

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### Responsible Jewellery Council

### RJC Member Certification – Verification Assessment (Audit)

Please contact:  
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if you have any questions  
[Click here](#) for the RJC Team Contacts  
on our website



Responsible  
Jewellery  
Council

#### What is the Verification Assessment?

The Verification Assessment or Audit is conducted by an Accredited Auditor and verifies an RJC Member's Self Assessment of conformance with the Code of Practices. Verification Assessments are required to become a Certified Member, and for Re-Certification at the end of the granted Certification Period.

#### What is the Verification Scope?

The Verification Scope is defined by the Auditor and is the selection of the Member's Facilities and relevant provisions in the Code of Practices to be reviewed during the Verification Assessment.

The Verification Scope includes:

- A selection of Facilities from within the Certification Scope; and
- A selection of provisions from the Code of Practices that are considered to be the most relevant, taking into consideration the nature, scale and impact of the Member's business.

The Verification Scope will be determined according to the content and quality of the Self Assessment and will take into account the following:

- Establish sufficient confidence to make a recommendation on Certification;
- Take account of risk and relevance;
- Fit within RJC recommended time limits (unless otherwise negotiated).

#### Can I carry out my RJC Verification Assessment alongside other audits?

Where similar standards are to be audited at a Member and/or Facility, organising RJC System Verification to occur concurrently may reduce duplication and costs.

Members and Accredited Auditors may agree to conduct the RJC Verification Assessment alongside audits against other standards. This could include combining audits for the RJC Code of Practices with the RJC Chain-of-Custody Standard at relevant Facilities; or combining audits for the RJC Code of Practices with other voluntary standards such as SA8000, ISO 14001 and/or OHSAS18001. Members and Auditors need to ensure that the integrity of the RJC Verification Assessment is not compromised and the RJC's reporting requirements are met. In addition, Auditors must be suitably qualified and accredited to conduct these combined audits (i.e. carry Accreditation to assess Conformance to the RJC Code of Practice, and any other external standards).

Members that are located in close proximity to each other may consider whether it is feasible to coordinate the timing of their respective Verification Assessments, to potentially share the Auditors' travel costs if relevant.

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### Am I ready for the Verification Assessment?

Prior to commencing the Verification Assessment, Members should ensure:

- Any new management system has been functioning for at least 3 months.
- The Certification Scope covers all the relevant parts of the business;
- All Assessment Questions have been addressed;
- The Self Assessment Workbook has been endorsed by the Member's senior management;
- All performance ratings in the Self Assessment are supported by Objective Evidence;
- Relevant documents have been assembled;
- Corrective actions for any major non-conformances have been fully implemented;
- Corrective actions for minor non-conformances are documented and underway.

### What documentation will be helpful for the auditors in addition to the Self Assessment?

For efficiency, Auditors aim to gain as much understanding of the Member's business as possible before conducting visits.

In addition to the completed Member Self Assessment, useful documentation includes:

- Organisational charts
- Description of key processes, infrastructure and equipment
- Work hours and shifts
- Relevant regulations, standards, policies, contracts, procedures, specifications and guidelines
- Previous assessments covering similar subjects and standards

### Will the Verification Assessment be a "surprise audit"?

RJC Certification does not require surprise audits. The jewellery supply chain handles high value materials and thus security of premises and personnel is of significant importance. While Verification Assessment visits require prior planning and scheduling, Auditors are nonetheless expected to be diligent in their assessments of evidence of conformance.

Once you have engaged with an Auditor and they have established the Scope of your Audit they will develop a Verification (Audit) Plan which is agreed with you. The Verification Plan will include details such as:

- Dates, times & places of the Assessment
- Identification of the Member's business practices and the facilities to be assessed
- Expected time and duration for each major activity
- Personnel (or functional roles) to be interviewed. The number of people to be interviewed will vary based on the number of employees, risks and nature of activities.
- Meetings scheduled to be held with Members business management, members RJC Coordinator etc

The Verification Plan should be designed to create minimum disruption to the normal business processes and should be presented to you at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the assessment. This will give you an opportunity to prepare and suggest an alternative timing or order of proceedings such that relevant personnel are going to be available and the potential disruption to your business is minimised.

### What are my responsibilities for the Verification Assessment as an RJC Member?

Members should:

- Provide the Auditors with access to Facilities, personnel and relevant information and records.
- Inform relevant personnel about the objectives and scope of the Verification Assessment.
- Nominate competent staff to accompany members of the audit team.

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- Ensure Auditors are aware of any risks such as occupational health, safety and other requirements.
- Respond to the findings of the Member Verification Report.
- Develop and implement Corrective Action Plans.

How is the Verification Assessment carried out?

The Verification Assessment is carried out by the Auditor and uses the same set of questions and performance ratings as the Self Assessment Workbook. All Verification Assessments comprise the following:

- A preliminary desktop review of the Member’s Self Assessment and other related information;
- Definition of the Verification Scope – a set of the Member’s Facilities and Provisions to visit and assess respectively, that is representative of the nature, scale and impact of the Member’s business;
- Verification of the Member’s Self Assessment through on-site review of the selected practices and facilities within the Verification Scope.

How much will the Verification Assessment (audit) cost?

The cost of the audit will depend on the time required and the rates charged by the auditing firm. The RJC provides guidance on time, but is unable to provide any guidance on rates, as these are negotiated between the Member and the Accredited Auditor they engage.

The table below is a snapshot of the table provided in the Assessment Manual. It is intended to provide a framework to determine the time required for the *on-site* component of the Assessment, taking into account the specific nature of the Member business to be assessed. We recommend using this table as a reference when negotiating with potential auditors.

Number of Workers	Base Time Person Days	Local and Simple	Local and Complex	Regional / Global Simple Processes	Regional / Global Complex Processes
1 - 25	2	-1	+1	+2	+3
25 - 100	3	-1	+1	+2	+3
100 - 500	5	-1	+2	+3	+5

As a rule of thumb, the total time required by the Auditor for the whole Verification Assessment is likely to be double that spent on-site at the Member’s premises. So for example the base case for a business with 10 workers would be 2 days on site, minus a day to take into account local and simple operations, doubled to account for planning, preparation and post assessment follow up and reporting, for a total of 2 auditor days.

The quality of the Self Assessment and preparation work will also determine the time required by the Auditor. This highlights the importance of conducting a thorough Self Assessment.

When selecting your Accredited Auditor we recommend seeking proposals from each of the Accredited Auditors that can complete Audits in your geographical locations. This allows you to select the best option for your business.

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Where do I get the contact details for RJC Accredited Auditors?

The list of RJC Accredited Auditors is available on our website: <http://www.responsiblejewellery.com/auditors/accredited-auditors/>. RJC Members select an Auditor from our list of Accredited Auditors to conduct their Verification Assessment (Audit). We recommend that you contact all of the Auditors that are available to audit in your geographical location. This will ensure you negotiate the best option for your business. Please note that the initial main contact on the website may not be in your area of business however they will work with you to provide a local auditor for you.

What are the possible outcomes of the Auditor conducting the Verification Assessment (Audit)?

This is a summary of the obligations of Members based on the Auditors Verification Assessment.

### Conformance, or Minor Non- Conformance

- Corrective Action Plan required to address any Minor Non-conformances
- Certification valid for 3 years

### Major Non- Conformance

- Major non-conformances to be addressed or captured in an approved Corrective Action Plan
- Certification valid for 1 year

### Critical Breach

- Must be immediately reported to the RJC Management Team
- must cease and/or immediately reassess the activity until the Critical Breach is rectified
- Disciplinary proceedings will commence

What reports will be issued following the Verification Assessment?

Members will receive a Member Verification Report that will include an overall Assessment of the Member's conformance with the relevant provisions of the RJC Code of Practices. The RJC recommends that Auditors send a draft copy of the Member Verification Report to the Member for their review/comment. The Member's Verification Report is confidential and will not be submitted to the RJC.

The RJC receives a Certification Recommendation & Summary Report from the Auditor. This includes information to: support the Lead Auditor's Certification Recommendation, and required information on Certification and Verification Scope to enable the Certification Recommendation to be processed by RJC. The RJC will follow up with auditors on any information gaps or necessary clarifications before granting Certification. RJC also collects information on areas of non-conformance to support updates to training and guidance.

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## What happens after the Verification Assessment?

On receipt of the Certification Recommendation and Summary Report, the RJC will initiate the Member Certification process. Steps included in the process include to:

- Confirm the competence of the Auditor(s) against the accredited Auditor register.
- Confirm that the Member's membership of the RJC is in good standing in all respects.
- Review the summary report and confirm that the findings are consistent with the instructions to Auditors in the Assessment Manual.
- Set the terms of the Certification validity, including the Certification Scope and the date Certification becomes effective and when it expires (i.e. the date for re-assessment).
- Issue formal documentation and information to the Member, including a unique Certification identification number unambiguously identifying the Certification status, and the conditions for use of the RJC logo.

Certified Members will be listed as such on the RJC website. They will be entitled to use the RJC Certification logo under licence from the RJC.

## What are the Steps to Certification?

### Self Assessment

- Conducted by the Member
- Define the Certification Scope
- Corrective actions as needed

### Verification Assessment

- Member engages an Accredited Auditor
- Auditor defines the Verification Scope
- Audits Facilities

### Corrective Action Plans

- Required for non-conformances

### Reports

- Detailed report to Member
- Recommendation to RJC

### Certification

- Valid three years if no Major non-conformances

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