



EVIDENCE QUALITY STANDARD — CORE

WHOLE QUALITY STANDARD EQC1

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Core Architecture for Determining the Quality of Evidence

WHOLE QUALITY INSTITUTE

Foreword

Decisions about quality depend on information about actual conditions. But having information does not by itself mean that the information is good enough for the decision being made.

A record may cover only part of what matters. A measurement may be accurate but concern the wrong place or time. Information may come from a reliable source but still be unsuitable for the question being examined. In each case, the information exists, but there is a limit to what it can support.

This Standard provides a common way to examine the quality of Evidence used to support quality decisions. It asks three basic questions: Is there enough of the necessary Evidence? Can the Evidence be trusted for what it shows? Is the Evidence suitable for the particular use?

These questions are organized through three Quality Factors - Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence Trustworthiness, and Evidence Applicability - and ten supporting Quality Indicators.

The Standard does not prescribe particular forms of Evidence, sources, technologies, or assessment methods. These may differ among industries, organizations, technical fields, and other applications.

Evidence Quality is also different from the quality of the product, service, organization, system, or other subject being examined. Good Evidence may show a poor condition, and limited Evidence may prevent a responsible conclusion about the condition. The quality of the Evidence and the quality of the subject are therefore separate questions.

This Standard is part of the WQI Core Quality Standards. The controlled terminology and the more detailed methodological relationships are introduced in the sections that follow. The derivation and justification of the three Factors and ten Indicators are addressed separately.

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Introduction

Quality decisions depend on Evidence.

Evidence may include records, measurements, observations, data, images, assessments, or other information used to understand an actual condition. The existence of such information, however, does not mean that it is adequate for the conclusion being considered.

A record may omit an important part of the condition. A measurement may concern the wrong location or period. Information may come from a reliable source but be unsuitable for the particular question. Evidence may also lack the detail needed for the decision being made.

These are different evidence problems. Treating Evidence as simply "good" or "bad" can hide the reason that a conclusion is, or is not, adequately supported.

Whole Quality therefore treats Evidence Quality as a distinct subject. In simple terms, Evidence Quality concerns what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Within WQI, Evidence is used to support a Finding about the actual condition of the subject being examined. That subject is formally defined as a Quality Object. Evidence Quality concerns the support available for the Finding; it does not determine whether the Quality Object itself is in a favorable or unfavorable condition.

This distinction is important. Strong Evidence may support an unfavorable Finding. Limited Evidence may prevent a responsible Finding. The quality of the Evidence therefore shall not be used as a substitute for the quality of the Quality Object.

The WQI Evidence Quality Core examines Evidence through three Quality Factors: Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence Trustworthiness, and Evidence Applicability.

Evidence Sufficiency asks whether enough of the necessary Evidence is available and whether it has the needed detail. Evidence Trustworthiness asks whether the Evidence provides a truthful representation of what it is intended to show. Evidence Applicability asks whether the Evidence is suitable for the subject, conditions, and determination for which it is used.

The three Factors are examined through ten Quality Indicators. These Indicators separate more specific questions such as Coverage, Completeness, Resolution, Source Reliability, Validity, Accuracy, Evidence Integrity, and the applicability of Evidence to the subject, Context, and determination.

The Factors and Indicators work together but remain distinct. Strength in one area does not automatically remove a limitation in another area that can affect what the Evidence supports.

The same architecture can be used across different domains. The forms of Evidence, methods, technologies, criteria, and applicable requirements may differ according to the Quality Object and Context.

The following sections introduce the controlled WQI terms and establish the formal Evidence Quality architecture, its application within Quality Determination, and its relationship to Findings, Quality State, Quality Claims, Uncertainty, and Traceability.

The methodological derivation and justification of the three Factors and ten Indicators are addressed separately in the WQI Evidence Quality Factors and Indicators Justification.

1 Scope

This Core Standard establishes the common WQI architecture for determining the Quality of Evidence used to support Findings and Quality Determinations.

It applies to different forms and sources of Evidence across Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts where the WQI methodology is used.

The Standard establishes three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators for Evidence Quality and the requirements governing their application.

It does not prescribe particular forms or sources of Evidence, data-collection methods, assessment technologies, domain-specific methods, or context-specific criteria.

The controlled meanings of WQI concepts used in this Standard are established by WQI_VOC1. Their formal relationships are introduced in the Normative Foundation and subsequent sections.

The methodological derivation and justification of the Evidence Quality Core architecture are addressed separately and are not part of this Core Standard.

2 Normative Foundation

2.1 Whole Quality Root Vocabulary

This Core Standard uses the controlled concepts and terminology established by the Whole Quality Root Vocabulary Standard (WQI_VOC1).

Terms defined in WQI_VOC1 retain their authoritative meanings when used in this Standard. This Core Standard does not create alternative definitions for those concepts.

Where additional wording is necessary to describe the application of a controlled WQI concept within the Evidence Quality Core, that wording shall be interpreted consistently with WQI_VOC1 and shall not redefine the Root Concept.

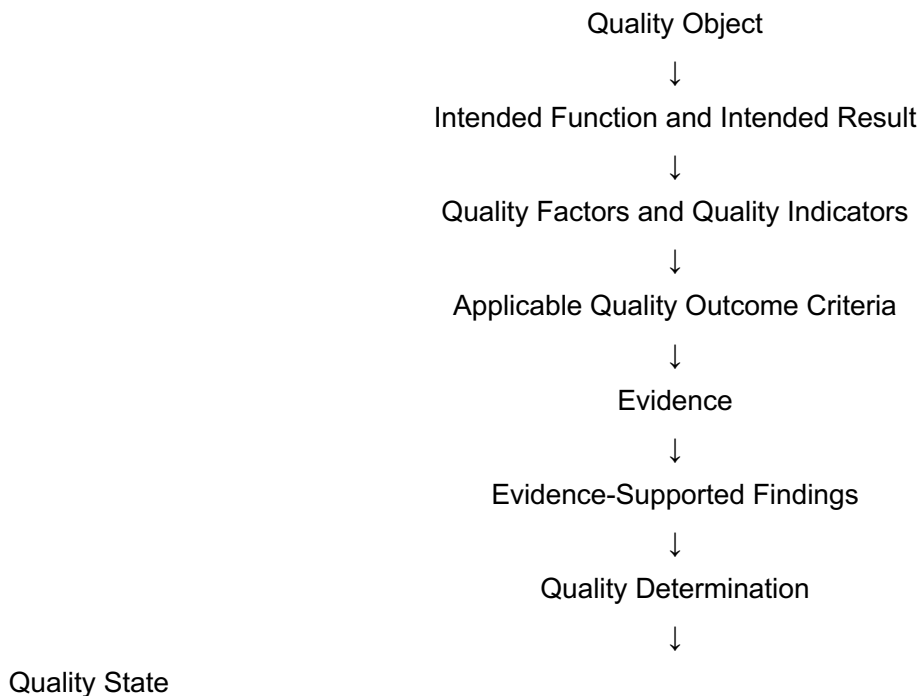
Context-specific terms, criteria, methods, and technical meanings may be established by applicable WQI standards, applied initiatives, or other relevant sources where required for a particular application. Such contextualization does not change the authoritative meanings of WQI Root Concepts.

2.2 Evidence within Whole Quality

Within Whole Quality, Evidence provides the factual basis for Evidence-Supported Findings concerning the actual condition of a Quality Object.

Evidence may originate from different forms and sources. Its role within a Quality Determination is not established by its form or source alone, but by its use in supporting a Finding concerning the Quality Object being examined.

Evidence is considered in relation to the applicable Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Quality Object, Context, and scope of the determination.





Bounded Quality Claim

Evidence does not replace the applicable Quality Outcome Criterion, and the existence of Evidence does not by itself establish a Finding or Quality State.

A Quality Determination shall therefore distinguish between what is observed or otherwise evidenced, what the Evidence supports as a Finding, and what may subsequently be concluded about the Quality State of the Quality Object.

2.3 Evidence as a Quality Object

Evidence may itself be treated as a Quality Object when its Quality is separately examined.

Treating Evidence as a Quality Object makes it possible to apply the general Whole Quality relationship between a defined Quality Object, its Intended Function and Intended Result, applicable Quality Factors and Quality Indicators, and the Evidence available to support the determination.

This treatment does not require Evidence to receive a separate Quality State whenever Evidence is used in an Quality Determination.

The purpose is to determine the Quality of the Evidence for the use being made of it and, consequently, what that Evidence can responsibly support in an Evidence-Supported Finding.

The Evidence Quality Object shall be defined with sufficient clarity for the determination being made. Depending on the application, it may consist of an individual item of Evidence, a defined body of Evidence, or another explicitly bounded evidentiary set used to support a Finding or Quality Determination.

The Quality Object about which the Evidence provides information remains distinct from the Evidence Quality Object. Determination of Evidence Quality shall therefore not be interpreted as determination of the Quality State of the underlying Quality Object.

2.4 Intended Function and Intended Result of Evidence

Within Whole Quality, Evidence is examined in relation to the function it is intended to perform in a Quality Determination.

The Intended Function of Evidence is to support a Finding about the actual condition of a defined Quality Object.

The Intended Result of Evidence is a Finding supported within the scope and certainty that the Evidence can responsibly support.

The Intended Function and Intended Result of Evidence are therefore related but distinct. The Intended Function identifies what the Evidence is used to do. The Intended Result is the Finding supported within the scope and certainty that the Evidence can responsibly support.

Realization of this function is not established merely by the existence, quantity, or apparent relevance of information. Evidence shall be capable of supporting the particular Finding for which it is used within the conditions of the determination.

The required evidentiary basis may differ among Quality Objects, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, Contexts, and determinations. Such differences do not change the Intended Function of Evidence established by the WQI framework.

Evidence Quality determination examines realization of this Intended Function and Intended Result through the Core architecture established in the following sections of this Standard.

3 Evidence Quality Architecture

3.1 General

Evidence Quality concerns the degree to which Evidence realizes its Intended Function for the use being made of it within a Quality Determination.

The WQI Evidence Quality Core establishes three invariant Core Quality Factors:

- Evidence Sufficiency;
- Evidence Trustworthiness; and
- Evidence Applicability.

These Core Quality Factors are examined through ten invariant Core Quality Indicators:

- Coverage;
- Completeness;
- Resolution;
- Source Reliability;
- Validity;
- Accuracy;
- Evidence Integrity;
- Subject Applicability;
- Context Applicability; and
- Determination Applicability.

The three Core Quality Factors identify distinct quality dimensions of Evidence. The ten Core Quality Indicators identify what is examined within those dimensions.

The Factors and Indicators form one Evidence Quality architecture. They shall be considered in relation to the Evidence Quality Object, the use being made of the Evidence, and the Quality Determination that the Evidence is intended to support.

The Core architecture does not establish a universal numerical measure or score for Evidence Quality. Evidence Quality is determined through the applicable Factors and Indicators in relation to the particular evidentiary use and conditions of the determination.

The Factors and Indicators are further specified in Sections 4 through 6. Their interaction is addressed in Section 7, and their role within Quality Determination is addressed in Section 8.

Evidence used to determine Evidence Quality shall itself be considered to the extent necessary for the determination being made. This requirement does not imply an unlimited sequence of separate Evidence Quality determinations; the evidentiary basis shall be examined to the level necessary to support the intended determination and its declared Methodological Resolution.

3.2 Evidence Quality and the Quality Determination Being Supported

Evidence Quality shall be considered in relation to the Quality Determination that the Evidence is intended to support.

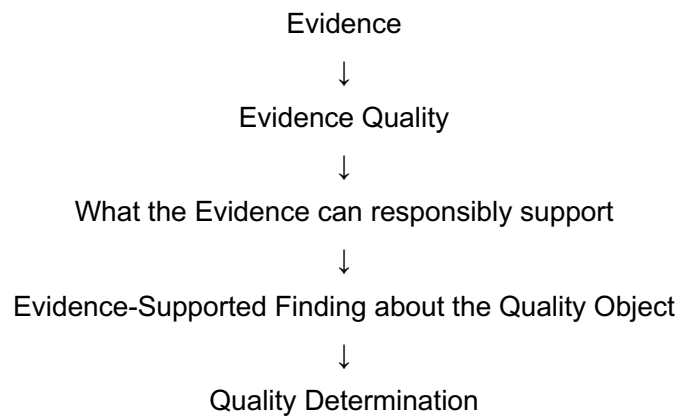
Evidence Quality and Object Quality are distinct. Evidence Quality concerns the capability and condition of Evidence for its intended evidentiary use. Object Quality concerns realization of the Intended Function and Intended Result of the Quality Object being examined.

Evidence that can responsibly support the intended Finding does not by itself establish a favorable Quality State. Such Evidence may support a favorable Finding, an unfavorable Finding, or another Evidence-Supported Finding concerning the actual condition of the Quality Object.

Similarly, Evidence that cannot responsibly support the required Finding does not by itself establish unfavorable Object Quality. Where Evidence cannot responsibly support the required Finding, the limitation

shall constrain the Finding or Quality Determination rather than be treated as evidence of poor Object Quality.

Evidence Quality shall therefore be determined with reference to the particular use being made of the Evidence. The same Evidence may be capable of supporting one Finding or determination while being insufficient, untrustworthy, or inapplicable for another.



Evidence Quality therefore governs the evidentiary support available to the Quality Determination. It does not substitute for that determination.

3.3 Invariance of the Core Architecture

The three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators established by this Standard constitute the invariant WQI Evidence Quality Core architecture.

Invariance means that the determination functions represented by these Factors and Indicators remain applicable when Evidence Quality is examined within the WQI framework.

Invariance does not mean that Evidence itself must be uniform across Quality Objects, domains, Contexts, or determinations.

The form, source, quantity, technical characteristics, collection method, assessment method, applicable criteria, required Methodological Resolution, and other conditions of Evidence may differ substantially according to the determination being supported.

Such differences do not create alternative Evidence Quality Factors or replace the Core Quality Indicators.

Context-specific requirements may determine how a Core Quality Indicator is applied and what Evidence is necessary to examine it. They may also establish criteria, methods, thresholds, or other conditions appropriate to the particular application.

Contextualization shall preserve the determination function of the applicable Core Quality Factor and Core Quality Indicator.

The invariant Core therefore provides a common Evidence Quality architecture while allowing the evidentiary requirements of individual Quality Objects, domains, Contexts, and determinations to remain specific to their application.

3.4 Context-Specific Application

The WQI Evidence Quality Core shall be applied in relation to the Quality Object, Evidence Quality Object, Context, scope, Methodological Resolution, and Quality Determination for which the Evidence is used.

The three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators remain invariant. Their application, however, shall reflect the conditions of the particular determination.

Context-specific application may establish or identify, as applicable:

- the Evidence required for the determination;
- applicable Quality Outcome Criteria or other criteria;

- appropriate forms and sources of Evidence;
- required extent, detail, and Methodological Resolution;
- applicable methods of collection, examination, validation, or interpretation; and
- other conditions necessary to determine what the Evidence can responsibly support.

These context-specific provisions may be established through applicable WQI standards, applied initiative standards or guides, the Reference Layer, or other sources appropriate to the determination.

Context-specific application may further specify a Core Quality Indicator where necessary for responsible use in a particular domain or determination. It shall not redefine the Indicator, replace its determination function, or omit a Core Evidence Quality consideration that can affect the determination without explicit justification and traceability.

The same form or source of Evidence may therefore have different evidentiary significance in different determinations. Its Evidence Quality shall be considered for the particular use being made of it rather than assumed from its form, source, or prior use alone.

Contextualization provides the application-specific basis needed to use the invariant Core architecture without converting context-dependent evidentiary requirements into universal WQI requirements.

4 Evidence Sufficiency

4.1 General

Factor — Evidence Sufficiency

Purpose of the Factor

To determine whether the available Evidence has the extent, completeness, and detail required to support the Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

Core role

Examines whether enough of the necessary Evidence is available, without important gaps, and at the Methodological Resolution required for the intended determination.

Definitions and Governing Terms

Governing WQI terms. Evidence, Evidence Quality, Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence-Supported Finding, Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, Methodological Resolution, Quality Determination, Uncertainty, and Traceability apply with their authoritative WQI_VOC1 meanings.

Evidence Sufficiency is examined through 3 Core Quality Indicators:

- Coverage
- Completeness
- Resolution

Coverage concerns the extent to which Evidence addresses the relevant parts, conditions, periods, events, or other aspects that must be examined for the Finding.

Completeness concerns whether important Evidence needed within the applicable scope is present rather than missing.

Resolution concerns whether the Evidence provides the level of detail or discrimination required to support the Finding at the Methodological Resolution of the intended Quality Determination.

Core Quality Indicators

Indicator 4.2 — Coverage

Indicator 4.3 — Completeness

4.2 Coverage

Indicator — Coverage

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall extend across the relevant parts, conditions, periods, events, or other aspects that must be examined to support the Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

Intent

To ensure that a Finding is not based on Evidence that addresses only part of what must be examined.

Scope and Boundaries

Coverage concerns the extent of the subject addressed by the Evidence.

The relevant extent depends on the Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, scope, and time of the determination.

Coverage may concern, as applicable, physical areas, components, functions, conditions, populations, activities, events, time periods, lifecycle stages, or other aspects relevant to the determination.

Coverage does not by itself establish that all important Evidence is present. That question is addressed through Completeness.

Coverage also does not establish that the Evidence has sufficient detail for the required Methodological Resolution. That question is addressed through Resolution.

Application Considerations

The required Coverage shall be determined in relation to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Where Evidence covers only part of the relevant subject, the resulting Finding shall remain bounded to the extent that the Evidence can responsibly support.

Where a limitation in Coverage can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to establish Coverage may include records, observations, measurements, data, samples, assessments, or other Evidence showing the extent of the subject that has been examined.

The quantity of Evidence alone does not establish adequate Coverage. Evidence shall address the relevant extent of the subject required for the determination.

4.3 Completeness

Indicator — Completeness

Indicator Statement

The Evidence needed to support the Finding or Quality Determination shall be present rather than missing.

Intent

To ensure that a Finding or Quality Determination is not made when important Evidence needed to support it is missing.

Scope and Boundaries

Completeness concerns whether the Evidence needed to support the Finding or Quality Determination is present rather than missing.

What Evidence is necessary depends on the Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, scope, and purpose of the determination.

Completeness is distinct from Coverage. Evidence may extend across the relevant subject but remain incomplete because important Evidence needed within that extent is missing.

Completeness is also distinct from Resolution. Evidence may be complete in what is present but lack the detail required for the Methodological Resolution of the determination.

Application Considerations

The required Completeness shall be determined in relation to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Missing Evidence does not necessarily make the available Evidence incomplete for the intended use. The missing Evidence must be important to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Where important Evidence is missing, the limitation shall be identified. The Finding or Quality Determination shall remain within what the available Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to establish Completeness may include records, observations, measurements, data, assessments, or other Evidence showing that the information necessary to support the Finding or Quality Determination is present.

The amount of Evidence alone does not establish Completeness. Completeness depends on whether the Evidence necessary for the particular Finding or Quality Determination is available.

4.4 Resolution

Indicator — Resolution

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall provide sufficient detail to support the Finding or Quality Determination at the required Methodological Resolution.

Intent

To ensure that a Finding or Quality Determination is not made from Evidence that lacks the detail needed to support it.

Scope and Boundaries

Resolution concerns the level of detail or discrimination provided by the Evidence for the determination being made.

The required Resolution depends on the Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, scope, and Methodological Resolution of the determination.

Resolution is distinct from Coverage. Evidence may extend across the relevant subject but lack sufficient detail to distinguish conditions that matter to the determination.

Resolution is also distinct from Completeness. The necessary Evidence may be present but remain too general, aggregated, imprecise, or otherwise insufficiently detailed for the required Methodological Resolution.

Application Considerations

The required Resolution shall be determined in relation to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Evidence does not require the greatest level of detail that could theoretically be obtained. It requires sufficient detail for the determination being made.

Where the available Evidence does not provide the required Resolution, the limitation shall be identified. The Finding or Quality Determination shall remain within the level of detail that the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to establish Resolution may include records, observations, measurements, data, images, analyses, assessments, or other Evidence showing the level of detail available for the determination.

Greater detail does not by itself establish adequate Resolution. Resolution is adequate when the Evidence provides the detail needed to support the particular Finding or Quality Determination.

5 Evidence Trustworthiness

5.1 General

Factor — Evidence Trustworthiness

Purpose of the Factor

To determine whether the Evidence provides a truthful representation of what it is intended to represent.

Core role

Examines whether the Evidence provides a truthful representation through its Source Reliability, Validity, Accuracy, and Evidence Integrity.

Definitions and Governing Terms

Governing WQI terms. Evidence, Evidence Quality, Evidence Trustworthiness, Evidence-Supported Finding, Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, Quality Determination, Uncertainty, and Traceability apply with their authoritative WQI_VOC1 meanings.

Evidence Trustworthiness is examined through 4 Core Quality Indicators:

- Source Reliability
- Validity
- Accuracy
- Evidence Integrity

Source Reliability concerns whether the source of the Evidence can be relied upon for the intended evidentiary use.

Validity concerns whether the Evidence represents what it is intended to show.

Accuracy concerns whether what the Evidence shows is represented without important error.

Evidence Integrity concerns whether the Evidence has remained intact and free from changes that could affect what it shows.

Core Quality Indicators

Indicator 5.2 — Source Reliability

Indicator 5.3 — Validity

Indicator 5.4 — Accuracy

5.2 Source Reliability

Indicator — Source Reliability

Indicator Statement

The source of the Evidence shall be reliable for the intended evidentiary use.

Intent

To determine whether the source from which the Evidence originates can be relied upon for the intended use.

Scope and Boundaries

Source Reliability concerns the degree to which the source of the Evidence can be relied upon for its intended evidentiary use.

A source may be a person, organization, system, instrument, database, process, or other origin from which the Evidence is obtained.

Source Reliability concerns the source, not whether the Evidence itself provides a truthful representation. A reliable source does not by itself establish Validity, Accuracy, or Evidence Integrity.

Application Considerations

Source Reliability shall be considered in relation to the Evidence and the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Relevant considerations may include the nature and origin of the source, how the Evidence was produced or obtained, applicable qualifications or controls, and known limitations affecting the source.

Where a limitation in Source Reliability can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Source Reliability may include information about the source, its origin, methods, qualifications, controls, performance, or other characteristics relevant to the intended use.

The reputation or formal status of a source alone does not establish Source Reliability. The source shall be considered in relation to the particular Evidence and its intended use.

5.3 Validity

Indicator — Validity

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall represent what it is intended to show.

Intent

To determine whether the Evidence actually represents what it is being used to show.

Scope and Boundaries

Validity concerns whether the Evidence represents the condition or characteristic it is intended to represent.

Validity is distinct from Source Reliability. Evidence may originate from a reliable source but still fail to represent the particular condition or characteristic being examined.

Validity is also distinct from Accuracy. Validity concerns whether the correct condition or characteristic is being represented. Accuracy concerns whether that condition or characteristic is represented without important error.

Validity is distinct from Evidence Integrity. Evidence may validly represent the intended condition or characteristic when created or obtained, while later alteration, loss, substitution, or distortion may affect its integrity.

Application Considerations

Validity shall be considered in relation to the condition or characteristic being examined and the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Relevant considerations may include what the Evidence represents, how that representation was established, the method by which the Evidence was produced or obtained, and known limitations affecting that representation.

Where a limitation in Validity can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Validity may include information about what was observed, measured, recorded, tested, assessed, or otherwise represented and the method by which that representation was established.

The existence of Evidence from a reliable source does not establish Validity. The Evidence shall represent what it is being used to show.

5.4 Accuracy

Indicator — Accuracy

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall represent what it shows without important error.

Intent

To determine whether the Evidence is accurate enough to support the Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

Scope and Boundaries

Accuracy concerns the degree to which the Evidence represents a condition or characteristic without important error.

Accuracy is distinct from Validity. Validity concerns whether the Evidence represents what it is intended to show. Accuracy concerns whether what it shows is represented without important error.

Evidence may therefore be valid but inaccurate. For example, Evidence may address the correct condition or characteristic while containing errors in its measurement, recording, calculation, description, or other representation.

Accuracy is also distinct from Evidence Integrity. An error may exist when Evidence is originally produced, while an integrity problem may arise through later alteration, loss, substitution, or distortion.

Application Considerations

The required Accuracy shall be determined in relation to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Evidence does not need to be free from every possible error. An error is important when it can affect what the Evidence can responsibly support in the intended determination.

Where a limitation in Accuracy can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Accuracy may include measurements, calculations, comparisons, verification results, records, observations, assessments, or other Evidence relevant to identifying or evaluating error.

Greater numerical precision does not by itself establish Accuracy. Accuracy depends on whether error affects the representation provided by the Evidence for its intended use.

5.5 Evidence Integrity

Indicator — Evidence Integrity

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall remain intact and free from changes that could affect what it shows.

Intent

To determine whether the Evidence has been preserved without important alteration, loss, substitution, or distortion.

Scope and Boundaries

Evidence Integrity concerns whether the Evidence remains intact throughout its evidentiary lifecycle.

Integrity may be affected by unauthorized, unexplained, or quality-relevant alteration, loss, substitution, distortion, corruption, or other changes that affect what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Integrity is distinct from Validity and Accuracy. Evidence may originally be valid and accurate but later lose integrity through alteration, loss, substitution, or distortion.

Evidence Integrity is also distinct from Source Reliability. A reliable source does not by itself establish that the Evidence has remained intact after it was produced or obtained.

Application Considerations

Evidence Integrity shall be considered from the creation or collection of the Evidence through its storage, transfer, processing, use, and retention, as applicable to the determination.

Not every change to Evidence represents a loss of integrity. Authorized or necessary processing, conversion, correction, or other change may be acceptable where its nature and effect are known and appropriately traceable.

Where a limitation in Evidence Integrity can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Evidence Integrity may include original records, change histories, custody or transfer records, system records, version histories, verification records, or other information showing how the Evidence has been maintained.

Evidence Integrity does not require Evidence to remain physically or technically unchanged in every circumstance. It requires that changes do not compromise what the Evidence represents or what it can responsibly support.

6 Evidence Applicability

6.1 General

Factor — Evidence Applicability

Purpose of the Factor

To determine whether the Evidence is applicable to the subject, Context, and Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

Core role

Examines whether the Evidence applies to the subject, Context, and determination for which it is used.

Definitions and Governing Terms

Governing WQI terms. Evidence, Evidence Quality, Evidence Applicability, Evidence-Supported Finding, Quality Object, Quality Indicator, Quality Outcome Criterion, Context, Quality Determination, Uncertainty, and Traceability apply with their authoritative WQI_VOC1 meanings.

Evidence Applicability is examined through 3 Core Quality Indicators:

- Subject Applicability
- Context Applicability
- Determination Applicability

Subject Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies to the Quality Object, part, condition, event, or period that is the subject of the Finding.

Context Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies under the conditions and circumstances in which the Finding is made.

Determination Applicability concerns whether the Evidence is suitable for the particular Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

Core Quality Indicators

Indicator 6.2 — Subject Applicability

Indicator 6.3 — Context Applicability

Indicator 6.4 — Determination Applicability

6.2 Subject Applicability

Indicator — Subject Applicability

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall apply to the subject it is being used to support.

Intent

To determine whether the Evidence concerns the Quality Object, part, condition, event, or period being examined.

Scope and Boundaries

Subject Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies to the specific subject of the Finding or Quality Determination.

The subject may be the Quality Object as a whole or a defined part, condition, function, event, period, or other aspect of that Quality Object.

Evidence concerning one subject shall not be assumed to apply to another subject merely because the subjects are similar or related.

Subject Applicability is distinct from Context Applicability. Evidence may concern the correct subject but not apply under the Context in which the Finding is being made.

Subject Applicability is also distinct from Determination Applicability. Evidence may apply to the correct subject but not be suitable for supporting the particular Finding or Quality Determination.

Application Considerations

Subject Applicability shall be determined in relation to the subject of the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Where Evidence concerns only part of the subject, its use shall remain within the part to which it applies unless a broader application is supported.

Where a limitation in Subject Applicability can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Subject Applicability may include identification records, descriptions, locations, dates, object or component identifiers, or other information establishing what the Evidence concerns.

Similarity or association alone does not establish Subject Applicability. The Evidence shall be connected to the subject for which it is being used.

6.3 Context Applicability

Indicator — Context Applicability

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall apply to the Context in which it is being used.

Intent

To determine whether the Evidence applies under the conditions and circumstances being examined.

Scope and Boundaries

Context Applicability concerns whether Evidence remains applicable under the conditions and circumstances in which the Finding or Quality Determination is made.

Relevant Context may include physical, environmental, operational, organizational, technological, temporal, regulatory, social, or other conditions that can affect the meaning or use of the Evidence.

Context Applicability is distinct from Subject Applicability. Evidence may concern the correct Quality Object or other subject but have been obtained under conditions that differ from those being examined.

Context Applicability is also distinct from Determination Applicability. Evidence may apply to both the subject and its Context but still not be suitable for supporting the particular Finding or Quality Determination.

Application Considerations

Context Applicability shall be determined in relation to the conditions and circumstances relevant to the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Evidence from a different Context is not automatically inapplicable. The significance of any difference shall be considered in relation to whether it affects the intended use of the Evidence.

Where a limitation in Context Applicability can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Context Applicability may include information describing the conditions and circumstances under which the Evidence was produced, obtained, observed, or recorded.

Similarity of Context alone does not establish Context Applicability. Relevant contextual differences shall be considered in relation to the intended use of the Evidence.

6.4 Determination Applicability

Indicator — Determination Applicability

Indicator Statement

The Evidence shall be suitable for the Finding or Quality Determination it is used to support.

Intent

To determine whether what the Evidence shows can properly support the particular Finding or Quality Determination.

Scope and Boundaries

Determination Applicability concerns whether what the Evidence represents can properly be used for the particular Finding or Quality Determination being made.

Evidence may apply to the correct subject and Context but still not be suitable for the particular determination.

Determination Applicability is distinct from Subject Applicability. Subject Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies to what is being examined.

Determination Applicability is also distinct from Context Applicability. Context Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies under the conditions and circumstances being examined.

Application Considerations

Determination Applicability shall be considered in relation to the particular Finding or Quality Determination for which the Evidence is used.

The same Evidence may properly support one Finding but not another. Its applicability shall therefore not be assumed from its prior use or general relevance.

Where Evidence supports only part of a Finding or a more limited determination, its use shall remain within what it can responsibly support.

Where a limitation in Determination Applicability can affect the determination, it shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Principle

Evidence used to determine Determination Applicability may include information showing the relationship between what the Evidence represents and the particular Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Relevance alone does not establish Determination Applicability. The Evidence shall be capable of supporting the particular Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

7 Interaction of Evidence Quality Factors and Indicators

7.1 General

Evidence Quality shall be determined through the combined consideration of the applicable Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators.

The three Core Quality Factors — Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence Trustworthiness, and Evidence Applicability — examine different aspects of Evidence Quality.

Evidence Sufficiency concerns whether enough of the necessary Evidence is available and at the required level of detail.

Evidence Trustworthiness concerns whether the Evidence provides a truthful representation of what it is intended to represent.

Evidence Applicability concerns whether the Evidence applies to the use for which it is intended.

The ten Core Quality Indicators provide the more specific basis for examining these three Factors.

The Factors and Indicators are distinct but operate together. A limitation identified through one Factor or Indicator may affect what the Evidence can responsibly support even when other Evidence Quality Factors or Indicators do not identify a limitation.

Evidence Quality shall therefore not be determined from a single Factor or Indicator considered in isolation where other Factors or Indicators are important to the intended evidentiary use.

The interaction among the Factors and Indicators shall remain visible in the Evidence Quality Determination so that the basis and limitations of that determination can be understood and traced.

7.2 Distinct but Interacting Functions

Each Evidence Quality Factor and Indicator has a distinct function within the Evidence Quality Determination.

A Factor or Indicator shall not be treated as equivalent to another merely because they concern the same Evidence or contribute to the same determination.

At the same time, the Factors and Indicators interact. A condition identified through one may affect the significance of findings made through another.

For example, Evidence may have adequate Coverage, Completeness, and Resolution but still be limited by questions of Validity or Accuracy. Evidence may also be trustworthy but unsuitable for the subject, Context, or determination for which it is being used.

The interaction of Factors and Indicators shall therefore be considered when determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Interaction does not remove the identity of the individual Factors or Indicators. The basis for each Evidence Quality finding that can affect the determination shall remain identifiable so that the reason for the resulting determination can be understood and traced.

7.3 Non-Substitutability and Non-Compensation

Evidence Quality Factors and Indicators are not interchangeable.

Strength in one Factor or Indicator shall not be used as a substitute for another Factor or Indicator that is important to the intended evidentiary use.

Similarly, strength in one area of Evidence Quality does not automatically compensate for a limitation in another area that can affect the determination.

For example, a large amount of Evidence does not compensate for Evidence that is invalid or inaccurate. Evidence from a reliable source does not compensate for insufficient Coverage. Accurate Evidence does not compensate for Evidence that is not applicable to the subject, Context, or determination.

This does not mean that every limitation has the same significance. The effect of a limitation depends on whether and how it affects the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Where an Evidence Quality limitation can affect the determination, it shall remain visible and shall be considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

The resulting Evidence Quality Determination shall therefore reflect the interaction of the applicable Factors and Indicators without treating them as interchangeable or automatically compensating.

7.4 Evidence Quality Limitations

An Evidence Quality limitation is a weakness or problem in the Evidence that affects what the Evidence can responsibly support.

A limitation may arise through one or more Evidence Quality Factors or Indicators.

The significance of a limitation depends on the Finding or Quality Determination being supported. A limitation that affects one determination may not affect another.

Evidence Quality limitations that can affect the determination shall be identified and remain visible in the Evidence Quality Determination.

Where a limitation prevents the Evidence from supporting the intended Finding or Quality Determination, the Finding or determination shall be limited accordingly.

Where the available Evidence cannot support the required determination, this shall not be interpreted as evidence of either favorable or unfavorable Object Quality.

Evidence Quality limitations shall therefore limit what can be concluded from the Evidence rather than lead to conclusions that the Evidence does not support.

8 Evidence Quality within Quality Determination

8.1 Evidence and Evidence-Supported Findings about the Quality Object

Evidence provides the basis for Findings about the actual condition of a Quality Object.

An Evidence-Supported Finding is a conclusion about the Quality Object that is supported by the available Evidence.

The Finding shall remain within what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Evidence Quality determines the strength and limits of that support. It does not determine whether the condition of the Quality Object itself is favorable or unfavorable.

Evidence that can responsibly support a Finding may support a favorable Finding, an unfavorable Finding, or another Finding about the actual condition of the Quality Object.

Where Evidence Quality limits what can be established about the Quality Object, the Finding shall be limited accordingly.

The Evidence-Supported Finding therefore provides the connection between the Evidence and the Quality Determination.

A conclusion about Object Quality shall not extend beyond what the Evidence-Supported Finding can support.

8.2 Evidence Quality and Supportable Findings about the Quality Object

Evidence Quality establishes what Findings can responsibly be made from the available Evidence.

A Finding is supportable to the extent that the Evidence, considered through Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence Trustworthiness, and Evidence Applicability, can responsibly support what the Finding states.

The scope and certainty of the Finding shall remain within what the Evidence can support.

Where Evidence supports only part of a proposed Finding, the Finding shall be limited to that part.

Where Evidence supports a Finding only under defined conditions or within a defined scope, those conditions or limits shall remain visible in the Finding.

A limitation in Evidence Quality shall not be converted into a Finding about the Quality Object that the Evidence does not support.

Additional Evidence may expand, narrow, confirm, or change what Findings can responsibly be made. A permissible Finding therefore reflects both what the Evidence shows and the limits established by its Evidence Quality.

8.3 Insufficient Evidence and Undetermined Object Quality Conditions

Where the available Evidence cannot support a required Finding about the Quality Object, the corresponding Object Quality condition shall not be determined from that Evidence. Where WQI methodology identifies such a condition as Undetermined, that status shall remain visible in the Quality Determination.

Undetermined means that the available Evidence does not provide an adequate basis for determining the condition being examined.

An Undetermined condition is not a favorable or unfavorable Quality finding.

Insufficient Evidence shall not be treated as evidence of poor Object Quality. It shall also not be treated as evidence of favorable Object Quality.

The reason the condition remains Undetermined shall be identified through the applicable Evidence Quality Factor or Indicator.

Only the part of the Quality Determination that cannot be supported by the available Evidence shall remain Undetermined. Other conditions may still be determined where adequate Evidence exists.

Additional or improved Evidence may allow an Undetermined condition to be determined later.

The Undetermined condition shall remain visible so that the limits of the Quality Determination are clear and traceable.

8.4 Evidence Quality and Quality State

Evidence Quality and Quality State are distinct.

Quality State represents the determined condition of the Quality Object in relation to its Intended Function or Intended Result and applicable Quality Outcome Criteria.

Evidence Quality concerns whether the Evidence can support the Findings used to determine that Quality State.

Evidence that can responsibly support the intended Finding does not by itself establish a favorable Quality State. Sufficient, trustworthy, and applicable Evidence may support either favorable or unfavorable Findings about the Quality Object.

Similarly, Evidence that cannot responsibly support the required Finding does not establish an unfavorable Quality State. Where the Evidence cannot support a required Finding, the corresponding Object Quality condition shall not be determined from that Evidence. Where WQI methodology identifies such a condition as Undetermined, that status shall remain visible.

Evidence Quality shall therefore affect the evidentiary basis and limits of the Quality State determination, not substitute for the Quality State of the Object.

Where only part of the Quality State can be supported by adequate Evidence, the determined and Undetermined conditions shall remain distinguishable.

The resulting Quality State shall not extend beyond what the Evidence-Supported Findings can responsibly support.

8.5 Evidence Quality and Quality Claims

An Quality Claim shall be supported by the Quality Determination on which it is based.

Evidence Quality affects the Claim by limiting what the supporting Evidence-Supported Findings can responsibly establish about the Quality Object.

A Quality Claim shall not extend beyond the scope, conditions, or limits of those Findings.

Where an Object Quality condition is Undetermined because the available Evidence cannot support the required Finding, the Quality Claim shall not present that condition as determined.

A limitation in Evidence Quality shall not be omitted where its omission could cause the Quality Claim to communicate more than the Evidence supports.

Evidence that can responsibly support the intended Finding does not justify a favorable Quality Claim unless the Evidence-Supported Findings and Quality Determination support that Claim.

Similarly, Evidence that cannot responsibly support the required Finding does not justify an unfavorable Quality Claim about the Quality Object.

The Quality Claim shall remain within what the evidentiary and determination pathway can responsibly support.

9 Evidence Quality, Uncertainty, and Traceability

9.1 General

Evidence Quality, Uncertainty, and Traceability perform different functions within a Quality Determination.

Evidence Quality concerns what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Uncertainty concerns what remains uncertain in the Finding or Quality Determination.

Traceability concerns whether the basis and path of the determination can be followed and understood.

These functions are related but shall remain distinct.

A limitation in Evidence Quality may increase Uncertainty, but Evidence Quality and Uncertainty are not the same. Similarly, strong Traceability may make the basis of Evidence and Findings clear, but it does not by itself establish that the Evidence can responsibly support the intended Finding.

Evidence Quality, Uncertainty, and Traceability shall therefore be considered separately and together where they affect the Finding or Quality Determination.

Their distinct roles shall remain visible so that the basis, limits, and uncertainty of the determination can be understood and traced.

9.2 Evidence Quality and Uncertainty

Evidence Quality and Uncertainty are related but distinct.

Evidence Quality concerns what the available Evidence can responsibly support.

Uncertainty concerns what remains unknown, unclear, or unresolved in the Finding or Quality Determination.

A limitation in Evidence Quality may create or increase Uncertainty. For example, incomplete Evidence, questionable Accuracy, or limited Context Applicability may leave part of a condition uncertain.

Uncertainty may also arise for reasons other than Evidence Quality, including variability in the Quality Object or limits in the method used for the determination.

Uncertainty shall therefore not automatically be treated as a limitation in Evidence Quality.

Where Evidence Quality contributes to Uncertainty, the relationship shall be identified so that the source and effect of the Uncertainty can be understood.

Uncertainty shall remain visible where it affects what can responsibly be concluded about the Quality Object.

9.3 Evidence Quality and Traceability

Evidence Quality and Traceability are related but distinct.

Evidence Quality concerns what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Traceability concerns whether the Evidence, its source, its use, and the path from Evidence to Finding and Quality Determination can be followed and understood.

Traceability supports Evidence Quality determination by making the evidentiary basis visible and allowing the relevant Evidence Quality Factors and Indicators to be examined.

Strong Traceability does not by itself establish that the Evidence can responsibly support the intended Finding. Evidence may be fully traceable but still be insufficient, untrustworthy, or inapplicable for the intended use.

Similarly, limited Traceability may restrict the ability to determine Evidence Quality where the origin, condition, use, or relationship of the Evidence cannot be adequately established.

Where Traceability affects the ability to determine Evidence Quality, the limitation shall be identified and considered in determining what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Traceability shall preserve a clear path, as applicable, from the Evidence and its source through the Evidence-Supported Finding to the Quality Determination.

9.4 Separation of the Three Methodological Functions

Evidence Quality, Uncertainty, and Traceability shall remain separate methodological functions within a Quality Determination.

They answer different questions: Evidence Quality — What can the Evidence responsibly support? Uncertainty — What remains unknown, unclear, or unresolved? Traceability — Can the basis and path of the determination be followed and understood?

One function shall not be used as a substitute for another.

Evidence that can responsibly support the intended Finding does not eliminate all Uncertainty. Low Uncertainty does not by itself establish that the Evidence can responsibly support the intended Finding. Strong Traceability does not establish that the Evidence is sufficient, trustworthy, or applicable.

At the same time, the three functions may interact. A limitation in Evidence Quality may increase Uncertainty. Limited Traceability may prevent an Evidence Quality condition from being adequately established. Uncertainty may identify where additional Evidence or further examination is needed.

Where these interactions affect the Finding or Quality Determination, they shall be identified without combining the three functions into a single measure or conclusion.

Keeping the functions separate allows the Evidence Quality, remaining Uncertainty, and Traceability of the determination to be understood independently and together.

10 Application across Quality Objects and Domains

10.1 Cross-Domain and Context-Specific Application

The WQI Evidence Quality Core is applicable across different Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts in which Evidence is used to support a Quality Determination.

The three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators remain common across these applications.

Their application, however, may require context-specific guidance appropriate to the Quality Object, domain, Context, and determination being supported.

Such guidance may be established through WQI standards, applied initiative standards, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, or other controlled application documents.

For example, an applied WQI initiative may establish Context Guides addressing the conditions of a particular infrastructure, service, organization, activity, or other Quality Object. Where necessary, the application may also establish context-specific guidance concerning the Evidence required to support Quality Determinations within that Context.

Context-specific guidance may address, as applicable, the Evidence required, relevant forms and sources of Evidence, applicable Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, Methodological Resolution, and other conditions affecting Evidence Quality determination.

Cross-domain and context-specific application does not require Evidence to take the same form or to be examined by the same methods in every application.

These differences do not change the WQI Evidence Quality Core architecture. They establish how that architecture is applied to the particular Quality Object, domain, Context, and determination.

Context-specific guidance shall preserve the determination function and WQI-controlled meaning of each applicable Core Quality Factor and Core Quality Indicator.

10.2 Application to Different Forms and Sources of Evidence

The WQI Evidence Quality Core applies to different forms and sources of Evidence.

Evidence may be quantitative or qualitative and may originate from direct observation, measurement, testing, records, documents, images, systems, databases, persons, organizations, assessments, or other sources appropriate to the determination.

The form or source of Evidence does not by itself establish its Evidence Quality.

Evidence from different forms and sources shall be examined through the same applicable Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators.

The significance of a particular form or source depends on the Finding or Quality Determination it is used to support.

Different forms and sources of Evidence may support the same Finding. They may also provide different or conflicting information about the condition being examined.

Where multiple forms or sources of Evidence are used, their individual Evidence Quality and their relationship to one another shall be considered where this can affect what the combined Evidence can responsibly support.

The use of multiple sources does not automatically establish that the combined Evidence can responsibly support the intended Finding. Additional Evidence does not compensate for limitations in Sufficiency, Trustworthiness, or Applicability unless it addresses those limitations.

No form or source of Evidence shall be considered inherently sufficient, trustworthy, or applicable solely because of its type, origin, technology, or formal status.

The Evidence Quality determination shall therefore remain based on the intended evidentiary use and the applicable Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators.

10.3 Context-Specific Quality Outcome Criteria and Methods

Application of the WQI Evidence Quality Core may require context-specific guidance appropriate to the Quality Object, domain, Context, and Quality Determination being supported.

Such guidance may be established through applicable WQI standards, applied initiative standards, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, or other controlled application documents.

Context-specific guidance may establish or identify the Evidence required, relevant forms and sources of Evidence, applicable Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, Methodological Resolution, and other conditions necessary for Evidence Quality determination.

Quality Outcome Criteria establish the expected state or result against which observations concerning the Quality Object are interpreted.

Quality Outcome Criteria concern the Quality Object condition being examined; they do not themselves constitute Evidence Quality criteria. They may, however, determine what Evidence is necessary to support interpretation of that condition.

The applicable Quality Outcome Criteria may differ among Quality Objects, Intended Functions and Intended Results, Quality Indicators, domains, Contexts, and determinations.

Methods used to obtain, examine, validate, or interpret Evidence may also differ according to the application.

Such context-specific provisions do not change the WQI Evidence Quality Core architecture.

They provide the application-specific basis necessary to determine whether the Evidence is sufficient, trustworthy, and applicable for its intended use.

The basis for the selected Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, and other context-specific evidentiary requirements shall be identifiable and traceable to the applicable source or sources.

A method shall not be treated as universally appropriate merely because it is established or commonly used in a particular domain. Its suitability shall be considered in relation to the Quality Object, Context, and determination for which it is used.

Where different criteria, methods, or other context-specific evidentiary requirements could affect what the Evidence can responsibly support, those actually used shall remain visible in the determination.

Context-specific guidance therefore provides the application-specific basis for using the invariant Evidence Quality architecture without changing the Core Quality Factors or Core Quality Indicators.

10.4 Applied WQI Initiatives and Standards

Applied WQI initiatives and standards shall use the WQI Evidence Quality Core as the common architecture for Evidence Quality determination.

They may establish additional application requirements necessary for their Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts.

Such requirements may be established through applied standards, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, or other controlled application documents.

Applied provisions may specify, as appropriate:

- Evidence required for particular Quality Objects or determinations;
- forms and sources of Evidence;
- context-specific Quality Outcome Criteria;
- methods for obtaining, examining, validating, or interpreting Evidence;
- required Methodological Resolution; and
- other conditions necessary for responsible Evidence use.

Applied initiatives may further specify how a Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator is examined in a particular application. Such specification shall preserve its WQI-controlled meaning and determination function.

Applied initiatives shall not create alternative Evidence Quality Factors or Indicators where the WQI Core architecture already addresses the same determination function.

Where an applied initiative identifies an Evidence Quality consideration that is not adequately addressed by the WQI Core architecture, that consideration shall be made explicit and traceable rather than silently incorporated through redefinition of an existing Factor or Indicator.

Applied standards and guidance shall maintain traceability to the applicable WQI Core provisions and WQI_VOC1.

This relationship allows Evidence requirements to be adapted to different Quality Objects and Contexts while maintaining a common WQI Evidence Quality architecture across applied initiatives.

11 Conformance with the WQI Evidence Quality Core

11.1 General

Conformance with the WQI Evidence Quality Core requires application of the common Evidence Quality architecture established by this Standard.

A conforming application shall preserve the three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators and their WQI-controlled meanings and determination functions.

Conformance does not require identical Evidence, Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, technologies, or application procedures across Quality Objects, domains, or Contexts.

Context-specific requirements may be established where necessary for the particular application, provided that they remain consistent with the WQI Evidence Quality Core.

A conforming application shall make clear which Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators were considered, how they were applied, and any Evidence Quality limitations that affect what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Conformance with this Standard concerns the use of the WQI Evidence Quality architecture. It does not by itself establish that the Evidence can responsibly support the intended Finding or that Object Quality is favorable.

The specific conformance requirements for use of the Core Quality Factors, Core Quality Indicators, contextualization, terminology, and traceability are established in Sections 11.2 through 11.6.

11.2 Required Use of the Three Core Quality Factors

A conforming Evidence Quality determination shall consider all three Core Quality Factors: Evidence Sufficiency; Evidence Trustworthiness; and Evidence Applicability.

No Core Quality Factor shall be omitted merely because another Factor is favorable.

Each Factor shall be considered in relation to the Evidence, its intended evidentiary use, and the Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

The depth of examination required for each Factor may differ according to the Quality Object, Context, scope, Methodological Resolution, and nature of the determination.

Where a Core Quality Factor does not require further examination in a particular application, the basis for that conclusion shall be identifiable.

The three Core Quality Factors shall not be replaced by alternative Factors that perform the same determination functions under different names.

Additional context-specific considerations may be used where necessary, provided that they do not redefine, replace, or obscure the three Core Quality Factors.

Conformance therefore requires preservation and consideration of Evidence Sufficiency, Evidence Trustworthiness, and Evidence Applicability as the common Factor structure of the WQI Evidence Quality Core.

11.3 Required Consideration of the Ten Core Quality Indicators

A conforming Evidence Quality determination shall consider the ten Core Quality Indicators: Coverage; Completeness; Resolution; Source Reliability; Validity; Accuracy; Evidence Integrity; Subject Applicability; Context Applicability; and Determination Applicability.

The Indicators shall be considered within their respective Core Quality Factors and in relation to the Evidence and the use being made of it.

Consideration of an Indicator does not require the same depth of examination in every application.

The depth of examination may differ according to the Quality Object, Context, scope, Methodological Resolution, Evidence, and Finding or Quality Determination being supported.

Where an Indicator does not require further examination in a particular application, the basis for that conclusion shall be identifiable.

A Core Quality Indicator shall not be omitted merely because another Indicator addresses a related aspect of the Evidence or produces a favorable finding.

The ten Core Quality Indicators shall not be replaced by alternative Indicators that perform the same determination functions under different names.

Additional context-specific considerations may be used where necessary, provided that they do not redefine, replace, or obscure the Core Quality Indicators.

Conformance therefore requires consideration of the ten Core Quality Indicators while allowing the depth and method of their application to remain appropriate to the particular Evidence Quality determination.

11.4 Permissible Contextualization

A conforming application may contextualize the WQI Evidence Quality Core for a particular Quality Object, domain, Context, or Quality Determination.

Contextualization may be established through applicable WQI standards, applied initiative standards, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, or other controlled application documents.

Contextualization may specify, as appropriate:

- Evidence required for the particular application;
- forms and sources of Evidence;
- applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- methods for obtaining, examining, validating, or interpreting Evidence;
- required Methodological Resolution;
- application-specific requirements for examining the Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators; and
- other conditions necessary for responsible Evidence use.

Contextualization may add detail necessary to apply a Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator within a particular Context.

Such detail shall preserve the WQI-controlled meaning and determination function of the applicable Factor or Indicator.

Contextualization shall not convert a context-specific requirement into a universal WQI requirement.

Where additional Evidence Quality considerations are necessary for a particular application, they may be included provided that their relationship to the WQI Core architecture is made explicit.

The basis for contextualization shall be identifiable and traceable.

Permissible contextualization therefore allows the Evidence Quality Core to be applied to different Quality Objects and Contexts without changing its invariant architecture.

11.5 Prohibited Redefinition or Silent Substitution

A conforming application shall not redefine a WQI Evidence Quality Core Factor or Core Quality Indicator in a manner that changes its WQI-controlled meaning or determination function.

A Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator shall not be replaced by a differently named concept that performs the same determination function without making that relationship explicit.

Similarly, a context-specific concept, criterion, method, or requirement shall not be presented as a WQI Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator unless it has been established as part of the WQI Core architecture through controlled revision.

Different terminology may be necessary within a particular technical, regulatory, professional, or other Context. Where such terminology corresponds to a WQI Core concept, the relationship shall be made explicit where necessary to preserve interpretation and Traceability.

Where an applied standard, Context Guide, Evidence Guide, or other controlled application document introduces an additional Evidence Quality consideration, it shall be identified as context-specific unless it has been incorporated into the WQI Core through controlled revision.

Context-specific additions shall not silently change the meaning, scope, or function of an existing Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator.

Where an application departs from the WQI Evidence Quality Core architecture, the departure shall be explicitly identified rather than presented as conformance with the unchanged Core.

These requirements preserve a common Evidence Quality architecture while allowing terminology and requirements necessary for particular domains and Contexts to be used transparently.

11.6 Traceability to WQI_VOC1

A conforming application of the WQI Evidence Quality Core shall maintain traceability to the controlled concepts and terminology established by WQI_VOC1.

WQI Root Concepts used in an Evidence Quality determination shall retain their WQI_VOC1 meanings.

Where this Standard further specifies the application of a Root Concept to Evidence Quality, that specification shall be interpreted consistently with WQI_VOC1.

Applied standards, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, and other controlled application documents may introduce context-specific terminology where necessary.

Where context-specific terminology corresponds to or further specifies a WQI Root Concept, the relationship shall be identifiable where necessary for correct interpretation and Traceability.

Context-specific terminology shall not silently change the meaning of a WQI Root Concept.

Where WQI_VOC1 is revised through controlled revision, the relationship between the revised Root Vocabulary and this Core Standard shall be reviewed to identify any resulting need for alignment.

Traceability to WQI_VOC1 therefore preserves a common conceptual basis for Evidence Quality determination across WQI standards, applied initiatives, Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts.

12 Maintenance and Controlled Revision

12.1 Invariant Core

The three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators established by this Standard constitute the invariant WQI Evidence Quality Core.

The invariant Core provides a stable common architecture for Evidence Quality determination across Quality Objects, domains, Contexts, and applied WQI initiatives.

Invariance applies to the determination functions and WQI-controlled meanings of the Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators.

It does not require uniform Evidence, Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, technologies, Methodological Resolution, or application requirements across different determinations.

Context-specific development shall therefore normally occur through application of the Core rather than through modification of the Core itself.

A new domain, Quality Object, Evidence form, technology, or method does not by itself require revision of the invariant Core.

Revision of the Core shall be considered only where there is a demonstrated methodological need that cannot be adequately addressed through contextualization or other application-specific provisions.

Any revision shall be made through controlled WQI revision and shall preserve Traceability to the preceding architecture and the basis for the change.

12.2 Necessary but Not Closed

The three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators are established by this Standard as the necessary components of the current WQI Evidence Quality Core architecture.

The Core is not declared permanently closed to further methodological development.

A proposed additional Factor or Indicator shall not be added merely because it is useful in a particular domain, Context, method, technology, or form of Evidence.

Before addition to the Core is considered, the proposed concept shall represent a distinct Evidence Quality determination function that is not adequately addressed by the existing Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators.

A concept that further specifies an existing Factor or Indicator for a particular application shall normally be treated through contextualization rather than expansion of the Core.

Similarly, a concept that concerns another methodological function, such as Uncertainty or Traceability, shall not be incorporated into the Evidence Quality Core merely because it interacts with Evidence Quality.

Evidence from application, research, and cross-domain use may identify a need to examine the completeness of the Core architecture.

Any resulting proposal for expansion or revision shall be evaluated through the controlled revision process established by this Standard.

The Evidence Quality Core is therefore stable enough to support consistent application while remaining open to justified methodological development.

12.3 Conditions for Revision

Revision of the WQI Evidence Quality Core shall be based on a demonstrated methodological need.

A revision may be considered where research, application, or cross-domain examination identifies an Evidence Quality determination function that is important to responsible Evidence Quality determination; is not adequately addressed by the existing Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators; is distinct from the determination functions already represented in the Core; is not merely a context-specific criterion, method, technology, Evidence form, or application requirement; and has relevance beyond a single specialized application where inclusion in the common WQI Core is proposed.

Revision may also be considered where experience demonstrates that an existing Core Quality Factor or Core Quality Indicator requires clarification to preserve its intended determination function or consistent application.

Before revising the Core, WQI shall consider whether the identified need can be adequately addressed through clarification, contextualization, a Context Guide, an Evidence Guide, or another application-specific provision.

A proposed revision shall consider its effect on the relationships among the existing Core Quality Factors and Core Quality Indicators and on other WQI standards and applied initiatives.

The basis for the revision, the change made, and its relationship to the preceding Core architecture shall be documented and traceable.

Revision shall not be made solely to accommodate terminology, practices, or conventions of a particular domain where the existing Core determination function remains adequate.

These conditions are intended to preserve the stability of the WQI Evidence Quality Core while allowing revision where methodological development demonstrates that change is necessary.

12.4 Cross-Domain Validation

The WQI Evidence Quality Core shall be examined through application across different Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts.

For the purpose of this Standard, cross-domain validation means structured examination of the Core architecture through materially different applications. It does not mean that application in a finite set of domains proves universal completeness of the architecture.

Cross-domain examination shall consider whether the three Core Quality Factors and ten Core Quality Indicators continue to perform their intended determination functions under materially different applications.

Such examination may include applications involving different forms and sources of Evidence, Quality Objects, Intended Functions and Intended Results, Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, technologies, Contexts, and Methodological Resolutions.

Cross-domain differences do not by themselves indicate a need to revise the Core. Differences that can be addressed through contextualization shall remain matters of application.

Cross-domain examination shall instead examine whether an Evidence Quality determination function important to responsible use of Evidence is absent, inadequately represented, or incorrectly separated within the Core architecture.

It shall also examine whether the existing Factors and Indicators remain distinguishable and whether unnecessary overlap or duplication becomes apparent through application.

Findings from applied WQI initiatives, Context Guides, Evidence Guides, research, and other documented applications may provide Evidence for this examination.

A limitation identified in one domain shall not automatically be treated as a limitation of the common Core. Its significance for the Core shall be examined across sufficiently different applications before a Core revision is proposed.

Results relevant to maintenance or revision of the Core shall be documented and traceable to the applications and Evidence on which they are based.

Cross-domain examination therefore provides a continuing test of whether the WQI Evidence Quality Core remains suitable as a common architecture while preserving context-specific requirements at the appropriate application level.

Annex A (informative) - WQI Evidence Quality Core Architecture

A.1 Three Core Quality Factors

1. Evidence Sufficiency — whether enough of the necessary Evidence is available, without important gaps, and at the Methodological Resolution required for the intended Finding or Quality Determination. Indicators: Coverage, Completeness, Resolution.

2. Evidence Trustworthiness — whether the Evidence provides a truthful representation of what it is intended to represent. Indicators: Source Reliability, Validity, Accuracy, Evidence Integrity.

3. Evidence Applicability — whether the Evidence applies to what it is being used to support. Indicators: Subject Applicability, Context Applicability, Determination Applicability.

The three Core Quality Factors perform distinct but interacting functions within Evidence Quality determination.

No Factor substitutes for another, and strength in one Factor does not automatically compensate for a limitation in another Factor that affects what the Evidence can responsibly support.

Together, the three Factors provide the common WQI architecture for determining Evidence Quality across Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts.

A.2 Ten Core Quality Indicators

Coverage — examines whether the Evidence extends across the relevant parts, conditions, periods, events, or other aspects that must be examined to support the Finding or Quality Determination.

Completeness — examines whether important Evidence needed within the applicable scope is present rather than missing.

Resolution — examines whether the Evidence provides sufficient detail to support the Finding or Quality Determination at the required Methodological Resolution.

Source Reliability — examines whether the source of the Evidence can be relied upon for the intended evidentiary use.

Validity — examines whether the Evidence represents what it is intended to show.

Accuracy — examines whether what the Evidence shows is represented without important error.

Evidence Integrity — examines whether the Evidence has remained intact and free from changes that could affect what it shows.

Subject Applicability — examines whether the Evidence applies to the Quality Object, part, condition, event, or period that is the subject of the Finding.

Context Applicability — examines whether the Evidence applies under the conditions and circumstances in which the Finding or Quality Determination is made.

Determination Applicability — examines whether the Evidence is suitable for the particular Finding or Quality Determination for which it is used.

The ten Core Quality Indicators perform distinct but interacting determination functions. Their application may be contextualized for different Quality Objects, domains, and Contexts, but their WQI-controlled meanings and determination functions remain unchanged.

A.3 Factor–Indicator Relationship

Evidence Quality



Evidence Sufficiency → Coverage / Completeness / Resolution

Evidence Trustworthiness → Source Reliability / Validity / Accuracy / Evidence Integrity

Evidence Applicability → Subject Applicability / Context Applicability / Determination Applicability

Core Quality Factors identify the principal dimensions through which Evidence Quality is determined. Core Quality Indicators identify what is examined within each Factor.

Each Core Quality Indicator belongs to a defined Core Quality Factor and performs a distinct determination function within that Factor.

Context-specific Quality Outcome Criteria, methods, and evidentiary requirements may be used to apply the Indicators without changing the Factor–Indicator relationship.

A.4 Evidence Quality Determination Pathway

Quality Object



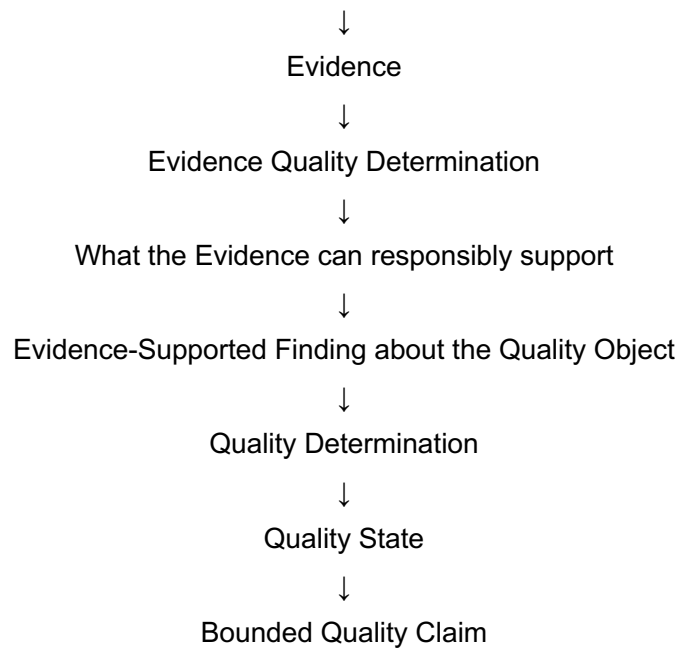
Intended Function and Intended Result



Quality Factors and Quality Indicators



Applicable Quality Outcome Criteria



Evidence Quality is determined in relation to the use being made of the Evidence within this pathway.

The Evidence Quality determination does not determine whether the condition of the Quality Object is favorable or unfavorable. It determines what the Evidence can responsibly support about that condition.

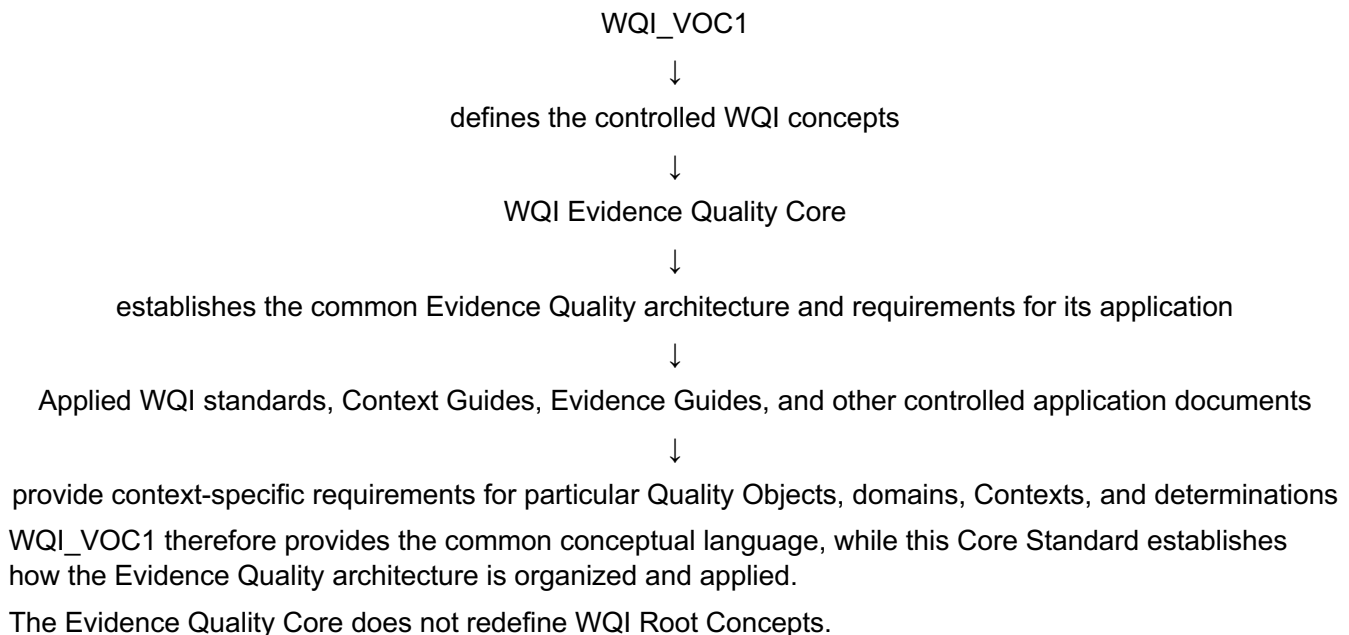
Where the Evidence cannot support the required Finding, the corresponding Object Quality condition shall not be determined from that Evidence. Where WQI methodology identifies such a condition as Undetermined, that status remains visible.

Uncertainty and Traceability remains distinct methodological functions throughout the pathway.

Annex B (informative) - Relationship to WQI_VOC1

WQI_VOC1 — Whole Quality Root Vocabulary Standard establishes the authoritative meanings of the WQI Root Concepts used in this Standard.

The WQI Evidence Quality Core applies those Root Concepts through a common architecture for Evidence Quality determination.



The detailed Factor–Indicator architecture and requirements for application belong to this Core Standard rather than requiring duplication in WQI_VOC1.

Applied WQI initiatives may further specify the use of these concepts for particular Quality Objects and Contexts without changing their WQI-controlled meanings or the invariant Evidence Quality Core architecture.

Where WQI_VOC1, this Core Standard, or an applied WQI document is revised, their relationships are reviewed to preserve conceptual consistency and Traceability.

Bibliography

- [1] WQI_VOC1 — Whole Quality Root Vocabulary Standard.
- [2] WQI_EQJ1 — Evidence Quality Factors and Indicators Justification
- [3] WQI_QMS1 — Management System Quality Standard - Core
- [4] WQI_QOS1 — Organization Quality Standard - Core

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