor, providing feedback and reinforcement. Eventually, the new surveyor will be able to perform the role of the surveyor independently.

The on- the-job training provided by the SA is essential for the new surveyor candidate to be able to attain the skills needed to conduct a survey. The purpose of these activities is to train the new surveyor candidate on how to apply the knowledge and demonstrate their ability to perform the skills learned in their federal and SA training.

The SA preceptor/mentor observes the surveyor candidate to assure that they have been adequately trained to conduct the CMS survey process and to make determinations about the Conditions of Participation (CoP) and or Conditions for Coverage (CfC) of the health care facility provider or supplier being surveyed.

Participation in Workgroups

QSED continues to develop various surveyor and certification training courses. To create job-focused training, we utilize frontline expertise from SA staff to assist with content review and input. Periodically, QSED may request assistance with training development projects.

QSED may ask the SA to nominate select surveyors to participate in workgroups to test pilot training. QSED may also request participation on workgroups and committees as needed. We ask that \$15,000 be placed in each SA budget for this purpose.

H. Training Schedules

Online Training

The majority of QSED surveyor training is now available online at <https://surveyortraining.cms.hhs.gov/>.

All technical questions related to the ISTW may be directed to the ISTW Help Desk at cmstraininghelp@hendall.com or by phone 1-855-791-8900.

In Person Training

A few trainings will be offered in person. Please see the FY 2020 Training Schedule below.

FY2020 Training Schedule <i>CMS Quality, Safety & Education Division</i>		
In-Person Training Event Dates & Locations	Contact	Email
STATE AGENCY DIRECTOR ORIENTATION COURSE (SADOC) <i>Monday April 6th – Tuesday April 7th 2020 Baltimore, MD</i>	Program Contact	QSOG_QSED@cms.hhs.gov
	Training Coordination	QSEDLogistics@hendall.com
STATE EXECUTIVES TRAINING INSTITUTE (SETI) <i>Wednesday April 8th – Friday April 10th 2020 Baltimore, MD</i>	Program Contact	QSOG_QSED@cms.hhs.gov
	Training Coordination	QSEDLogistics@hendall.com

Questions regarding any training content, direction, availability etc. may be directed to the QSED Mailbox at QSOG_QSED@cms.hhs.gov.

For assistance with Hotel Reservations, select the website at <http://tdpsvs.com/cms> or send an email to rita@tdpsvs.com.

I. QSEP System Requirements

The following computer configuration is required to access training on QSEP. If your computer does not have the proper hardware, the training may run slowly or may not run at all. SAs and ROs must have the proper equipment and software to access and run the online training. Be sure that your computer system meets or exceeds these requirements.

It is suggested that users not access QSEP through VPN as this can block the courseware from playing.

Prior to running training on your computer, compare your current system configuration with the system requirements below:

Hardware Minimum Requirements

- 1.5 GHz CPU or greater with minimum of 4 GB RAM (8 GB recommended)
- Network connection (work): Ethernet, Wi-Fi
- Network connection (offsite): Fios, DSL, Cable broadband Internet (dial-up is **not** supported)
- Speakers may be required; refer to course requirements. (*Speakers are required for most Online Training Courses*)
- Note that 3G and 4G connections are not recommended when taking tests.

Operating Systems Requirements

- Windows 7, 8, or 10
- Mac OS X 10.7 (or later)
- Google Android 6.0 (or later)
- Apple iOS 10.0 (or later)

QSEP Officially Tested/Supported

Wherever possible, both the QSEP website (<https://qsep.cms.gov>), and its associated courses have been designed to run on *any* HTML5 compatible browser and on *any* platform. This includes mobile devices such as Apple iOS and Google Android compatible phones and tablets. Unfortunately, exceptions do exist, particularly with older course materials (created using now defunct technologies such as Adobe Flash or Windows Media Player). Where exceptions occur, QSEP will highlight the additional software requirements necessary to launch those courses. In the future, courses created using these older technologies will eventually be replaced with modern HTML5 versions.

The following tables highlight the platform/browser configurations tested and officially supported by the QSEP Team (denoted by 'X').

QSEP Tested Platforms - Microsoft Windows

Windows 7	X	X	X
Windows 8	X	X	X
Windows 10	X	X	X

QSEP Tested Platforms - Apple macOS

Apple Mac	Safari	Firefox	Google Chrome
OS X 10.7 Lion	X	X	X
OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion	X	X	X
OS X 10.9 Mavericks	X	X	X
OS X 10.10 Yosemite	X	X	X
OS X 10.11 El Capitan	X	X	X
macOS 10.12 Sierra	X	X	X
macOS 10.13 High Sierra	X	X	X
macOS 10.14 Mojave	X	X	X

Video Requirements

Videos within the online training modules are often used for scenario-based learning activities.

- Windows Media Player will also need to be installed and the plugin enabled on the learner's browsers for access of videos within the ISTW.

Operating Systems Requirements

- Windows 7, 8, 10
- Mac OS X 10.7 or later

Software Requirements

- Windows Media Player 9+
- Participants need active computer speakers with volume control.

Headset Requirements

- If learners are in a cubicle environment, separate headsets are needed to prevent disturbance to individuals working in close proximity.
- Headsets should be capable of being plugged into the computer, to hear audio segments of online training.
- Headsets should be capable of being plugged into a phone, for participation in teleconference calls.

General headset specifications:

- Style considerations should fit your needs: over the head, over the ear, behind the neck, wired or wireless, any adjustable style conducive to all-day wearing comfort.
- Wireless headphone devices should include rechargeable capabilities.
- Headsets require volume control, audio performance and a microphone to allow the participants to speak. Headset should not be audio only. Noise-cancelling microphones are recommended.
- Select a headset model/brand ideal for telephone intensive users: including call-center, help-desk, and customer service organizations.

Adobe Flash Player

- Download the link for the Adobe Flash Player from the Adobe's site and enable the plugin on the learner's browsers. Select this link to download: <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>.

Operating System and Browser Support

QSEP is a browser-based application, designed to work with the most commonly used contemporary browsers. Any hardware or operating system capable of supporting such browsers should be able to run the QSEP web site without difficulty. Specific minimum technical requirements for running QSEP are listed in the table below.

	Windows	Mac OS X	Linux
Operating Systems	Windows 7 32-bit/64-bit, Windows 8 32-bit/64-bit, Windows 8.1 32-bit/64-bit, Windows 10 32-bit/64-bit	10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10	Ubuntu 10x and 11x (Gnome), Red Hat 5, 6, Open SuSE 11.4 Fedora 15, 16 (all 32-bit)
Minimum System Requirements			
Processor	Intel Core2 Duo CPU 2.XX GHz or AMD processor (2 GB of RAM recommended)	Intel (512 MB of RAM or more recommended)	Intel or AMD x86
JavaScript	JavaScript and cookies enabled	JavaScript and cookies enabled	JavaScript and cookies enabled
Other	Active X enabled (unblocked for IE is recommended) Java 6 or later		Java 6, GNOME/KDE windowing system
Browsers			
Internet Explorer	10 (32-bit/64-bit), 11 (32-bit/64-bit)		
Firefox	Latest	Latest	Latest
Safari		5, 6, 7, 8	
Chrome	Latest 32-bit/64-bit	Latest 32-bit/64-bit	