

Quality Assurance and Control (QAC)

Brief summary of features

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Sample Inspection and Monitoring Samples (SIMS)

A tool designed to help detect developing problems by collecting information that describes current inspection performance. There are three ways to obtain information for SIMS.

Random – Nightly, the program randomly selects from samples entered or uploaded into the Inspection Data Warehouse (IDW) that day, using stratified sampling. An email will be sent to the QAS containing information on the sample and whether it should be monitored by the QAS or GSL.

Targeted – FOSS or QACS will identify samples that have been entered into IDW to be monitored by GSL. QAS will identify samples that have been entered into IDW to be monitored by the QAS. Criteria can be any of the following: date range, inspector, inspection type, service type, commodity, class, factor and result, grade, movement, carrier, sampling device, or special grade. An email will be sent to the QAS containing information on the sample and whether it should be monitored by the QAS or GSL.

Flagged – FOSS or QACS will create a profile of the sample they want monitored by GSL. QAS will create a profile of the sample they want monitored by the QAS. These samples have yet to be entered into IDW. Criteria can be of any of the following: date range, factor and result, OSP, commodity, class, grade, and QAS. Nightly, the program selects samples that meet the profiles from samples entered or uploaded into the IDW. An email will be sent to the QAS containing information on the sample and whether it should be monitored by the QAS or GSL.

Once the sample is received by the QAS or GSL, they have the ability to enter their results by clicking the Edit New or Edit Existing SIMS link.

Subjective Testing and Evaluation Process (STEP)

A tool designed to minimize interpretive variability within subjective factor determinations in all graded commodities. The BAR reviews and adjusts the factor separations of the OSP QAS, while the OSP QAS review and adjusts the factor separations of the inspector. There are three types of STEP:

Random – The program will randomly select a SIMS sample upon entering the results of the GSL or QAS. If selected, a pop-up will appear saying it has been selected and to send the sample to the BAR.

Targeted – FOSS, QACS, or the BAR will identify samples that have been entered as SIMS to be analyzed by the BAR. OSP management will identify samples that have been entered as SIMS to be analyzed by the OSP QAS. Criteria can be any of the following: data range, OSP, inspector, inspection type, service type, commodity, class, factor and result, grade, movement, carrier, sampling device, or special grade. An email will be sent to the QAS containing information on the sample and whether it should be monitored by the QAS or GSL.

Flagged – FOSS, QACS, or the BAR will create a profile of the sample that will be analyzed by the BAR. These samples have yet to be selected into SIMS. Criteria can be of any of the following: date range, factor and result, OSP, commodity, class, grade, and QAS. If selected, a pop-up will appear saying it has been selected and to send the sample to the BAR.

Once the sample is received by the QAS or BAR, they have the ability to enter their results by clicking the Edit New or Edit Existing STEP link.

Corrective Action

While the QAS or GSL is entering their results using SIMS Edit, they have the option to flag one or more factors as for Corrective Action by checking a box.

There is a new feature in CRT that when a certificate is superseded for an appeal or BAR appeal, there is an option to “Send Original to QAC as Corrective Action”.

The SP QAS, OSP QAS, GSL, or BAR sends a portion of the sample back to inspector for a repick. After the sample is returned and corrected, the results may be entered by clicking the Edit Existing Corrective Action link.

Opinion

Opinions provide a quick exchange of interpretations between the inspector and QAS and the QAS and the BAR.

An inspector submits challenging separations/samples to the QAS for review. The OSP QAS will use the Create New Opinion link and enter the inspector’s information.

OSP QAS or GSL can submit challenging separations/samples to the BAR for review. They will go into Create New Opinions and check the box that states “Direct Request to BAR” and fill out the rest of the form.

OSP QAS or GSL may submit a SIMS sample for an opinion to the BAR by clicking “Create & Attach Opinion” while in SIMS Edit.

The OSP QAS or BAR will use the Edit Existing Opinion link to enter their results.

Over the Shoulder (OTS)

OTS allows the shift supervisor, SP QAS, OSP QAS, GSL or BAR to observe inspectors grading skills and offer immediate feedback and training. They will click the Create New OTS link and enter the original and supervision data. If the sample has already been submitted to IDW, they can click Attach Inspection Record and fill out a search form to find the record.

If the sample hasn't been submitted to IDW yet, once it has been, the shift supervisor, SP QAS, OSP QAS, GSL or BAR can go into Edit Existing OTS to review information and attach the record. .

Performance Appraisal Sample (PAS)

PAS are samples that the inspector submits to the QAS or BAR for a rating.

The SP QAS, OSP QAS, or BAR click on Create New PAS to enter in the inspectors and enter some preliminary information. A record from IDW can be attached by entering search criteria and submitting the request. The supervision data is entered and saved.

Referee

Referees are samples sent to a group of inspectors to determine training needs. Inspectors analyze the sample for factor(s) and return the sample. The sample is corrected and scored.

SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR determines that a sample should be divided and sent to a group of inspectors to test their ability. They click the Create New Referee link and choose the OSP, service point, commodity, and factor(s) to be tested. The inspectors may be chosen manually or randomly by the program. The program will send an email to the OSP QAS notifying them about the referee and request for participation.

The inspector, SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR clicks the Edit Existing Referee and enters the original result and the sample and separations are returned to the originator.

The SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR clicks the Edit Existing Referee and enters in the corrected result.

Survey

Surveys are samples sent to a group of inspectors to determine training needs. Inspectors analyze the sample for factor(s) and retain the sample. Portions of the sample are submitted to the BAR to establish a target.

SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR determines that a sample should be divided and sent to a group of inspectors to test their ability. They click the Create New Survey link and choose the OSP, service point, commodity, and factor(s) to be tested. The inspectors may be chosen manually or randomly by the program. The program will send an email to the OSP QAS notifying them about the survey and request for participation.

The inspector, SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR clicks the Edit Existing Survey and enters the original result.

The BAR clicks the Edit Existing Survey and enters in the results to calculate the target value.

When all results are entered, the originator of the survey clicks the Edit Existing Survey and presses the Calculate Std deviation button. This will perform determine the control limits for the survey. Inspectors with samples outside the limits will be asked to return their separations for correction.

The SP QAS, OSP QAS or BAR clicks the Edit Existing Survey and enters corrections.

Voluntary STEP

Voluntary STEP are samples that inspectors submit for review.

An inspector submits samples to the QAS for review. The OSP QAS submits samples to the BAR for review.

The OSP QAS or BAR will use the Create New Voluntary STEP link to enter criteria to search QAC and IDW for information on Local Voluntary STEPs.

OSP QAS will be able to use the Request VSTEP checkbox on the Edit SIMS screen to submit information to the BAR.

The OSP QAS or BAR will use the Edit Existing Voluntary STEP link to enter their results.

Early Alerts

Early Alerts is a bulletin board like tool that will allow information to get out to everyone quickly.

The BAR, QACS, FOSS, and GSL can click on the Early Alert Program link and click the Create Circuits link to create new national or local circuits.

The OSP QAS can click on Early Alert Program and click the Create Circuits link to create new local circuits.

BAR, QACS, FOSS, GSL and OSP QAS can click on the Bulletins link and type in a new message. When the Post button is pressed, the message is posted and an email goes out to all members of that circuit.

Domestic Complaint

Domestic Complaints are caused when someone claims that results/grades obtained from one circuit are different than results/grades obtained from another circuit. QACS and FOSS will look into these complaints and check for validity.

After QACS or FOSS receives a complaint they will create a complaint record by clicking on the Create Domestic Complaint link. QACS will perform a search of IDW for all the records needed and attach the records. The system will create a template that lists all the pertinent information that the user can cut and paste into an email to interested parties.

The OSP sends the samples and work records to the BAR for review. BAR will click Edit Existing Domestic Complaints link and enter their results. System emails QACS when results have been entered.

QACS or FOSS reviews data and emails results to involved OSP.

Foreign Complaint

Foreign Complaints are when foreign countries claim that the results/grades/weights are different than what they requested.

Office of International Affairs (OIA) is informed of a complaint. They click on the Create Foreign Complaint link and fill out information to perform a search through IDW of possible ships and lots for selection. The system will create a template that lists all the pertinent information that the user can cut and paste into an email to interested parties.

The OSP sends the samples and work records to the BAR for review. BAR will click Edit Existing Foreign Complaints link and enter their results. System emails OIA when results have been entered.

OIA will review information and initiates a report, which is sent to all interested parties.

Abilities within QAC

Inspectors (if E-authenticated) – Read and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Enter their results into **Edit Existing Referee** and **Edit Existing Survey**.

Shift Supervisors – Read and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New OTS**. Enter results: **Edit Existing OTS, Edit Existing Referee, and Edit Existing Survey**.

Service Point QAS (if E-authenticated) - Read and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New OTS, Create New PAS, Create New Referee, and Create New Survey**. Enter results: **Edit New SIMS, Edit Existing SIMS, Edit Existing Corrective Action, Edit Existing OTS, Edit Existing PAS, Edit Existing Referee, and Edit Existing Survey**.

Official Service Provider QAS (if E-authenticated) – Create Local Circuits, Initiate Bulletins, Read, Edit, and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New Targeted SIMS, Create New Targeted STEP, Create New Opinion, Create New OTS, Create New PAS, Create New Referee, Create New Survey and Create New Voluntary STEP**. Enter results: **Edit New SIMS, Edit Existing SIMS, Edit New STEP, Edit Existing STEP, Edit Existing Corrective Action, Edit Existing Opinion, Edit Existing OTS, Edit Existing PAS, Edit Existing Referee, Edit Existing Survey and Edit Existing Voluntary STEP**. Retrieve data: **SIMS Record Search and STEP Record Search**.

Grading Services Lab (GSL) - Create Local and National Circuits, Initiate Bulletins, Read, Edit, and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New Opinion and Create New OTS**. Enter results: **Edit New SIMS, Edit Existing SIMS, Edit Existing Corrective Action, Edit Existing Opinion, Edit Existing OTS, Edit Existing Referee, and Edit Existing Survey**. Retrieve data: **SIMS Record Search and STEP Record Search**.

Board of Appeals and Review (BAR) – Create Local and National Circuits, Initiate Bulletins, Read, Edit, and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New Targeted STEP, Create New OTS, Create New PAS, Create New Referee, Create New Survey and Create New Voluntary STEP**. Enter results: **Edit New SIMS, Edit Existing SIMS, Edit New STEP, Edit Existing STEP, Edit Existing Corrective Action, Edit Existing Opinion, Edit Existing OTS, Edit Existing PAS, Edit Existing Referee, Edit Existing Survey, Edit Existing Voluntary STEP, Edit Existing Domestic Complaint, and Edit Existing Foreign Complaint**. Retrieve data: **SIMS Record Search and STEP Record Search**. Perform Administration: **Random STEP Submission Rates and Flagged STEP Profiles**.

Field Operations and Support Staff (FOSS) - Create Local and National Circuits, Initiate Bulletins, Read, Edit, and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New Targeted SIMS, Create New Targeted STEP, and Create Domestic Complaint**. Enter results: **Edit Existing Domestic Complaint**. Retrieve data: **SIMS Record Search and STEP Record Search**. Perform Administration: **Flagged SIMS Profiles and Flagged STEP Profiles**.

Quality Assurance and Control Staff (QACS) - Create Local and National Circuits, Initiate Bulletins, Read, Edit, and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create New Targeted SIMS, Create New Targeted STEP, and Create Domestic Complaint**. Enter results: **Edit Existing Domestic Complaint**. Retrieve data: **SIMS Record Search and STEP Record Search**. Perform Administration: **SIMS Distribution Rates, Random SIMS Stratified Rates, Flagged SIMS Profiles, Random STEP Submission Rates, and Flagged STEP Profiles**.

Office of International Affairs - Read and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Initiate processes: **Create Foreign Complaint**. Enter results: **Edit Existing Foreign Complaint**.

FMD - Weights – Read and Respond to existing **Early Alerts**. Enter results: **Edit Existing Foreign Complaint**.