

## Sample 6 -DATA COLLECTION QASP

### PERFORMANCE-BASED QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN



#### INTRODUCTION

This Performance-Based Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) has been developed pursuant to the requirements of the Performance-Based Statement of Work in Contract No. RN XXXXXX. This plan sets forth procedures and guidelines that the Department of Education will use in evaluating the technical performance of the Contractor. A copy of this plan will be furnished to the Contractor so that the Contractor will be aware of the methods that the Government will employ in evaluating performance on this contract and address any concerns that the Contractor may have prior to initiating work.

#### PURPOSE OF THE QASP

The QASP is intended to accomplish the following:

- ⌘ Define the roles and responsibilities of participating Government officials;
- ⌘ Define the types of work to be performed with required end results;
- ⌘ Describe the evaluation methods that will be employed by the Government in assessing the Contractor's performance;
- ⌘ Provide copies of the quality assurance monitoring forms that will be used by the Government in documenting and evaluating the Contractor's performance; and
- ⌘ Describe the process of performance documentation.

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) will be responsible for monitoring, assessing, recording, and reporting on the technical performance of the Contractor on a day-to-day basis. S/he will have the primary responsibility for completing Quality Assurance Monitoring Forms which s/he will use to document the inspection and evaluation of the Contractor's work performance. It is extremely important for the COTR to establish and maintain a team-oriented line of communication with the Contractor's Project Manager (PM) and the PM's office staff in order to perform her/his monitoring functions. The COTR, Contracting Officer (CO), and PM must work together as a team to ensure that required work is accomplished in an efficient and proper manner. Meetings should be held on a regular basis in order to resolve serious problems. Less serious problems should be discussed and resolved on an impromptu basis.

#### METHODOLOGIES TO BE USED TO MONITOR THE CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE

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Even though the Government, through its COTR, will be monitoring the contractor's performance on a continuing basis, the volume of tasks performed by the contractor makes technical inspections of every task and step impractical. Accordingly, the Department of Education will use a quality-assurance review process to monitor the contractor's performance under this contract. The contractor's performance will be evaluated by the COTR in terms of a specific set of products and activities, according to three categories: "superior," "acceptable," and "unacceptable." The criteria for each of these performance levels are outlined below. All products produced by or activities performed by the contractor shall meet the level of "acceptable," at a minimum.

"Unacceptable," "acceptable," and "superior" levels of performance shall contribute to the contractor's ability to receive monies from a fee pool. The fee pool shall begin with \$50,000, and shall be capped at \$100,000. The minimum amount of the fee pool is \$0. For each activity or task included under the QASP and performed at an "unacceptable" level, the fee pool shall be reduced as outlined for each of the six (6) activities below (noted as "Fee pool contribution"). Likewise, the fee pool shall be increased by an amount as outlined below for each "superior" level of performance. Work performed at the "acceptable" level shall neither add to nor reduce the amount in the fee pool. The amount remaining in the fee pool shall be awarded at the conclusion of the contract.

In general, the work will be evaluated in terms of how well the requirements of the contract are satisfied, the extent to which the work performed follows the approach found in the contractor's technical proposal, clarity of documentation, and timeliness of scheduled task accomplishment. At the discretion of the COTR or the Contracting Office or Specialist, other government officials approved by the Contracting Officer or Specialist may be asked to evaluate a particular deliverable or set of deliverables.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTING FORMS

The COTR will use two quality assurance monitoring forms (Exhibits B & C) to document and evaluate the Contractor's performance under this contract. The two forms, when completed, will document the COTR's understanding of Contractor requirements, what was actually completed, and the impact or consequences of what was not completed.

The COTR will evaluate each event in accordance with the following definitions of contractor performance:

Superior -a level of performance which exceeds the minimum standards of performance;

Acceptable -an acceptable level of performance which meets the minimum standards of performance; or

Unacceptable -a level of performance which is not acceptable and which fails to meet the minimum standards of performance.

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The COTR must substantiate all tasks which s/he judges to be indicative of "superior" performance. Performance at the "acceptable" level is expected from the Contractor. Performance at all three levels will be evaluated.

The COTR will forward copies of all completed QA monitoring forms to the CO and Contractor by the close of business on the days the forms were prepared. The Contractor is required to respond in writing to any negative QA monitoring form(s) within 5 working days after receipt of the form(s).

### ANALYSIS OF SURVEILLANCE RESULTS

The CO will review each QA monitoring form prepared by the COTR. When appropriate, the CO may investigate the event further to determine if all the facts and circumstances surrounding the event were considered in the COTR opinions outlined on the forms. The CO will immediately discuss every event receiving a substandard rating with the Contractor to assure that corrective action is promptly initiated.

At the end of every year, the COTR will prepare a written report for the CO summarizing the overall results of his/her surveillance of the Contractor's performance during the previous months. This report will become part of the formal QA documentation.

The products or activities that will be used to evaluate contractor performance, and the deductions tied to each, are listed below. Performance deductions for these products or activities will be taken only once, when the task is completed.

#### A. PERFORMING UNDER CONDITIONS OF EMERGENCY SPEED

Contract Requirement: Task 1.12

Performance Indicator: At the request of the COTR, the contractor shall perform activities under conditions of emergency speed.

Primary Method of Surveillance: COTR review of timeliness of performance of task or delivery of product, and quality of product or quality of performance.

Standard of Performance: Requests to perform activities under conditions of emergency speed shall be completed depending upon one of four priority levels, as requested by the COTR, following the definitions below. Each request from the COTR to perform under emergency speed shall be evaluated based on the contractor's submission of a product or completion of a task by the time period indicated by the priority level assigned at the time

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of the request. The contractor shall meet, at a minimum, standards of quality and thoroughness established in the contract, even under conditions of emergency speed.

- Priority 1: within 24 hours of request
- Priority 2: within 72 hours of request
- Priority 3: within 5 working days of request
- Priority 4: within 10 working days of request

### Evaluation Criteria:

#### Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) the task is not completed or the product is not delivered within the specified timeframe;
- 2) the task is poorly carried out such that the COTR or NCES must intervene to complete the task or do it well;
- 3) the product is of poor quality, lacking structure, failing to meet the objectives specified by the COTR, or requiring substantial revisions;

#### Acceptable Performance :

- 1) the task is completed on time, or the product is delivered on time;
- 2) the task is completed to the satisfaction of the COTR;
- 3) the product is of generally good quality, requiring no more than usual amounts of revision;

#### Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the task is completed or the product is delivered ahead of schedule; or
- 2) the product is of high quality, requiring very limited revision or no revision.

## B. DATA FILE COMPILATION

### Contract Requirement: Deliverable 11.4

Performance Indicator: The Contractor must construct organized, user-friendly data files of the U.S. + augmented data on CD-ROM for each study contained in the contract, as specified in the contract. Each data file shall include an electronic code book and any software necessary for novice users to undertake complex data analysis techniques.

Primary Method of Surveillance: NCES disclosure review of data files and COTR end-of-project review of data files.

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Standard of Performance: Each data file required under the contract shall meet NCES standards for compilation and construction of data files. Each data file shall be evaluated in terms of how well the requirements of the contract are satisfied, how well the data files are organized, how user-friendly the data files are, the clarity of all accompanying documentation, and the overall quality of the deliverable.

### Evaluation Criteria:

#### Unacceptable Performance:

- 1) the data files are unstructured or not well organized;
- 2) the data files do not include an electronic codebook;
- 3) the data files are not useable in SAS-PC, SPSS-DOS, or SPSS-WIN;
- 4) the data files are not submitted in a format suitable for publication on CD-ROM;
- 5) the data files do not incorporate all suggested revisions based on reviews of the draft versions; or
- 6) the data files do not successfully pass through NCES data disclosure review, even after numerous revisions.

#### Acceptable Performance:

- 1) the data files are organized and well structured;
- 2) the data files include an electronic codebook;
- 3) the data files are useable in SAS-PC, SPSS-DOS, or SPSS-WIN;
- 4) the data files are submitted in a format suitable for publication on CD-ROM;
- 5) the data files incorporated suggested revisions based on reviews of draft versions;
- 6) each data file is accompanied by a well-written, comprehensive Users' Manual; and
- 7) the data files successfully pass through NCES data disclosure review.

#### Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the data files include software which will assist novice users in complex analysis techniques;
- 2) the Users' Manual accompanying the data files includes documentation that instructs inexperienced researchers on how to properly apply weights, plausible values, or other scaling techniques.

## C. FINAL VERSION OF FIELD TEST REPORT

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### Contract Requirement: Deliverable 9.3

Performance Indicator: The Contractor must accurately and clearly report on the findings from the field tests of PISA and the field test of ILSS. The Contractor shall provide a description of the field test; document all steps in field test sampling, data collection procedures, methods and techniques used in accomplishing these steps, problems encountered, and how they were dealt with; provide preliminary relational analyses of the data; describe problems encountered and plans for revision and improvement in U.S. data collection for the main study; and provide recommended revisions for the main study. The Contractor shall meet all statistical standards of NCES for the reporting of data.

Primary Method of Surveillance: COTR review of final report

Standard of Performance: The Contractor shall prepare the field test reports according to the standards of NCES, as outlined in the NCES document standards. The contractor shall revise the field test report as necessary based on comments received. The field test reports shall be evaluated in terms of accuracy, clarity, conciseness, and meeting the statistical standards of NCES for the reporting of data.

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) the report is unstructured or is not concise;
- 2) the report does not describe the methods used in the field test;
- 3) the report does not include plans for revision and improvement of the main study data collection;
- 4) the report does not meet the statistical standards of NCES; or
- 5) the report does not include the suggested revisions of the COTR and NCES adjudicators.

Acceptable Performance :

- 1) the report is between 30-60 pages in length;
- 2) the reports is well structured and comprehensible;
- 3) the report includes the suggested revisions of the COTR
- 4) all analyses included in the report meet NCES statistical standards
- 5) the report clearly details all aspects of the field test, as specified in the contract (under Task 4.23).

Superior Performance :

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In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the report is concise and informative;
- 2) the report presents clear plans for improvement of the main study; and
- 3) the report presents feasible and insightful interpretations of the findings.

### D. TECHNICAL REPORTS

Contract Requirement: Deliverable 13

Performance Indicator: The Contractor must submit a detailed and accurate technical report that contains a description of the sample design, instrument development, and data collection and analysis procedures for each study. The Contractor shall submit a report that is comprehensive yet concise. The Contractor shall meet all statistical and document standards of NCES.

Primary Method of Surveillance: NCES adjudication review

Standard of Performance: The Contractor shall prepare each technical report according to the standards of NCES, as outlined in the NCES document standards. The contractor shall see each report through the process of NCES adjudication, and revise reports as necessary based on comments received. Each technical report shall be evaluated in terms of accuracy, clarity, conciseness, and attainment of NCES statistical standards for the reporting of data.

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance (-):

- 1) the reports are unstructured or are not concise;
- 2) the reports do not detail the sample design of each study;
- 3) the reports do not detail the development of instruments used in each study;
- 4) the reports do not describe data collection and analysis procedures;
- 5) the analyses of data included in the reports do not meet the statistical standards of NCES;
- 6) the reports do not include the suggested revisions of the COTR and NCES adjudicators; or
- 7) the reports do not successfully pass through NCES adjudication review, even after numerous revisions.

Acceptable Performance :

- 1) the reports are well structured and comprehensible;

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- 2) the reports contain details on the sample design, instrument development, data collection and analysis procedures used in each study;
- 3) the report includes the suggested revisions of the COTR and NCES adjudicators;
- 4) all analyses included in the reports meet NCES statistical standards; and
- 5) the reports successfully pass through NCES adjudication.

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### Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the reports are concise and informative; and
- 2) the reports present feasible and insightful interpretations of the findings.
- 3) the reports present the rationale for choosing a specific methodology and describe the alternatives that had been considered.

## E. PDF AND HTML-FORMATTED VERSIONS OF ALL PUBLICATIONS

### Contract Requirement: Deliverable 13

Performance Indicator: The Contractor shall provide PDF and HTML-formatted electronic versions of each of the publications for each study to be included on the NCES web site. The contractor shall ensure that these electronic versions of each publication for each study are free of programming/formatting errors and are accessible by all users with access to the NCES internet web site. The Contractor shall meet all specifications for NCES web site products, and shall delivery these products on time, according to established delivery dates.

Primary Method of Surveillance: NCES web site adjudication review

Standard of Performance: The Contractor shall prepare PDF and HTML-formatted electronic version of all publications for each study according to the standards of NCES. The contractor shall see these electronic versions for each study through the process of NCES web site adjudication, and revise them as necessary based on any comments received. Each electronic version of a publication shall be evaluated in terms of accuracy, clarity, and usefulness to the intended target audience. The Contractor shall meet all established delivery dates.

### Evaluation Criteria:

#### Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) the electronic version of publications for each study are not user-friendly or contain numerous formatting or structural errors;
- 2) the electronic version of publications for each study do not meet the web site document standards of NCES;
- 3) the electronic version of publications for each study do not include the suggested revisions of the COTR and NCES adjudicators; or
- 4) the electronic version of publications for each study are not delivered on time, according to established delivery dates.

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### Acceptable Performance :

- 1) the electronic version of publications for each study are well structured and comprehensible;
- 2) the electronic version of publications for each study include the suggested revisions of the COTR and NCES web site adjudicators; and
- 3) the electronic version of publications for each study are user-friendly and accessible to those who use the NCES internet web site; and
- 4) the electronic version of publications for each study are delivered on time, according to established delivery dates.

### Superior Performance:

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the electronic version of publications for each study implement state-of-the-art innovative or creative web site features that will make each electronic publication more user-friendly and/or useful.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FORM

WORK TASK: \_\_\_\_\_

SURVEY PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE: COTR REVIEW

EVALUATION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

NARRATIVE DISCUSSION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE  
DURING SURVEY PERIOD:

PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FORM

WORK TASK: \_\_\_\_\_

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SURVEY PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE: NCES ADJUDICATION REVIEW

EVALUATION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

NARRATIVE DISCUSSION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE  
DURING SURVEY PERIOD:

PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_