



Ontario Public Library Guidelines  
Monitoring and Accreditation Council  
[www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca](http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca)

# Virtual Audit Process

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## The Rationale for Virtual Auditing

In early 2018, the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council began to explore the possibility of using technology to assist in streamlining the work and business of the OPLG Council. From these explorations, two virtual test audits were performed, one in the north at the Fort Frances Public Library and another in south at the Blue Mountains Public Library. Both audit experiences revealed to the OPLG Council that a virtual platform would be efficient, economical and detailed to the degree the OPLG Council could say with certainty that scope, magnitude and integrity of the OPLG Guidelines process would be preserved.

The OPLG Council also recognizes the limitations, budgets and time of our supporting Ontario Library Service organizations and the working realities of those from the broader library community who serve as the co-auditors. We realize that there is a need to use staff time efficiently. By utilizing virtual means to conduct most of our audits moving forward, the OPLG Council hopes to utilize its resources in more efficient ways, and be able to provide more opportunities for more libraries to become accredited.

## Preparing for an audit

1. In preparing for an audit, please ensure that you are working with the latest version of the **Ontario Public Library Guidelines**. The current version is the 2019 (7<sup>th</sup>) edition and it is posted in both a Word and an Excel at- <http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca/> . At that web page, you will find the “self-assessment” tools in both Word or Excel, and this document will be your guide for the accreditation audit.
2. To start the process, you will need to request an audit using the ‘Request Form’ posted on the Ontario Public Library Guidelines website. Any public library in Ontario may request an audit. Audits may be carried out in English or French, as requested. The OPLG does update our documents from time to time and it is important to note that preparation based on published documents *prior* to official Request Form completion may have libraries preparing under the incorrect documents for their scheduled audit. Only once an audit has been requested and scheduled is the document version locked in.
3. On receiving a request for an audit, a peer audit team will be appointed through the Ontario Library Service (Steven Kraus – [skraus@olsn.ca](mailto:skraus@olsn.ca) or Peggy Malcolm – [pmalcolm@sols.org](mailto:pmalcolm@sols.org)).

4. On receiving a request for an audit, OLS staff will also create the necessary platforms to prepare for the audit. These instructions are intended to guide you and your staff through the process to be used for a Virtual Accreditation Audit.

## Process

The Virtual Accreditation Audit will require a review of the same elements as would be the case if an audit team were to visit the library in person. That is:

- each of the guideline statements within the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Assessment Tool will require a “yes” or “no” answer
- the library will still be required to achieve all the mandatory guidelines; and
- the library system and at least one physical location will still be required to achieve a score of 90% overall

In addition, audits teams conducting the virtual audit will still be comprised of personnel from the Ontario Library Service and at least one other peer who possesses enough education or experience to assist the OPLG Council in conducting the evaluation. The difference in the Virtual Accreditation Audit is that the work of the audit team – and the library – will be conducted electronically in two ways:

1. Uploading documentation from the library onto a specific Google Drive for review by the audit team
2. Conducting a virtual tour of the physical space (s) for observation by the audit team.

## Part 1 – Uploading documentation

The 2019 version of the Ontario Public Library Guidelines is currently posted as a “self-assessment tool” on the OPLG website at <http://www.ontariopubliclibraryguidelines.ca> . The document itself consists of seven areas. The first five areas are focused on system-wide elements including #1- Governance & Administration; #2 – Planning Documents & Process; #3 Policy; #4 Personnel & Human Resources; and #5 General, and the final two areas involve on-site observations for #6 Collections & Services and #7 Physical & Facilities.

Not unlike previous practices for in-person audits, the expectation of the OPLG Council remains that any public library seeking accreditation or re-accreditation be prepared to provide clear and concise supporting information in their pursuit of the OPLG Guidelines.

For the purposes of a virtual accreditation audit, staff from the accrediting library will need to upload local library documentation to a library-specific folder within the OPLG Google Drive. This Google drive will be set up by a member of the OPLG Council and the link provided.

The accrediting library will upload documents, photos, videos or other appropriate proofs and evidence for the audit team to review. This work should be completed at least two weeks before the actual audit day. These uploads might be supporting documentation, photos or videos and other evidence that would be adequate to provide context, clarity and precise information on each guideline. The audit team will review this documentation against the requirements of the OPLG Guidelines to determine whether the specific guideline was met.

The accrediting library must provide all documentation for Areas 1-5 (System-Wide guidelines) but is encouraged to also submit any photographic evidence which may be more difficult to experience on a virtual tour for the onsite areas of 6&7. Examples could be parking lots where Wi-Fi may not be strong enough for the virtual tour or directional signs which are not onsite.

### A. Naming Convention on the Google Drive

For the purposes of this audit any document, photo, video or other evidence provided to support any of the OPLG Guidelines should be appropriately labelled for easy review and retrieval by the audit team. The names should include reference to the **actual OPLG Guideline number**, the name and the name of the local file. For example:

- OPLG 1.6 – Bylaws – TrilliumPublicLibraryBylaws2019.pdf
- OPLG 27.4 – Signage – TrilliumPublicLibraryRoadSignWestEnd.jpg

### B. Folder structure

There are seven sub-folders within the library folder. Using the naming convention, the local documentation should fall into the correct OPLG Guidelines area. That is:

Folder for Area #	Include evidence for questions or statements in these sections	Number of questions or statements in this area
Area 1 Folder	Sections 1 to 6	24
Area 2 Folder	Sections 7 to 11	27
Area 3 Folder	Sections 12 to 15	24
Area 4 Folder	Sections 16 to 18	23
Area 5 Folder	Sections 19 to 23	25
Area 6 Folder	Sections 24 to 26	33
Area 7 Folder	Sections 27 to 30	30

### C. Formats

For the purposes of the virtual audit, the following file formats will be accepted.

Type	Format
Documents (Original Files or Scanned Items)	Word or PDF
Photos (High Resolution and in Focus)	JPG or PNG
Videos	AVI or MP4

Scanned documents are welcome, however do ensure that all materials are properly formatted, clear and legible for audit teams to review samples of materials provided.

## Part 1 – Uploading documentation (continued)

### D. Other notes on uploading

As you consider the upload of supplementary evidence to support your OPLG guideline items, the OPLG Council would like to recommend that ‘like’ documents be uploaded as a single file and labelled with the guidelines that it might cover. For example,

- Guidelines #'s – Trillium Public Library Brochures
- Guidelines #'s – Trillium Public Library Reader’s Advisory Tools
- Guidelines #'s – Trillium Public Library Event Posters
- Guidelines #'s – Trillium Public Library Social Media Posts

### E. Using the Assessment Tool to support documentation

Auditors understand that by the very nature of the process, some policies, procedures or documentation may account for one or more guideline when similar topics, themes or concepts are related. For this reason, we have also provided a copy of the *Assessment Tool* within the Google Drive. This would be the file where you could include any notes about a guideline, using the space provided.

For example, in the *Assessment Tool* itself, the library noted that the policy related to Harassment – and therefore needed as evidence to support 12.4 Harassment is included under 12.3. When the audit team does not find anything under 12.4 Harassment in the folder for Area 3, then the team can go back to the *Assessment Tool* to find a note. At another point, the audit team also can see that while they can find the policy for 12.1 on Safety etc. within the Google Drive folder, it is also posted on the library website.

		Status (Y/N) whether you have the item or not		G-Drive Evidence	Online Evidence
<b>Section 12: Safety Security &amp; Emergencies</b>					
12.1	<b>Safety, Security and Emergencies Policy</b> - The library board is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for library staff as they carry out their duties and for members of the public who use public library services. The library has established and adopted a policy to deal with safety, security and emergency issues.	Y	Y	12.1 H&S	<a href="http://www.thebluemountainlibrary.ca/policy.cfm">http://www.thebluemountainlibrary.ca/policy.cfm</a>
12.2	<b>Working Alone</b> - The Library has established and adopted a policy pertaining to staff and volunteers who working alone in the library or other designated sites.	Y	Y	12.2 Work Alone	
12.3	<b>Workplace Violence</b> - The library has established and adopted a policy in place that adheres to relevant provincial and/or federal legislation on workplace violence and sexual violence.	Y	Y	12.3 Respectful Workplace	
12.4	<b>Harassment</b> - The library has established and adopted a policy in place that adheres to relevant provincial and/or federal legislation on harassment and sexual harassment.	Y	Y	See 12.3 Respectful	

Likewise, some documentation may be found on the accrediting library’s website. In this case the direct link to the documentation is acceptable in place of uploading of a file. This should be noted within the assessment tool in the Online evidence column with an active direct link.

## **Part 2: Virtual Tour**

For Sections 6 and 7 of the OPLG Guidelines, the audit team will take a “virtual” tour of your public library space. It is the expectation of the OPLG Council that the members of the audit team will be shown all areas of the public library required for the purposes of a virtual audit. Special care should be taken to demonstrate and guide the audit team through all public library spaces virtually, to address each of the guideline elements found in Sections 6 and 7.

To conduct the tour, we will be using ZOOM, a version of virtual conferencing software that is similar to Skype, Facetime or Google Hangouts. It allows multi-site virtual connections and the ability to share and review documents collaboratively.

For the “virtual” tour of the library space, it is the OPLG’s recommendation that a mobile device (e.g. smart phone, tablet) be used to conduct the tour. At the library, it would be best if a team of two staff members or volunteers be available to provide the tour. That way, one person can be a “camera/device person” allowing the CEO to recount and provide the necessary evidence and information for each guideline in Sections 6 and 7. In multi-branch locations, the CEO may choose to remain at the first branch and participate in the further branch Virtual tours over Zoom while other staff give those online the tour. In this way, time for travel is mitigated.

This portion must be done in real time and not submitted to council in recorded video format. The OPLG Council, in trust, will assume the public library system being audited will not purposefully or knowingly hide or obstruct any areas of the library for viewing during a virtual audit for any reason.

## **Timing and scheduling**

As the OPLG Council begins to use virtual audit processes, the timing of your intention to accredit or re-accredit your public library becomes more important. We would hope that you would provide Council with a minimum of eight (8) weeks’ notice of your intended date. This will allow us to set up the Google Drive folder for your library and give you time to prepare and upload the necessary documents. It will also give us time to appoint an audit team, set a date and review the technological logistics for virtual/live streamed portions of the audit.

On the day of the audit, the audit team will review their scoring of the uploaded evidence in the Google Drive, and spend some time on the virtual tour of the library space. We expect this step might take 3 hours to complete. The CEO, or in multi-branch locations, the supporting accrediting library team, will not be required to be on the Zoom call for the entire auditing team discussion. The CEO should be available during this time however, should the auditing team have further questions which arise during the evaluation process.

Following the audit, a draft Audit Report will be prepared by the Audit Team. This draft report will be review by the Library CEO. Once all points are agreed upon, the OLS OPLG Council representatives will submit the Final Audit Report to the Guidelines Council for approval.

## Questions:

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