

Audit Committee Institute

Evaluation of internal auditors

In light of the current international credit crunch audit committee members are more focused than ever on enhancing both the effectiveness and efficiency of their audit committees, including improving the interaction of the audit committee with management, internal audit, and the external auditors. Indeed, the importance of the relationship between audit committees and internal auditors is being increasingly recognised.

While the statutory auditor is responsible for auditing the company's financial statements and forming an opinion as to their truth and fairness; the internal auditor is responsible for providing objective assurance as to the adequacy and effectiveness of a company's risk management and control framework. Each has its own unique responsibilities, but the audit committee should determine that they complement each other, that their audit effort is coordinated, and that they communicate effectively.

The audit committee should evaluate internal audit based on its own experiences and ask management and external audit to provide their own assessments. In addition to these assessments, the head of internal audit should be requested to self assess the department's performance. This process may identify other issues, including matters relating to the audit committee's own performance, the performance of management or the performance of external audit.

This paper provides a four-part checklist of questions to consider as part of an integrated framework for the internal assessment of the internal audit function that should be completed by the following:

- Audit committee (initial assessment)
- Management
- External auditor
- Head of internal audit

The audit committee should aim to ensure they have appropriately qualified resource to provide answers to these questions and to consider the implications of the findings.

It must be noted however that best practice guidance (as detailed in the *Combined Code on Corporate Governance*) endorses the Institute of Internal Auditors ('IIA') international standards for the professional practice of internal auditing, which requires that external assessments of internal audit's effectiveness be performed at least every 5 years by a qualified, independent reviewer from outside the organisation.

A number of advisory firms, including KPMG who sponsor the Audit Committee Institute ('ACI'), have established methodologies that offer a means to assess the effectiveness of the internal audit function. These assess internal audit against best practice principles and provide recommendations to strategically reposition internal audit.

Evaluation of internal auditors - Audit committee

This checklist should be completed by the audit committee prior to feedback from other areas of the organisation

Understanding

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How well does internal audit demonstrate that it:			
■ Recognises its accountability to the audit committee;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Has a strong understanding of the responsibilities and operation of the audit committee;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Understands the expectations of the audit committee and the chairman;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Understands the organisation's business and risk environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
Does internal audit consistently demonstrate a realistic and commercial view of the business?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Charter and structure

	Yes	No
Do the terms of reference for internal audit define:		
■ Roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Expectations of management;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Scope of internal audit work;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Minimum resources;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Access to information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the internal audit's terms of reference reviewed annually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate internal audit's terms of reference in light of the organisation's current needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's current terms of reference in light of the organisation's future needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are internal audit's terms of reference visible to everyone in the organisation?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the structure of internal audit facilitate:			
■ Consistency in the quality of service to the organisation;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Understanding of the organisation's business issues;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ The delivery of value to the organisation?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Skills and experiences	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How well does internal audit's staffing reflect its roles and responsibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On the basis of the work performed by internal audit over the past 12 months, does internal audit appear to have the right staff mix and competencies in specialist areas such as IT and Treasury and the necessary geographical coverage?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the internal audit team have an appropriate programme of continuing education?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's independence from the activities it audits.	Strong <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
How would you assess the committee's confidence in internal audit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Communication	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Has internal audit attended all the audit committee meetings it was scheduled to attend?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has internal audit made itself available for consultation outside of audit committee meetings?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's responsiveness to requests from the audit committee, including requests for special investigations.	Strong <input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's frankness and candour with the committee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's handling of difficult or contentious issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes	No
Does internal audit determine that the chairman of the audit committee is fully briefed on significant findings or developments prior to audit committee meetings?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate the usual level of preparation for audit committee meetings demonstrated by internal audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate the quality of internal audit reports and papers tabled with the audit committee. Consider their relevance and clarity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
Have reports been received from internal audit on a sufficiently timely basis?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does internal audit promptly advise the audit committee about significant issues and significant developments, including on special projects such as fraud investigations?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does internal audit promptly advise the committee about significant changes to the internal audit plan?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate the strength of internal audit's process to monitor the status of open matters/recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
Does internal audit contribute to the committee's understanding of the overall assurance framework within the organisation and the role internal audit plays in this framework?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the internal audit function proactively share its knowledge widely with the business i.e., outside the strict reporting channels?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Performance

This section should include questions that focus on the Key Performance Indicators ('KPIs') for the internal audit team

		Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Assess the quality of the internal audit plan in terms of:				
■ Comprehensiveness, clarity and timeliness;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Coverage of priority and high risk areas;		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Focus on testing of the control framework.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes	No
Did the original internal audit plan leave any significant issues of concern to the audit committee unaddressed?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement	
What was your assessment of the scope of the internal audit as outlined in the plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Yes	No
Was it clear from its reporting to the committee that internal audit:		
■ Delivered the services outlined in the plan;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Were in accordance with the agreed timetable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there evidence of effective coordination of internal and external audit work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are success measures used for evaluating the performance of the internal audit function?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the internal audit function offer adequate career progression opportunities for its employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there sufficient performance based reward mechanisms to motivate internal audit employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you consider that internal audit has added value to the organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In what way has internal audit added value to the organisation?		

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How would you assess internal audit's overall performance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall comments

Name _____
 Position _____
 (Audit Committee Chairman)

Signed _____
 Date _____

Evaluation of internal auditors - Management

This checklist should be completed by heads of major business units and the chief financial officer/finance director. Where significant subsidiaries or major business units are subject to internal audit, consider asking leaders of these businesses to complete the survey.

Planning

	Yes	No
Are internal audit's terms of reference sufficiently visible to everyone in your business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there sufficient pre-planning and coordination by the internal auditors with the department before each phase of the internal audit or special project commenced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did internal audit discuss its approach and major areas of audit focus with you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you raise any major areas of concern that were not reviewed by the internal audit team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Skills and experience

	Yes	No	
Do you consider the internal audit team to have sufficient professional experience, project management, inter-personal skills and seniority to effectively carry out the work required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you consider the internal audit team to have sufficient experience in the functional specialisations (e.g., IT, treasury) to effectively carry out the work that was required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Assess the strength of internal audit's understanding of the organisation and the risk it faces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How strongly did the senior members of the internal audit team demonstrate an appreciation of the issues key to your role and responsibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
Did members of the internal audit team consistently demonstrate independence in all their deliberations?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In your view, does the way in which internal audit is funded impair its independence?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Do you believe the members of the internal audit team are independent of the activities they audit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were members of the internal audit team adequately supervised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Work programme

	Yes	No	
Was effective cooperation achieved between the internal auditors and your department, including the avoidance of undue disruption to normal activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was there a formal process to determine that internal audit kept you up to date with audit/project progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Did internal audit provide early identification and advice of contentious issues, problem areas and delays?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Did internal audit suggest how such issues could be resolved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were suggestions realistic, robust and presented clearly and on a timely basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How responsive was internal audit to the business's needs, including requests for special investigations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were internal audit reports:	Yes	No	
■ Relevant, clear and constructive;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
■ Sufficiently detailed to enable effective management action;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
■ Issued on a timely basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were internal audit findings discussed with you prior to being tabled with the audit committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Did internal audit follow up recommendations to see whether they had been implemented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any major unresolved disagreements with internal audit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Overall performance

	Yes	No
Did internal audit add value to your business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In what ways did internal audit add value to your business?

Overall comments

Name _____ Signed _____

Position _____ Date _____

Evaluation of internal auditors - External auditors

This checklist should be completed by the external auditor of the parent organisation and of subsidiaries, major business units or regions if appropriate.

Terms of reference

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate internal audit's current terms of reference given your understanding of the organisation's business, complexity, risk environment and the current developments in internal audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
From your knowledge of internal audit and industry best practice, do you consider internal audit's current terms of reference are of appropriate quality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Skills and experience

Do you consider the internal audit team to have the professional experience, technical skills, inter-personal skills and seniority to effectively carry out the internal audit work required?

Yes No

Evaluate the senior members of the internal audit team's understanding of the organisation, its business and its risk environment.

Strong Adequate Needs improvement

Assess the internal audit team's experience in key functional specialisations, in the context of what is needed for the proper discharge of their roles and responsibilities:

■ IT;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Risk management;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Treasury;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Accounting;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Tax;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Supply chain.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify)

From your dealings with members of the internal audit team and your knowledge of internal audit and industry best practice:

		Yes	No
■ Do you consider internal audit have sufficient resources to satisfy their terms of reference?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
■ Evaluate the sufficiency of internal audit's resources to adequately deliver the services outlined in its internal audit plan in the timeframes identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes	No
Does the structure of internal audit appear to facilitate a proper understanding of the organisation's business issues?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does internal audit's staffing appear to adequately reflect its roles and responsibilities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In your assessment, is the internal audit methodology robust and does it reflect the latest thinking in internal audit?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Work programme

	Yes	No
Are there regular discussions between internal and external audit on internal and external audit strategies, assessment of risks and the implications of audit findings/audit work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you receive copies of all relevant internal audit reports issued by internal audit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were copies of internal audit reports received on a timely basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are internal audit reports of a standard comparable to best practice in other organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To the best of your knowledge, are there any major areas of risk or concern that internal audit did not appear to cover?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall comments

Name _____

Signed _____

Position _____

Date _____

Evaluation of internal auditors - Self assessment

This checklist should be completed by the head of internal audit (self assessment).

Understanding

Evaluate internal audit's understanding of:

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
■ The responsibilities and operation of the audit committee;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ The organisation's business;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ The organisation's risk environment;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ The organisation's control framework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Charter and structure

Do the terms of reference for internal audit define in sufficient detail, for the purposes of directing internal audit:

	Yes	No
■ Roles, responsibilities and reporting lines;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Expectations of management;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Scope of internal audit work;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Access to information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evaluate internal audit's current terms of reference in light of the organisation's current needs.

Evaluate internal audit's current terms of reference in light of the organisation's future needs.

Assess the structure of internal audit in terms of enhancing its:

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
■ Objectivity;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Understanding of the organisation's business issues;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Ability to respond to business needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Skills and experience

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How well does internal audit's staffing reflect its roles and responsibilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess the staff mix and competencies of the internal audit team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's independence from the activities it audits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Communication

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate internal audit's responsiveness to requests from the audit committee, including requests for special investigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's frankness and candour with the committee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate internal audit's handling of difficult or contentious issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Over the last 12 months, has the chairman of the audit committee been fully briefed on significant findings or developments prior to audit committee meetings?

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
Evaluate internal audit's process to monitor the status of open matters/recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Performance

This section should be developed to focus on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set for the internal audit team.

In what way has internal audit added value to the organisation?

	Strong	Adequate	Needs improvement
How would you assess internal audit's overall performance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall comments

Name _____ Signed _____
 Position _____ Date _____



If you would like further information on any of the matters discussed in this publication, please talk to your usual contact at KPMG Ireland or contact:

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Further material is available on www.auditcommitteeinstitute.ie

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