



WILLIAM McNAMARA  
COMPTROLLER

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, 9TH FLOOR  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108  
(617) 727-5000  
MACOMPTROLLER.ORG



**To:** Department Heads, Internal Control Officers, and Chief Fiscal Officers

**From:** Peter J. Scavotto, Assistant Comptroller for Risk

**Date:** May 20, 2021

**Re:** Fiscal Year 2021 Internal Control Questionnaire and Department Certification  
Comptroller Memo #2021-20

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### Executive Summary

With this memo the Office of the Comptroller issues the Fiscal Year 2021 *Internal Control Questionnaire* (ICQ). Internal controls are critical in creating an environment that is accountable to the public and demonstrates proper stewardship of public resources, while being responsive to the needs and direction of Senior Management. The Internal Control Act, Chapter 647 of the Acts of 1989, mandates that each department document its internal controls in accordance with guidelines established by the Office of the Comptroller – see: [Internal Control Guide](#).

Per the Internal Control Guide, department internal control plans must be based on risk assessments and updated annually, or when significant changes occur. All departments have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this year's ICQ has questions for departments to confirm that the associated risks have been assessed and controls have been implemented where required.

Through the Commonwealth Department Head Signature Authority (DHSA) model, the Department Head is responsible for implementing and maintaining effective internal controls based on prescribed statutes, regulations and policies. The ICQ is designed to identify adherence to the controls, areas of risk, and mitigation steps. The ICQ's Certification Section confirms the status of the departments' compliance with these requirements.

Responses to the ICQ are due by close of business on Friday, **June 30, 2021**.

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Internal Control Officers (ICOs) will receive an email with a link to the survey and a printable version of the survey questions. Each ICO should work closely with Senior Management to identify appropriate staff for providing responses to each section of the ICQ. You may use the printable version to parse and disseminate sections to staff for this purpose. It is recommended that all responses be collected first, and then entered into the application.

The ICQ provides an indication of the effectiveness of the Commonwealth's internal controls. During the Single Audit, the external auditors (CliftonLarsonAllen) and Comptroller staff, will review the internal controls of several departments in more depth. Auditors will also follow-up with departments on prior year findings, review compliance with federal and state regulations, test selected transactions, and review cash and encumbrances. The auditors use department Internal Control Plans and ICQ responses, along with other procedures, to render an opinion on the internal controls of the Commonwealth as a whole.

The Office of the State Auditor often refers to ICQ responses and Internal Control Plans when conducting their audits of state agencies. Other oversight agencies may be notified of ICQ responses that relate to their areas of responsibility.

### **Departments Using Shared Services**

Some departments use Shared Services through Comptroller approved Interdepartmental Services Agreement(s) (ISAs). The department that is the source of a transactional function must apply its Department Head Signatory Authority (DHSA) before that transactional function can be performed by another department. Thus, both departments must work together to respond to the related ICQ section(s).

### **Certification**

The last section of the questionnaire is the department's certification of the accuracy of responses. Each Department Head must review the responses before they are submitted. After submission, the Department Head will receive an email alert that the ICQ was submitted. A completed copy is sent to your Internal Control Officer. Please keep an electronic or printed copy and make it available to any auditors or regulators, federal or state, who conduct a review of your agency.

The completed ICQ is due on or before **June 30, 2021**. If you have any questions, please contact the CTR's Risk Team via email [CTR-Risk.Management.Team@mass.gov](mailto:CTR-Risk.Management.Team@mass.gov), CTR's Solution Desk via email [comptroller.info@mass.gov](mailto:comptroller.info@mass.gov) or phone (617) 973-2468.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Attachments: Instructions for Completion

cc: Single Audit Liaisons  
MMARS Liaisons  
Payroll Directors  
General Counsels  
Internal Distribution

## **Instructions for Completing the Fiscal Year 2021 Internal Control Questionnaire**

### **ACCESS**

Each Internal Control Officer (ICO) will receive an e-mail from CTR Statewide Risk Management Team ([CTR-Risk.Management.Team@Mass.gov](mailto:CTR-Risk.Management.Team@Mass.gov) <[noreply@checkbox.com](mailto:noreply@checkbox.com)>)

Please make sure this email address is not “Blocked” by your email service. The email will contain a printable version of the ICQ.

The ICO will also receive (separately) a password for accessing the ICQ.

### **BEFORE COMPLETING THE SURVEY**

It is recommended that all responses be collected ahead of time and then entered into the ICQ all at once. Disseminate sections of the printable version to the appropriate subject matter experts for this purpose.

### **COMPLETING QUESTIONS**

Each department must answer all questions applicable to its operations. Responses are saved as you proceed through the survey. Some questions are conditional, meaning one or more questions may appear depending on how a previous one is answered. For example, “*Did the department receive, expend or manage any federal funds during the fiscal year?*” Selecting “Yes” displays additional questions for this section. If the response is “No”, hitting the *Next* button brings you to the next section.

Question numbers are system generated and the total count for each department varies based on responses to previous questions. So, the live survey question numbers may not match the numbers in the printable version of the survey.

Comment boxes will appear as needed if more information is requested for a specific question, and at the end of each section (if applicable).

### **NAVIGATION**

Use the Back and Next buttons on the bottom of each page to navigate through the survey. If the Next button does not bring you to the next section, please review the current section for required questions that were likely unanswered.

Policy links are embedded as references throughout the survey and will prompt you to another tab. Should you by chance use the browser’s Back Button and close the survey - just re-open the link from the original email and you will be returned to where you left off in the survey.

### **SAVING YOUR WORK**

To save a partially completed ICQ and return to it later, click on the *Save and Exit* button located at the bottom of each page. You can enter your email when prompted and have a reminder sent to your Inbox, or you can open the survey again from the original email to resume data entry.

### **QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

CTR's SRMT annually reviews and updates the ICQ. Should you encounter a question or response format that you are unable to understand or may require future clarification, please contact a member of the SRMT at [CTR-Risk.Management.Team@mass.gov](mailto:CTR-Risk.Management.Team@mass.gov).

### **CERTIFICATION AND SUBMISSION**

After the questions have been reviewed with the Department Head, check the *Yes* button in the Certification Section to submit the survey.

After submission, a confirmation email is sent to the Department Head. The ICO will receive an email with the completed questionnaire. Submit the completed ICQ no later than **June 30, 2021**.