

Glossary of Terms for Quality, Satisfaction, and Stakeholder Harmonization in Supported Employment

AMSI STANDARD GQS1

FIRST DRAFT EDITION, APRIL 2025



AMERICAN SUPPORT STANDARDS INSTITUTE

Introduction

Achieving and sustaining competitive integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) requires more than compliance or performance—it requires a shared language and understanding of what quality truly means. This glossary presents key terms related to **quality**, **stakeholder satisfaction**, and the **harmonization of expectations** across all phases of supported employment.

In the AMSI quality framework, **quality** is not abstract. It is defined and evaluated through **quality factors**, supported by **indicators** and **probes**. These include both:

- **Non-latent indicators**, which can be directly observed and measured
Examples include:
 - Reduction of time late for work by 90% within the next month
 - Shortening supply wait times to under 10 days
 - A documented policy protecting the rights of individuals with IDD
- **Latent indicators**, which reflect internal states or outcomes that cannot be directly observed but are inferred through related measures
Examples include:
 - Development of self-advocacy skills
 - Building social relationships
 - Promoting independence

One of the most critical **latent indicators** is **stakeholder satisfaction**, especially that of individuals with IDD. Satisfaction is a subjective experience influenced by personal values, preferences, and expectations—often unstated. It cannot be measured directly; instead, it is assessed through **indirect methods** such as annual program surveys, employer evaluations, employee feedback, and nationally recognized tools like the **CQL Personal Outcome Measures (POM)** and **CQL’s Basic Assurances**. These tools offer structured indicators for measuring satisfaction with outcomes and services.

Harmonization is the deliberate process of balancing all these quality components—observable and latent—across diverse stakeholders, including individuals with IDD, job coaches, service providers, employers, and oversight entities. It recognizes that maximizing satisfaction may at times require adjusting or even reducing emphasis on certain non-latent factors when those adjustments better support the individual's well-being, autonomy, or preferences.

The **intake process**, as part of employment support services, includes final-stage responsibilities such as **assisting with onboarding and providing inclusive orientation at the actual job site of a real employer**. These steps are essential for ensuring a smooth transition into competitive integrated employment and long-term success on the job.

This glossary is presented as an **open standard**, to be reviewed and refined as practice evolves. It offers a shared foundation for collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement in delivering high-quality, person-centered supported employment services.

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accreditation of an organization (a human service provider) - a demonstration by an independent party that an organization (a human service provider) has sufficient competence (knowledge, skills, and experience) and has provided services in compliance with specified requirements.

Note 1.: Accreditation is one of the forms of conformity assessment.

Note 2.: Accreditation of a SEMP service provider by CQL is a demonstration by CQL that a SEMP service provider has sufficient competence (knowledge, skills and experience) and has provided services in compliance with the specified requirements of the CQL.

Note 3.: CQL accreditation is based on compliance with the Basic Assurances, as well as a set of advanced-level standards called the Personal Outcome Measures, which focus on individualized outcomes and quality of life.

Note 4.: *Support services* for individuals with IDD—such as employment support and community-based habilitation—are understood to be part of the broader **human services sector**, as referenced in this glossary.

basic assurances (CQL's Basic Assurances) - a set of fundamental standards for organization providing human services, including services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Basic Assurances include 10 quality factors with 46 indicators and 324 quality objectives that organization must meet to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the individuals they serve. The Basic Assurances cover areas such as rights protection, health and safety, personal outcome measures, and positive services and supports, among others.

certification of a worker - certification of a worker's competencies that means a demonstration by an independent party that a worker has sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience (competence) to perform work in compliance with specified requirements.

Note: Certification of a worker (certification of a worker's competencies) is one of the forms of **conformity assessment**.

civil rights - the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.

Note 1.: Civil rights are personal rights guaranteed and protected by the U.S. Constitution and federal laws enacted by Congress, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Civil rights include protection from unlawful discrimination.

Note 2.: Examples of civil rights include the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right to government services, the right to a public education, and the right to use public facilities.

coach work (services) quality - the quality of person-centered services provided by the coach (directly or indirectly) to an individual with IDD and other work provided by the coach to the SEMP service provider.

competence – the state of having sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience.

compliance - a type of conformity assessment that determines whether a service provider or individual meets the **mandatory requirements set forth in official regulations** issued by federal, state, or local government authorities.

Note 1: Unlike general conformity assessment—which may include voluntary standards, contractual expectations, or stakeholder preferences—**compliance deals exclusively with legal and regulatory obligations.**

Note 2: Compliance is required to maintain operational licenses, protect public safety, and uphold civil and consumer rights across sectors such as healthcare, education, employment, and disability services.

Note 3: Compliance assessments typically involve inspection, auditing, documentation review, or reporting aligned with legal mandates issued by authorities such as OPWDD, the U.S. Department of Labor, or local health departments.

Note 4: Noncompliance may result in penalties, loss of licensure, or restricted access to funding and services.

conformity assessment - any activity concerned with determining directly or indirectly that relevant requirements (expectations) are fulfilled.

Note: A requirement (expectation) can be that of a statutory or regulatory body (OPWDD, CDC...), CQL, SEMP service provider, consumer, employer, individual with IDD, coach, etc.

consumer - a person or organization that buys services or goods from the employer.

critical nonconformity - a nonconformity found in the person or coach work quality, which may result in, or has the reasonably foreseeable potential to result in, harm to the health, security or welfare of others...

customer - an individual with IDD (including his/her family/advocate/care coordinator if necessary), to whom the SEMP service provider provides supported employment services.

dignity - a quality or characteristic of being worthy of respect and honor, regardless of one's circumstances or position in life.

Note: It is often associated with the idea of inherent value and worthiness that every human being possesses simply by virtue of their existence. Dignity is closely tied to notions of self-respect and self-esteem, and can be expressed through actions, attitudes, and behaviors that reflect a sense of self-worth and respect for others. It is a fundamental human right that should be upheld and protected in all aspects of life, including in the workplace, healthcare settings, and in the treatment of individuals who are marginalized or vulnerable.

employee - a person who is paid to work (provide service) for another.

employee compensation (also referred to as remuneration outside of the US) - is the total amount of payment in any form an employee can expect to receive in exchange for the services he or she provides for another.

employer - an individual or organization, whether private or governmental, that hires an individual with IDD to perform specific tasks for a consumer.

Note: When an employer provides employment to an individual with IDD, they also assume the role of a human service provider for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

essential job functions - tasks and responsibilities that are fundamental to the job and not marginal, easily modified, or easily reassigned to other employees.

formal experience - experience gained through formal education, training, or structured programs.

Note: Examples of formal experience include earning a degree or certification, completing a professional development program, or participating in a structured internship or apprenticeship, etc.

formal knowledge - knowledge that is acquired through a structured and systematic educational or training program. It is an explicit knowledge, as it can be easily articulated and codified. Formal knowledge involves the acquisition of concepts, theories, and principles that are commonly accepted within a particular field or discipline. It is often based on empirical evidence and is subject to rigorous testing and evaluation.

Note: Examples of formal knowledge include the information and skills acquired through formal education programs such as academic degrees, vocational training, or professional certifications.

harmonization of stakeholders' interests - the process of aligning the needs and expectations of all parties involved in supporting an individual with IDD to achieve integrated competitive employment.

human right - a right that is believed to belong justifiably to every person. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.

Note: Examples of human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.

informal experience - learning and skill-building experiences that occur outside of formal education or training settings.

Note: Examples of informal experience include learning a new language through immersion or self-study, gaining experience through volunteering for a nonprofit organization, etc.

informal knowledge - knowledge that is acquired through experience, observation, and personal interactions, rather than through formal education or training programs.

Note: Examples of informal knowledge include practical skills, as well as personal insights and perspectives gained through life experiences.

inspection - a conformity assessment (evaluation) by observation and judgment accompanied as appropriate by measurement.

job - a task or a set of tasks performed by an individual in exchange for compensation, such as salary, wages, or commission. It requires a specific set of skills, knowledge, and experience.

Note: Jobs can be a full-time or part-time occupation and can be found in various sectors such as healthcare, education, finance, technology, hospitality, and many others. A job can provide financial stability, personal fulfillment, and a sense of purpose for individuals who pursue it.

justice - in its broadest sense, a concept that individuals are to be treated in a manner that is equitable and fair (Wikipedia).

latent indicator – a variable that cannot be directly observed or measured but can be inferred through its relationship with other observable variables.

Note: Examples of latent indicators: developing self-advocacy skills, building social skills, and promoting independence.

legal right - any action of a person which law permits, it is recognized and protected by law. It is an interest accepted and protected by law, regulations or by decisions of suitably authoritative bodies.

Note 1.: Types of legal rights - life, liberty, and personal security.

Note 2.: One of the legal rights is the right to a safe workplace (individualized security provision - personal protective equipment and uniform for work with hazardous chemicals) under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

Note 3.: Any debasement of any legal right is punishable by law. Legal rights affect every citizen. Legal rights are equally available to all citizens without discrimination of creed, sex...

major nonconformity - a nonconformity found in the person work quality, which the person couldn't independently correct (the assistance of the coach (staff) was required), and (or) a claim arose from the consumer (employer).

Note 1.: Assistance from the coach (staff) could vary in intensity from intermittent to pervasive.

measurement - a single act that quantifies an attribute of service or work (speed, clock-in time, deadline...).

minor nonconformity - a nonconformity found in the person work quality, which the person was able to independently correct (the assistance of the coach (staff) was not required).

monitoring - a conformity assessment (evaluation) by 'watching' or 'observing' the measurements over time to detect trends.

Note: Monitoring (inspection) can be conducted by an independent party (3d party) and(or) by a consumer (2nd party) and(or) by an employer (1st party). The goals and subjects of inspections can be various.

national conformity assessment principles for the United States - articulates the principles for U.S. conformity assessment activities that will allow consumers, buyers, sellers, regulators and other interested parties to have confidence in the processes of providing conformity assessment.

nonconformity - any failure to meet a requirement/expectation (failure to achieve a quality objective).

non-latent indicator - a variable that can be directly measured or observed.

Note: Examples of non-latent indicators (objectives):

- Reduction of time late for work by 90% within the next month.
- Reducing wait times for supplies delivery to the job site to under 10 days within the next month.
- The presence of a documented policy that protects the rights of IDD individuals.

objective knowledge - information, facts, or understanding that is based on evidence and verifiable through observation, measurement, and experimentation. It is independent of personal beliefs, emotions, or biases and can be validated through the scientific method or other reliable means.

Note: Examples of objective knowledge include scientific laws and theories, mathematical equations, historical facts, empirical data, and results of systematic observation, and testing that are generally accepted as true by the scientific community or other knowledgeable experts.

person coaching - enhancing (developing) individual's knowledge and skills by an approved specialist, who uses structured intervention techniques.

CQL-POM-Manual - the CQL's Manual for Personal Outcome Measures designed by the Council on Quality and Leadership to identify an IDD individual's quality of life outcomes, plan supports, and gather information and data about individual outcomes.

person training - transferring knowledge and skills to an individual by an approved specialist, who uses structured intervention techniques.

quality - the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of a service (or work) fulfills the requirements of stakeholders **in supported employment** for an individual with IDD.

Note 1: Quality is defined, measured, and improved through a structured system that includes **quality factors, indicators, probes, and quality objectives**, allowing for transparent evaluation and continuous improvement across all phases of supported employment.

Note 2: Quality applies to all stages of supported employment, beginning with the **intake process**, where eligibility, service planning, and individual employment goals are identified. The intake process lays the groundwork for success and continues through onboarding and inclusive orientation at the real job site.

Note 3: Quality includes both **non-latent indicators** (e.g., timeliness, completeness of documentation, accuracy of eligibility assessment) and **latent indicators** (e.g., satisfaction with the intake experience, feelings of readiness or inclusion).

Note 4: Quality is a **shared responsibility** between individuals with IDD, job coaches, employers, and service providers, requiring transparent expectations and commitment to continuous improvement.

Note 5: Harmonization of diverse stakeholder expectations is essential to achieve person-centered, balanced quality outcomes across all phases of employment support.

quality plan - a document that explains how the employer (including an individual with IDD) and the service provider will achieve their quality objectives in supported employment.

Note 1: A quality plan includes defined **quality factors**, corresponding **indicators**, measurement **probes**, and **objectives** for expected performance at each phase of support, including **intake, job development, onboarding, inclusive orientation**, and ongoing coaching.

Note 2: In the intake process, the quality plan may outline how eligibility assessments, person-centered planning, and pre-employment supports will be delivered and evaluated to ensure readiness for job placement.

Note 3: Quality plans support transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, and may be integrated into broader **consumer-provider agreements** that formalize shared expectations.

Note 4: Quality plans must be reviewed and updated regularly, using both **non-latent indicators** (e.g., timeliness, documentation, milestone completion) and **latent indicators** (e.g., satisfaction, motivation, sense of inclusion) gathered through tools such as satisfaction surveys or CQL-POM.

Note 5: The quality plan is a tool for harmonizing expectations and ensuring individualized, person-centered outcomes across all stakeholders.

regulation - in the context of services, a "regulation" refers to an official document issued by federal, state, or local government authorities that establishes mandatory requirements for the provision, quality, and standards of those services.

Note 1.: Regulations are designed to ensure safety, fairness, efficiency, and compliance within various sectors, including healthcare, education, financial services, and environmental protection.

Note 2.: These authoritative rules are legally enforceable and must be adhered to by service providers to maintain their operational licenses, ensure public safety, and uphold consumer rights.

respect - a feeling of admiration, esteem, or regard for someone or something that is considered to have value or worth. It is the recognition and appreciation of the inherent dignity, rights, and autonomy of others.

Note: Respect can be demonstrated through actions, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate a willingness to listen to and consider the views, needs, and feelings of others.

rights - legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory. Rights are of essential importance in such disciplines as law and ethics, especially theories of justice and deontology.

risk - a potential for loss or harm that may result from any action or decision.

Note: Risk is a natural factor of real-life human experience.

safe environment - a physical, emotional, and social space where individuals with IDD feel protected from harm, danger, or injury. It refers to a setting that promotes physical safety and security, as well as emotional and psychological well-being.

Note 1.: In a safe environment, people are free from the fear of violence, harassment, discrimination, or abuse. It is a space where individuals can express themselves freely without fear of ridicule, judgment, or punishment.

Note 2.: Creating a safe environment is essential in a wide range of settings, including workplaces, schools, homes, healthcare facilities, and public spaces. A safe environment fosters a sense of trust, respect, and support among individuals and promotes their overall well-being. It is an essential element of creating a healthy and thriving community.

satisfaction - the feeling of pleasure that an individual (stakeholder) experiences when he/she/they fulfill their needs or expectations. It is a subjective experience that can be influenced by various factors such as personal values, cultural background, past experiences, current circumstances, health and/or IDD conditions.

significant incident - an incident, other than an incident of abuse or neglect, that because of its severity or the sensitivity of the situation may result in, or has the reasonably foreseeable potential to result in, harm to the health, security or welfare of the individual with IDD.

systematic theory of profession - a conceptual framework that aims to analyze and understand the nature, structure, and dynamics of the professions within a particular field or industry.

Note 1: It involves examining the key elements that define a profession, such as definition and goals, core concepts and principles, practice guidelines and standards, regulations, professional development and training, and research and evidence-based practices.

Note 2: This theory provides a systematic approach to studying professions, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of their characteristics and facilitating the advancement of professional knowledge and expertise.

skills - hard and soft, ability to apply knowledge in practice.

stakeholders - consumer, employer, SEMP service provider, coach, individual with IDD (including his/her family/advocate/care coordinator if necessary), OPWDD, CQL..

standard - In the service industry, a "standard" refers to a document that establishes voluntary guidelines, criteria, or specifications designed to ensure quality, safety, efficiency, and interoperability of services.

Note 1: Unlike regulations, which are mandatory and legally enforceable, standards are developed through consensus among industry stakeholders, including businesses, professional associations, and consumer groups.

Note 2: They serve as a benchmark for excellence and best practices, guiding service providers in delivering consistent, high-quality services that meet or exceed customer expectations.

Note 3: Adoption of these standards is typically voluntary, but adherence can be a significant factor in competitive differentiation, market access, and customer trust.

standard mandated by law (regulation) - a document that originates as a voluntary standard, developed through consensus within the service industry, setting forth guidelines, best practices, or specifications to ensure quality, safety, and efficiency. This standard transitions from voluntary to mandatory when it is directly referenced and incorporated into a legal regulation by governmental authorities.

Note 1: Once referenced in such regulations, the standard gains legal enforceability, requiring adherence from service providers not merely as a best practice, but as a legal obligation.

Note 2: This integration into law solidifies the standard's role in establishing minimum requirements for service quality, safety, and performance, aligning industry practices with regulatory objectives to protect public interest.

subjective knowledge - information, beliefs, or understanding that are based on personal experiences, opinions, or interpretations, and are influenced by individual biases, emotions, and cultural factors. It is often associated with feelings, attitudes, and values that can vary from person to person.

Note: Examples of subjective knowledge include personal experiences, beliefs, and opinions about religion, politics, art, and culture, etc.

work schedule - a plan of activities or tasks together with the times or dates when they are intended to happen or be done.