



## Using the CIGI Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation

It is important for every industry to have a framework of quality standards by which to measure performance and to establish credibility. Most people have heard of the Yellow Book, or The Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, that is used by audit organizations. Evaluation work does not have a well-known equivalent and organizations are often left to establish quality standards on their own. Fortunately, the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) has established Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, also known as the Blue Book, to provide a framework for inspections and evaluation work by Federal Offices of Inspector General (OIG). This framework can be applied to all organizations performing program evaluations.

CIGIE is an independent group within the executive branch established to address integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues throughout Government and to increase professionalism and effectiveness of OIG personnel. They began issuing the Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluation in 1993. The CIGIE Standards aim to guide organizations to conduct evaluations in the most efficient and effective way possible.

### CIGIE Inspection Standards

The 14 Standards, summarized below, are designed to be somewhat general to allow organizations the flexibility to develop internal policies and procedures to ensure that work complies with the Standards.

1. **Competency:** Staff should have knowledge of evaluation methodologies and the ability to develop a working knowledge of the program or organization being evaluated. CIGIE also prescribes a minimum of 40 hours of training for staff biennially.
2. **Independence:** Organizations should always consider whether other services they provide challenge their independence while conducting evaluations.
3. **Professional Judgment:** Evaluators should use professional judgement in selecting the type of work to perform and the methods most appropriate to perform it.
4. **Quality Control:** Organizations should develop and implement written policies and procedures for internal controls over evaluation work.
5. **Planning:** Coordination, research, and work planning should be thorough and should ensure that evaluation objectives will be met.
6. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Data collection methods should be reliable and valid and should always consider confidentiality. Data should be reviewed for accuracy and reliability and analyses should be appropriately documented.
7. **Evidence:** Evidence must be reliable and sufficient to support the findings.
8. **Records Maintenance:** Organizations should retain evaluation documentation and dispose of it according to legal and administrative requirements.
9. **Timeliness:** Evaluations should be completed in a timely manner to be of the most use and time frames should be flexible to accommodate changing priorities.
10. **Fraud, Other Illegal Acts, and Abuse:** Evaluators should be alert to any indicators of fraud, other illegal acts, or abuse and have clear understanding of what actions may be required of this is discovered.
11. **Reporting:** Reporting in evaluations should be timely, complete, objective, convincing, clear, and concise.



12. **Followup:** The success of evaluations depends on whether necessary corrective actions are actually implemented. Followup helps ensure that actions are undertaken and completed within a reasonable time.
13. **Performance Measurement:** Organizations should have mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of inspection work.
14. **Working Relationships and Communication:** Organizations should strive for positive working relationships and effective communication with those entities being evaluated.

You can read the latest issue of the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation and check out other evaluation resources on the CIGIE website: <https://www.ignet.gov/>.

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