

Registered Organisation inspection panel member training

Unit 1 - Assessment

Purpose of RO Inspections

RO inspections ensure that organisations operate in line with the CIfA Code of conduct, Standards and guidance, relevant legislation, and their own policies. They assess real organisational competence—how systems, decisions, behaviours, and outputs work in practice.

What the Application and Inspection Must Show

Organisations must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, skills, and professional behaviour. Policies should be clear, current, and genuinely used. Ethical behaviour—trustworthiness, integrity, transparency, and accountability—should be evident in daily work. The aim is to confirm that systems exist and function effectively.

How Competence Is Assessed

Competence is evaluated through:

- **Proxies** (indirect indicators such as accreditations or staff stability)
- **Assertions** (claims that must be checked)
- **Inference** (logical conclusions grounded in evidence)
- **Direct Evidence** (reports, procedures, case studies, and observations)

Evidence Principles

Evidence must be valid, authentic, current, sufficient, and consistent. It should be factual, observable, traceable, and measurable where possible. Actions in practice are stronger than assumptions or purely verbal claims.

Assessment Criteria Overview

Inspections consider:

- **Organisation Structure** – clarity, cohesion, purpose
- **Conflicts of Interest and Ethics** – management processes and alignment with the Code
- **Staffing and Employment** – recruitment, development, and retention of competent staff
- **Professionalism and Accreditation** – support for CIfA values and accreditation
- **Training and CPD** – structured, meaningful, policy-aligned
- **Volunteers & Public Benefit** – adherence to policy and demonstration of benefit
- **Health & Safety** – alignment with expert guidance and CIfA policy
- **Quality Assurance** – systems ensuring consistent high-quality work and improvement
- **Policies, Commissioning, and Reports** – relevance, impartiality, and compliance with standards

Preparing for the Inspection

Panel members review the application form and two reports (or one full project). All materials are assessed against CIfA Standards, the Code of conduct, policies, and legislation. A planning meeting sets focus areas, questions, and entries for the benchmarking form to ensure a coordinated approach.

Conducting the Inspection

The visit should feel like a constructive conversation. Use open questions, reflective prompts, and a supportive tone. Avoid leading questions, unnecessary technical grilling, or rushing. Manage challenging behaviours by slowing the pace, rephrasing, offering thinking time, or redirecting discussion to ensure balanced participation.

Time Management

Keep conversations focused on the assessment criteria and core purpose. Steer discussions gently back on track when needed.

Recommendations and Decisions

After the visit, record concerns, clarifications, strengths, and improvement areas. Any formal recommendations must be clearly evidence-based and referenced to CIfA Standards, the Code, and relevant policies or legislation. Findings are submitted to the Registered Organisations Committee, which applies RO Regulations and makes the final decision.

Key Principles to Remember

RO inspections assess culture, competence, and compliance. Evidence must be factual, current, valid, and consistent. Inspections should be fair, transparent, proportionate, and supportive. Clear recommendations help organisations improve and strengthen professional standards across the sector.