

## **Auditing - Opening and closing meetings**

How to do them professionally

No matter what type of audit you are involved in it is essential that it starts and finishes well. Opening and closing meetings offer the forum to do this. A well run and professional opening meeting sets the scene for the audit and, if done well, creates a great first impression. Likewise, a well run closing meeting draws the audit to a close in a professional and controlled manner. TIP – if you are being audited, see how many of these points the auditor covers!

### **Items to cover in an opening meeting.**

(Typically this would last about 15 minutes maximum)

The Lead Auditor is in charge.

- Introduce the audit team and their roles.
- Allow auditees to introduce themselves.
- Remind the auditees of the reason and scope for the audit.
- Confirm that the programme is still OK.
- Clarify the role of any Guides.
- Confirm communication channels on how the audit will be run and reported.
- Confirm that any logistical requirements are OK.
- Check that any documents that you may have seen during preparation are still valid.
- Remind the auditees that the audit is to add-value and promote improvements.
- Explain how audit findings will be reported; during, at the Closing Meeting and in the report.
- Explain how any Non-Conformities (should they be seen) will be reported and the ramifications for any Non-Conformities.
- Remind the auditees that the audit is confidential.
- Explain that an audit will only look at a sample of the Quality Management System (QMS) and not the whole of the QMS.
- Check arrangements for the Closing Meeting (time, location, attendees).
- Give the auditees an opportunity to ask questions.

### **Items to cover in a closing meeting.**

(Typically this would last 15 – 30 minutes, depending on findings)

The Lead Auditor is in charge.

- Record attendees.
- Give an expression of thanks.
- Remind them of the reason and scope for the audit.
- Explain how findings will be reported now and in the future.
- Tell the auditees when they will get the report.
- Remind the auditees that the audit is confidential.

- Remind the auditees that an audit has only look at a sample of the Quality Management System (QMS).
- Present your findings – use strengths to promote improvements.
- Explain any Non-Conformities (these should be against a clause of the standard being audited against).
- Provide a summary/ overview of the whole audit.
- Give any statement of recommendation (if you are permitted to do so).
- Invite discussions.
- Agree timelines for any Corrective Actions.
- Draw the meeting to a close.

Remember to include both of these meetings in your audit schedule. Keep the timings tight, as they do eat into the time allocated for your audit. Good luck with your auditing.

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**Dominic Parry**

**January 2012**

Inspired Pharma Training Director

Dominic is a leading pharmaceutical quality management consultant