



# **WQS1-2026**

## **WHOLE QUALITY IN SUPPORT SERVICES**

*Foundational Article for AMSI Under the Whole Quality Institute (WQI)*

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**American Support Standards Initiative (AMSI)**

*An applied initiative under the Whole Quality Institute (WQI)*

# Contents

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Why Whole Quality Is Needed.....	3
3. Support Service as a Whole Quality Object .....	4
4. Intended Function and Function Realization.....	4
5. Occupations and Support Work.....	5
Occupational Foundation of Support-Service Quality .....	5
6. Work, Results, and Service.....	5
7. Quality of Service.....	6
8. Boundaries and Interfaces .....	6
9. Evidence and Quality Claims .....	7
10. Whole Quality of Service .....	7
11. Core Standards and Context Guides .....	8
Personal Care Aide family example .....	8
Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coaching family example .....	8
12. AMSI Whole Quality Position .....	9
13. AMSI Publication Families .....	9
Vocabulary.....	9
Standards and Context Guides.....	9
Boundaries and Interfaces .....	10
Funding, Value, and Compensation .....	10
Technology and Support Services .....	10
Verification and Certification.....	10
14. Relationship Between AMSI and WQI.....	10
15. AMSI Whole Quality Architecture.....	11
16. Conclusion .....	11
17. Copyright, Permissions, and Use.....	12

## 1. Introduction

The American Support Standards Initiative (AMSI) is an applied initiative under the Whole Quality Institute (WQI). AMSI applies Whole Quality principles to personal and social support services, including personal care, vocational rehabilitation, employment support, community participation support, residential support, and related human-service activities performed across real-world service environments.

Support services are often described through tasks, outcomes, compliance requirements, funding levels, staffing levels, technology, documentation systems, or regulatory requirements. Each of these may influence service quality. None of them alone defines quality.

AMSI therefore adopts a Whole Quality approach. Whole Quality examines the complete support-service object, including its intended function, the work performed, the results produced, the boundaries and interfaces through which services operate, and the evidence available to support quality claims.

This article serves as the foundational AMSI hub article for the Whole Quality era. It connects AMSI vocabulary, Core Standards, Context Guides, analytical publications, verification methodologies, and future guidance documents without replacing any of them.

WQS1 is not intended to reproduce AMSI VOC1, replace Core Standards, or resolve all applied questions concerning funding, technology, certification, or service-specific practice. Instead, WQS1 provides a common architectural map. It explains how support services can be understood as Whole Quality objects and how existing AMSI publication families relate to that object.

This hub function is important because AMSI has developed multiple kinds of publications over time. Some define vocabulary. Some define quality states for service families. Some interpret service quality in specific support contexts. Some examine funding, value, boundaries, technology, evidence, verification, or certification. WQS1 provides the Whole Quality logic that connects these different publication types under WQI.

## 2. Why Whole Quality Is Needed

Support services are frequently evaluated through incomplete perspectives. A task-based approach may verify that activities occurred, but may fail to determine whether meaningful results were achieved. An outcome-only approach may recognize positive results, but may ignore whether those results were achieved through safe, ethical, sustainable, and replicable work. A compliance-based approach may confirm that documentation or administrative requirements were satisfied while overlooking real service performance.

Funding, technology, staffing, and management systems are also important, but they are not substitutes for quality. A well-funded service may produce poor quality. A technology-enabled service may weaken human support. A compliant service may fail to realize its intended function. A service with strong worker effort may still lack the conditions needed to produce stable results.

Whole Quality is needed because support services operate through people, occupations, relationships, organizations, funding structures, environments, technologies, and social conditions. Quality cannot be reduced to one of these elements alone. It must be evaluated through the complete support-service object and through the degree to which that object realizes its intended function.

For example, a personal care service may complete a scheduled visit while still failing to preserve dignity, privacy, safety, or effective assistance. An employment support service may document contact with an employee while failing to support actual employment participation. A technology system may generate reports while narrowing what is visible about the person, the worker, or the context.

Whole Quality helps prevent substitution errors. A substitution error occurs when one quality-relevant element is treated as if it were quality itself. Funding may support quality, but funding is not quality. Documentation may provide evidence, but documentation is not quality. Technology may assist work, but technology is not quality. Compliance may be necessary, but compliance is not the whole quality state.

AMSI uses Whole Quality to keep the analysis centered on the service object: what function the service is intended to realize, what work is actually performed, what results are produced, what interfaces affect realization, and what evidence supports the claim.

### 3. Support Service as a Whole Quality Object

Within AMSI, a support service may be treated as a Whole Quality object when it possesses an intended function, observable work activities, identifiable results, defined boundaries, identifiable interfaces, and evidence capable of supporting quality claims.

Examples include personal care services, vocational rehabilitation job coaching, employment supports, residential supports, transportation-related supports, communication supports, and community participation supports. The scale may vary: a quality object may be a single support interaction, a worker assignment, a Core Standard service family, a Context Guide application, or a broader service stream.

The support service itself becomes the object of quality evaluation. The purpose of Whole Quality analysis is not only to examine whether a task was completed, whether a form was signed, or whether an outcome was reported. The purpose is to determine whether the support service as a whole is successfully realizing its intended function within a defined boundary and evidence basis.

This distinction is important because support services are not physical products and are not purely administrative transactions. They are performed through human work in changing real-life contexts. Their quality is therefore a condition of the whole service object, not only of one worker, one task, one payer decision, one technology platform, or one documented outcome.

A support-service quality object should be bounded. A claim about the quality of one worker assignment is not automatically a claim about the quality of an entire provider organization. A claim about one context guide application is not automatically a claim about the entire Core Standard family. A claim about one evaluation period is not automatically valid for all future periods.

WQS1 therefore treats the support service as a bounded quality object. The boundary should identify what service is being evaluated, whose work is included, what results are included, what time period is considered, what context applies, and what evidence supports the claim.

### 4. Intended Function and Function Realization

The foundation of Whole Quality is intended function. An intended function describes why a support service exists and what it is expected to accomplish.

Examples of intended support functions include assisting an individual with activities of daily living, supporting successful participation in competitive integrated employment, supporting communication and self-expression, supporting community participation, promoting dignity and autonomy, maintaining safety, supporting stability, and enabling participation in valued life roles.

However, intended function alone is not sufficient. A service may have a clear purpose but fail to realize that purpose in practice. Function realization refers to the degree to which the intended function is actually achieved under real operating conditions.

The central quality question becomes: Is the intended support function being realized in practice? This question moves quality evaluation beyond formal purpose statements and toward the real condition of the service as experienced by the person receiving support, the worker performing the work, the provider organization, the funder, and other stakeholders.

In AMSI, Quality Factors, Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, evidence expectations, verification activities, and quality claims should be connected back to intended function and function realization. This makes quality evaluation coherent rather than arbitrary.

For personal care, function realization may involve safe and dignified assistance with daily living. For vocational rehabilitation job coaching, function realization may involve effective employment participation in

a real workplace. For community support, function realization may involve actual access, participation, and stability rather than only attendance or transportation.

Function realization also helps identify failure modes. A service can fail because work is incomplete, because results are weak, because interfaces are broken, because funding does not support necessary work, because technology distorts the service, or because evidence is insufficient to support the quality claim.

## 5. Occupations and Support Work

Support services are delivered through work performed by people. AMSI uses occupational concepts and terminology defined within AMSI VOC1. WQS1 does not reproduce the full vocabulary standard. Instead, it uses the VOC1 distinction between occupation, job, role, work, result, and service as the foundation for Whole Quality analysis.

### Occupational Foundation of Support-Service Quality

Support-service quality begins with occupations because occupations define the work through which support functions are performed. Jobs, roles, and employment arrangements may vary across employers, states, programs, funding systems, and service models. Occupations provide a more stable foundation for describing work, competence, responsibilities, and service functions.

This does not mean that every real-world job fits neatly into one occupation. AMSI recognizes blended occupational practice. A single job may include functions associated with several occupations, and the distribution of functions may change across time, setting, or service context.

Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coaching has historically been a major AMSI area of interest. Within the Standard Occupational Classification system, Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coach functions are commonly associated with Rehabilitation Counselors (SOC 21-1015). This gives vocational rehabilitation job coaching a specific occupational anchor while still allowing AMSI to examine actual work performed in real employment settings.

At the same time, titles such as Direct Support Professional (DSP), Direct Support Worker (DSW), Employment Specialist, Residential Counselor, Community Support Worker, or similar program titles often describe jobs or service roles rather than standardized occupations. Such titles may combine functions associated with multiple occupations.

Whole Quality therefore focuses on actual support functions being performed rather than relying solely on job titles, program labels, funding categories, or employer descriptions. This preserves both occupational clarity and real-world flexibility.

The occupational foundation is especially important for standards development. Without knowing what work is actually being performed, it is difficult to define competence, quality factors, indicators, evidence, or outcome criteria. Occupational anchoring helps AMSI avoid vague service labels and helps connect quality standards to real work performed by real people.

## 6. Work, Results, and Service

Support services exist through work performed in real-world settings. Workers perform occupational functions, interact with supported persons and stakeholders, respond to changing circumstances, and contribute to desired outcomes.

AMSI uses the foundational expression:

$$\text{Service} = \text{Work} + \text{Result}$$

Work alone is not a service. Work may be performed without producing the intended result. Results also do not emerge independently of work. Results are produced, influenced, supported, maintained, or protected through work performed within a service context.

A complete understanding of service therefore requires examination of both what was done and what was achieved. This principle remains one of the core foundations of AMSI. It also provides a natural bridge to Whole Quality because Whole Quality evaluates the complete support-service object, not only one component of service delivery.

The Work + Result structure protects against two common errors. The first error is treating a task list as a complete service. The second error is treating an outcome claim as complete without examining the work that produced, failed to produce, or sustained the result. AMSI treats both work and result as necessary components of service.

## 7. Quality of Service

If a service consists of work and results, quality must address both dimensions.

**Quality of Service = Quality of Work + Quality of Result**

Quality of Work may include competence, safety, dignity, communication, responsiveness, reliability, professional conduct, and conformity with defined support requirements. Quality of Result may include improved functioning, successful employment participation, increased independence, improved stability, maintained safety, or enhanced community participation.

Neither dimension alone is sufficient. Correct work with poor results is not quality service. Favorable results achieved through unsafe, inappropriate, coercive, unsustainable, or uncontrolled work are also not quality service.

The quality of a support service must therefore be evaluated through the relationship between work performed and results produced. Whole Quality builds upon this foundation by adding intended function, boundaries, interfaces, evidence, and bounded quality claims.

Quality of Service is therefore narrower than Whole Quality but remains essential. It is the base layer from which Whole Quality expands. If quality of work and quality of result are not visible, the broader Whole Quality claim is not adequately grounded.

## 8. Boundaries and Interfaces

Support services operate through relationships. These relationships create boundaries and interfaces between people, organizations, systems, environments, technologies, and activities. Many support-service failures occur not within an isolated task, but at the interface through which that task is understood, coordinated, delivered, or followed through.

Important support-service interfaces include:

- worker <-> supported person
- worker <-> family member or representative
- worker <-> supervisor
- worker <-> provider organization
- worker <-> coworker or workplace staff
- provider <-> funding authority
- provider <-> regulator
- supported person <-> workplace

- supported person <-> community
- supported person <-> technology or digital system

A service may fail even when individual tasks are performed correctly because the failure occurs at the interface rather than within the task itself. Information may not transfer correctly. Expectations may conflict. Responsibilities may be fragmented. A worker may not receive necessary context. A provider may satisfy a documentation requirement while failing to support the real relationship through which the service function is realized.

In support services, human relationship quality is often part of the service condition itself. A worker-supported person interface may determine whether support is accepted, trusted, understood, and effective. A supported person-workplace interface may determine whether employment support succeeds. A provider-funder interface may determine whether required work is authorized, timed, and sustained.

Whole Quality therefore treats boundary and interface quality as an essential contributor to service quality. This section introduces the concept only at the hub level. More detailed AMSI boundary and interface analysis may be developed in separate publications.

Boundary and interface analysis is particularly important when service systems become complex. Multiple parties may share responsibility for one support outcome. Without clear boundaries, accountability becomes blurred. Without functional interfaces, the intended support function may fail even when each party believes it has completed its assigned part.

## 9. Evidence and Quality Claims

Quality claims require evidence. Without evidence, quality statements become opinions, assumptions, beliefs, or administrative assertions rather than verifiable conclusions.

Evidence may originate from observations, service records, supported-person feedback, family feedback, employment records, participation records, incident reports, functional assessments, outcome measurements, independent reviews, or other sources appropriate to the quality claim being made.

Different claims require different evidence. A claim about work performance may require evidence of activities performed and conditions under which they were performed. A claim about results may require evidence that expected results were achieved or maintained. A claim about function realization may require evidence that the intended function of the service was actually realized in the defined context.

AMSI emphasizes evidence-supported quality evaluation and transparent quality claims. A quality claim should be bounded by service scope, time period, context, evidence basis, and limitations. This prevents broad, unsupported claims and helps stakeholders understand what has actually been verified.

Evidence is not limited to paperwork. Documentation may be useful, but support-service evidence may also include observation, feedback, functional change, stability over time, participation, absence or presence of incidents, and other indicators appropriate to the service. The evidence selected should match the quality question being asked.

## 10. Whole Quality of Service

Whole Quality extends beyond traditional service-quality concepts. Quality of Work and Quality of Result remain essential, but support services also depend on boundaries, interfaces, evidence, and function realization.

$$\text{Whole Quality of Service} = \text{Quality of Work} +$$

**Quality of Result +  
Quality of Boundaries and Interfaces +  
Evidence Supporting Function Realization**

Whole Quality asks not only whether work was performed appropriately and whether desired results were achieved. It also asks whether critical boundaries and interfaces functioned effectively, whether the intended function was realized, and whether the evidence supports the quality claim.

This approach allows AMSI to make support-service quality visible as a quality state of the whole service object. It also prevents substitution errors, such as treating funding, technology, documentation, compliance, or worker effort as equivalent to quality itself.

Whole Quality of Service is not a simple arithmetic formula. The expression is an architectural statement. It identifies the main components that must remain visible when quality is evaluated. If any component is ignored, the quality claim may become incomplete or misleading.

## **11. Core Standards and Context Guides**

AMSI applies Whole Quality through a family-level architecture consisting of Core Standards and Context Guides. This architecture allows AMSI to maintain stable quality principles while recognizing that support services are realized differently across contexts.

A Core Standard defines fundamental quality requirements applicable to a family of services. A Context Guide explains how those requirements are realized within a specific environment, activity, setting, population, or support situation.

Context Guides do not replace Core Standards. They apply Core Standards within defined support environments. The Core Standard remains the stable family-level reference. The Context Guide makes that reference usable in a concrete context where work, risks, interfaces, evidence, and expected results may differ.

### **Personal Care Aide family example**

The Personal Care Aide (PCA) quality family may include a Core Standard supported by Context Guides such as:

- PCA Quality Standard - Core
- Bathing Support Context Guide
- Mobility Support Context Guide
- Meal Support Context Guide

The Core Standard expresses the stable quality logic for the PCA service family. The Context Guides explain how that logic applies in specific support activities where safety, dignity, privacy, physical assistance, communication, and result expectations may differ.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coaching family example**

The Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coaching (VRJ) quality family may include a Core Standard supported by employment-context guides such as:

- VRJ Quality Standard - Core
- Cleaning Services Employment Context Guide
- Other Employment Context Guides

The VRJ Core Standard expresses the stable quality logic for vocational rehabilitation job coaching. Employment Context Guides explain how that logic applies within specific workplace environments where job tasks, coworker interfaces, supervision, safety, productivity expectations, and support boundaries may differ.

This family-level architecture supports consistency, scalability, portability, and future expansion. It also aligns AMSI with the broader WQI idea that a Core may provide family-level quality architecture while Context Guides provide context-specific realization.

The Core Standard and Context Guide structure also prevents overgeneralization. A single service family may share one intended function logic, but the real conditions of support can vary significantly. Context Guides preserve the connection between family-level quality and real-life context.

## 12. AMSI Whole Quality Position

AMSI adopts a Whole Quality approach to support-service quality. This position differs from approaches that define quality primarily through funding levels, regulatory compliance, documentation systems, staffing ratios, technology platforms, management systems, or isolated performance measures.

These elements may influence quality, but they do not define quality. Within AMSI, quality is evaluated through the quality state of the support service itself.

AMSI does not prescribe a mandatory Quality Management System. Different organizations may use different management systems, technologies, staffing models, documentation methods, and operational structures. The central question remains whether the intended support function is being realized with sufficient quality.

This approach keeps quality evaluation focused on the service and the support function rather than on one required management model. It also allows AMSI standards and context guides to remain portable across diverse service models and regulatory environments.

AMSI does not reject management systems, compliance programs, funding rules, or technology. It treats them as potentially useful supports. They become quality-relevant when they help or hinder work, results, function realization, boundary quality, evidence, and quality claims.

## 13. AMSI Publication Families

AMSI applies Whole Quality through several publication families. These families together create the support-service application platform under WQI. WQS1 serves as the hub article that explains how the families connect.

### Vocabulary

Vocabulary publications establish shared terminology and conceptual distinctions. Example:

- AMSI VOC1

### Standards and Context Guides

Standards and Context Guides define quality requirements and explain how those requirements are realized within specific support contexts. Examples include:

- PCA Quality Standard - Core
- Bathing Support Context Guide
- Mobility Support Context Guide
- Meal Support Context Guide
- VRJ Quality Standard - Core

- Cleaning Services Employment Context Guide

## Boundaries and Interfaces

Boundary and Interface publications examine quality conditions emerging through human relationships, organizational interactions, and service-system connections. Examples include:

- When Support Fails at the Human Interface
- IDD and Mental Health Reference Guide

## Funding, Value, and Compensation

Funding and Value publications examine relationships among quality, cost, funding, disability, employment, compensation, and service sustainability. Examples include:

- Understanding Quality Beyond Cost
- What Work Are We Paying For?
- Whole Quality vs Funding

## Technology and Support Services

Technology publications examine how digital tools, AI systems, and documentation platforms may support or distort support-service quality. Example:

- Whole Quality & Technology

## Verification and Certification

Verification and Certification publications examine evidence, verification, conformity assessment, certification, and quality claims. Examples include:

- Service Verification Methodology
- Quality Certification

These publication families should remain connected but not merged. VOC1 defines vocabulary. WQS1 explains the Whole Quality hub architecture. Funding and Technology articles apply the architecture to specific domains. Standards and Context Guides apply the architecture to service families and contexts.

This publication-family structure allows AMSI to evolve without rewriting every publication at once. WQS1 updates the hub. Funding and Technology articles can be updated next. Other publications can remain stable until WQI VOC1 and the revised AMSI VOC1 are ready.

## 14. Relationship Between AMSI and WQI

WQI provides the general Whole Quality architecture, including concepts such as Whole Quality, Quality Object, Intended Function, Function Realization, Quality Factors, Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, Evidence, Quality Claims, Boundaries, and Interfaces.

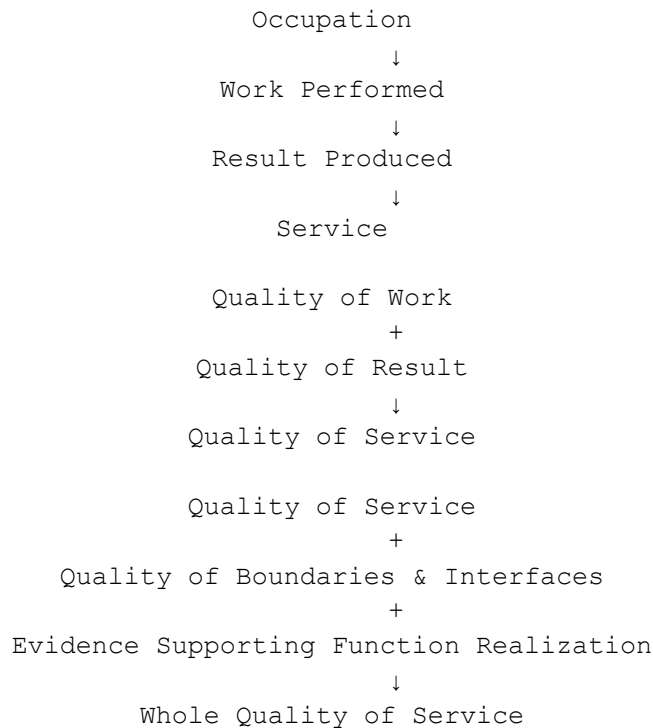
AMSI serves as the support-service application platform of WQI. AMSI translates Whole Quality concepts into support-service vocabulary, Core Standards, Context Guides, analytical publications, verification methodologies, and practical frameworks for personal and social support services.

In this relationship, WQI provides the general architecture and AMSI provides the support-service application. The two are complementary. AMSI does not replace WQI vocabulary, and WQI does not replace AMSI applied support-service standards. Instead, AMSI shows how the WQI method can be used in the human support-service domain.

Future WQI VOC1 may provide the root Whole Quality vocabulary. A revised AMSI VOC1 may then allocate that root vocabulary into the applied support-service vocabulary. WQS1 is written to remain stable during that transition by referencing VOC1 concepts without duplicating the full vocabulary standard.

## 15. AMSI Whole Quality Architecture

The following architecture summarizes the central logic of WQS1 and connects AMSI VOC1, WQI foundational logic, Core Standards, Context Guides, and future verification methods.



This architecture does not replace detailed standards, vocabulary, context guides, or verification methodologies. It provides the hub logic connecting them.

The upper sequence shows the AMSI service foundation: occupation supports work, work produces results, and work plus result constitutes service. The middle sequence shows the service-quality foundation: quality of work and quality of result together form quality of service. The lower sequence shows the Whole Quality expansion: quality of service must be considered with boundaries, interfaces, evidence, and function realization.

## 16. Conclusion

Support services exist to perform intended functions that matter in the lives of people receiving support. These functions are realized through work performed by people, occupations, organizations, and service systems operating within real contexts.

AMSI recognizes that quality cannot be understood solely through tasks, outcomes, compliance requirements, funding levels, staffing levels, technology, or administrative systems. Whole Quality requires examination of the complete support-service object.

This includes intended function, function realization, work performed, results produced, boundaries and interfaces, evidence, and quality claims.

The foundational AMSI principle remains: Service = Work + Result. Building upon this principle, Whole Quality extends service-quality evaluation to include broader conditions necessary for successful function realization.

Through standards, context guides, analytical publications, and verification methodologies, AMSI seeks to make support-service quality visible, understandable, evidence-based, and capable of continual improvement. As an applied initiative under WQI, AMSI uses Whole Quality to help evaluate support services not only by what they intend to do, but by what they actually accomplish in practice.

## 17. Copyright, Permissions, and Use

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