



MRC Policy Updates: March 2023 Pre-Assessments and Public Notice of Engagement in the MRC Accreditation Process

MRC Pre-Assessment Policies:

The following points clarify and supplement existing MRC policies regarding the availability of and execution of MRC Pre-Assessments, also known as Pre-Audits.*

1. A formal Pre-Audit is required for any digital measurement product submitted by an organization that is applying for MRC accreditation for the first time.
2. Formal Pre-Audits are generally encouraged for non-digital measurement products submitted by an organization that is applying for MRC accreditation for the first time.
3. ***In all other situations, the availability of a Pre-Audit is at the sole discretion of the MRC Staff.***
 - a. Examples of situations (other than the two noted above) in which MRC may desire to conduct a formal Pre-Audit in advance of an audit might include:
 - i. First time assessments of a product produced by an organization that has previously been engaged in an MRC accreditation process, but the product in question is of a unique nature in the marketplace, or one with which MRC has had no prior experiences in the auditing of a comparable type of service.
 - ii. As a first step that is mutually agreed upon between MRC and the measurement organization in bringing a specific product into the accreditation process where the MRC's membership has expressed its strong desire to have the product become engaged with MRC.
 - iii. In a situation where, in the judgment of the MRC staff, the learnings to be gained from executing a pre-audit process prior to an audit will be of significant benefit, specifically to MRC and its members.
4. Pre-Audits are to be executed only when the applicant organization has indicated in advance to the MRC its "good faith" intention to subsequently enter into and complete a full audit for MRC's accreditation consideration.
5. If an organization is entering the MRC accreditation process for the first time (referring specifically to the *organization* that produces the measurement service, and not the product itself), it has the option to have its Pre-Audit findings considered as "restricted"—which, for this specific purpose, is defined as sharing the Pre-Audit report output among only the measurement service, the CPAs, and the MRC Staff; in other words, the restricted report is not shared with MRC members, unless the service chooses to waive this choice at a later time.
 - a. In all other situations, a restricted Pre-Audit would be administered only in highly unusual circumstances, and is available only if that is a condition that is explicitly agreed to in advance by the MRC Staff.
 - b. In the event that a service, subsequent to a confidential Pre-Audit, chooses to withdraw the product from the MRC process prior to the execution of the full audit stage, this action would effectively negate the prior agreement concerning the restriction on MRC's ability to share the Pre-Audit findings with MRC members. In such a situation, at the

* (see <https://www.mediaratingcouncil.org/sites/default/files/News/Process-Related/052416%20CPAs%20note%20on%20new%20pre%20audit%20policies.pdf> for prior Pre-Audit policy statements).

discretion of the MRC Staff, the Pre-Audit report then may be shared with a committee comprised of MRC members (all of whom are subject to MRC's standard member NDA).

Please direct any further questions concerning the MRC's Pre-Audit policies to a member of the MRC Staff.

Policies concerning public notice of engagement in the MRC accreditation process

Note: "Public notice" is defined for this purpose as a listing that the service is "in process" on the MRC website, but does not necessarily exclude other additional means of public communication by MRC.

MRC may publicly note that a service has applied for accreditation consideration upon initiation of a pre-audit or audit process with that service.

- However, an organization that is engaged with MRC for the first time may request that its service's engagement in the process be withheld from public notice until such time as the pre-audit of the service has been reviewed in a review meeting among the service, the CPAs, and the MRC Staff.
 - The above option applies to first-time applicants regardless of whether they have requested their pre-audit report output be considered "restricted," as described previously in the pre-audit policy section of this notice.
 - In no instance does a service have the ability to have its engagement with MRC withheld from public notice subsequent to the aforementioned pre-audit review meeting.
 - A service that does not engage in a pre-audit process, and moves directly into the MRC's audit process, does not have the option to withhold news of its engagement from public notice.

Other public communications by services actively engaged in the MRC accreditation process:

- A service generally may publicly note its engagement in the accreditation process, but only by reference to its formal "In Process" status. No further explanatory or detailed descriptions is permitted without the prior agreement of the MRC Staff.
- Services that do communicate externally concerning their engagement in the accreditation process waive the right to request that MRC withhold public notice of that engagement. External communications in this context are defined as communications, written or verbal, to any entity outside the service's organization, excluding the MRC Staff and the auditors designated by the MRC to conduct the engagement.
- Any public communications, including press releases, blog posts, social media posts, marketing materials, etc., that reference MRC or the MRC's audit and accreditation process should be provided to MRC in advance for MRC's review and approval.
- MRC does not allow for services that are not formally engaged in the accreditation process (defined as having a formal written agreement in place for auditing) to invoke a relationship with MRC, formal or otherwise, in their public communications, and MRC retains the right to publicly respond to any such statements, and to publicly correct or clarify the record as necessary.