

A+C Policy

QUALITY POLICY

Document ID	AC002
Date adopted	10 August 2017 (Revised October 2018 and July 2020)
Director responsible	Managing Partners
Manager responsible	QA Lead
Version Number	V 3
Version Date	30 July 2020
Next review due	July 2022
Related policies	Quality Assurance Audit Policy

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to set a clear understanding of the quality standards that *Allen + Clarke* will work to, and the mechanisms used to ensure those standards are met.

2. ALLEN + CLARKE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Allen + Clarke's Strategic Plan sets 10- and 25-year goals for the firm. These focus on *Allen + Clarke* being a leader in the public policy space, and ultimately being recognised as a firm that exemplifies the idea that businesses can partner with governments to lead important societal change.

Figure 1: *Allen + Clarke's* Vision Framework



To achieve these goals, we need to be the top of our game. This means living our values which are all about making a difference. It means recruiting, retaining and building people who are the best at what we do. It's about building the trust and respect of our clients so that we are their first port of call, not just because they rate us for what we do but also because they enjoy the experience of working with us. We need to have a substantive and positive market presence that is not just about our work (although that's a core part of it), but also about the impact we've had and how we care enough about what we are trying to achieve, that we pull out all stops – including doing some stuff for free (e.g. pro bono projects).

Underpinning all of this is quality: without quality systems and processes, and ultimately delivering quality services, we won't be top of our game – and simply won't achieve our goals.

3. ALLEN + CLARKE'S QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Allen + Clarke has always had a focus on quality. Ever since we started, we have talked about how 'quality trumps everything'. We have an impressive track record of very satisfied clients. Like any organisation, from time to time we have dropped the ball. However, when that has occurred we have applied the kitchen sink philosophy to making things right: throwing the full resources of the firm to sort problems out. In most cases this has resulted in an even greater reputation among those clients and further business being offered.

Over the last 18 years we have developed a range of systems and processes to promote and ensure quality, and to encourage a firm-wide philosophy of continuous quality improvement. These have been built up over time, both proactively and sometimes in response to problems that have arisen or threats on the horizon.

Our quality management systems have been formalised and codified and include:

- ISO9001 Quality Assurance certification which includes an annual auditing process;
- the development of a formal *Allen + Clarke* Quality Management System (QMS), a document that maps all our systems and processes against ISO9001;
- a yearly work programme committed to continuous improvement in relation to QA;
- socialisation of QA processes and policies across all staff at *Allen + Clarke*.

This document sets out *Allen + Clarke's* Quality Policy.

3.1. QA Principles

In 2012 *Allen + Clarke* agreed a set of principles for quality assurance. The following revised principles are based on but extend the 2012 principles to emphasise a systems approach to QA, and a focus on continuous quality improvement. They continue to inform *Allen + Clarke's* work:

- **No compromise on quality:** *Allen + Clarke's* reputation is highly dependent on always delivering high quality products, on time and in line with client expectations and demands. We do not – and will not - compromise on quality;
- **If it's not right, we'll put it right:** We will apply the old LV Martin's philosophy diligently – and absolutely. If we have done something wrong then the whole firm will own that and apply everything required to fix it;
- **Think, plan and engage:** with each other and with the client so that there is a clear (shared) understanding and direction – from the beginning, and throughout projects;
- **Managing trade-offs:** While we expect all staff to work as efficiently as possible, we will not compromise the quality of our work where there has been under-sizing or under-pricing of projects: staff should consult with management about potential conflicts between delivering quality products and delivering products efficiently with a view to identifying solutions to conflicts;
- **No surprises:** We expect all staff to raise, at the earliest opportunity, any concerns they may have that quality and client expectations may not be able to be met;

- **Solutions-focus:** Staff should always come with suggested solutions to problems or perceived threats;
- **Meeting all applicable requirements:** *Allen + Clarke* will meet all legislated and client-mandated requirements around delivery;
- **Continuous improvement:** we will constantly look for opportunities to improve our systems, processes and the quality of our outputs – and for building and improving the business. We will monitor efforts, review our systems and processes, and encourage a culture that ensures that everyone at *Allen + Clarke* ‘owns’ our commitment to quality improvement.

3.2. Quality Objectives

Drawing on our Strategic Plan, the QA Principles we have identified, feedback from our team on what they see quality to be, and the ISO9001 Standard on quality management systems, *Allen + Clarke’s* quality objectives are:

- to develop a culture of continuous quality improvement that is promoted from the top but owned by everyone
- to always deliver excellent quality products, on time and to budget
- to resolve any quality wobbles early, transparently and to the client’s total satisfaction
- to meet all applicable requirements
- to have clients who value our work, and so much that they are strong advocates for us to other agencies
- to have a set of partners who enjoy working with us and think of us when opportunities arise (as we do them)
- to recruit the best people
- to develop and support our staff so they become masters of their craft, love the work they are doing, do great work, and promote *Allen + Clarke* as a great firm to work for.

All systems and processes we put in place will be focussed on promoting the achievement of the above quality objectives. The quality objectives will also form the basis for our management reviews of our quality management system.

3.3. Quality measures

Measure	Indicator and target
Key company goals and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we achieve or exceed all targets we set for the implementation of the Practices, the Australian market plan, and other key company initiatives
Client satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we achieve 4/5 or higher on all measures listed on client feedback forms, and an average of 4.25/5 • internal end of project reviews suggest a high level of client satisfaction (we achieve an average of 8/10 or higher on staff’s self-assessment on the AoG criterion “Service”)

Measure	Indicator and target
Clients as advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of clients completing our client feedback forms tick the box advising that they would be happy to refer us to others/recommend us
Staff satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual staff surveys show high engagement, commitment to improvement and a high degree of satisfaction with working at <i>Allen + Clarke</i>
Staff competency and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all staff engage actively in performance review and professional development processes we move quickly to resolve non-performance
Partners bring us work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> we can point to a number of examples where partners have raised work opportunities with us, or recommended us to clients
Proposal success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> our success rate for proposals we submit is greater than 40% for non-AoG projects, and greater than 66% for AoG opportunities in New Zealand
Compliance with all systems and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a high degree of support for, and compliance with, all QA systems and processes, and this support is demonstrated by staff at all levels
Innovation and continuous quality improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> we can point to a number of examples of where staff have initiated, led and owned initiatives to improve quality across the firm, and to more broadly promote the success of <i>Allen + Clarke</i>