



2021 Verification & Validation Guidance - FAQs

1/12/21

Question: What does it mean to be Point of Care Marketing Association (POCMA) certified?

Answer: POCMA certifications are for applicable product line networks. By completing the required network and campaign audits, POCMA certification represents that the POC company's network assets and campaigns have been audited by an approved third party and have met the Verification and Validation Guidance criteria. The POCMA certification is not, as such, a certification seal for the company in entirety. The seal will be labeled to show the product-lines that have been POCMA certified for a POC media company. Please note that a network audit is not required for assets that are portable or otherwise deemed temporary in nature.

Question: What are the benefits of working with a POCMA-certified network for advertisers?

Answer: POCMA certification indicates that the POC company has complied with standards outlined in the POCMA Verification & Validation Guidance and has participated in a third-party audit of its network and campaigns. The resulting certification gives buyers a high level of confidence that a POC company's product line(s) has met the POCMA standards for providing accurate, reliable and consistent data.

Question: Why was the POCMA Verification & Validation Guidance amended?

Answer: The standards were amended to incorporate learnings from testing conducted to date, streamline the audit process, and reduce the amount of in-person audit activity required at healthcare facilities, which have faced accessibility challenges due to COVID-19. As a result, the guidelines were modified to include an audit approach that does not solely rely upon in-field testing. Both audit approaches

included in the revised guidance provide users of the audit reports with a high level of assurance that the data provided is accurate.

Question: What are some of the changes that were made to the POCMA Verification & Validation Guidance in December 2020?

Answer: The new version reflects four major changes:

1. Network audits were expanded to include an audit of a publisher's internal controls and procedures. This audit approach was added as an alternative to in-person testing, which has faced accessibility challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2. The volume of campaign audits required for certification was reduced to 25% of the POC company's total volume from the previous fiscal year.
3. The frequency of campaign audits was changed to semi-annual (every six months). In addition, some definitions were modified to provide greater transparency and clarity.
4. The audit success criteria establish a 92.5% threshold as the baseline for compliance; however, there is now an exception provision for "circumstances outside of the POC media company's control" that can be granted as long as there is documentation that a satisfactory make good was determined between the buyer and seller.

Question: Do the new guidelines mandate that my campaigns must be audited?

Answer: No. Having audits and applying for POCMA certification is voluntary.

Question: Is a POC publisher required to have all products audited?

Answer: The certification process for either a POCMA member or non-member is voluntary. POC companies can determine which product lines they want to audit and submit for POCMA certification. Campaign audits must be related to the product lines that are being certified.

Question: Is a physical audit required?

Answer: If a physical audit is deemed an appropriate part of certification, the process allows for two audit approaches: one that focuses on evaluating a POC company's internal controls and procedures and one that relies upon in-person verification. The first approach, while not reliant on physical audits, will still require some degree of confirmation that the assets are present and functioning to verify that the POC company's processes are producing accurate records. The auditor will determine the best approach.

Question: The new guidelines describe two different audit approaches for network audits. Can a POC company use different approaches for separate product lines or must one approach be used for all audits?

Answer: POCMA certification standards were developed to accommodate the unique needs of various product lines. Depending on the circumstances associated with those product lines, either approach may be used.

Question: Does the 92.5% success rate criteria apply to all digital campaigns during a 3-month period or does it only apply to the campaigns that are required to be audited (i.e., 25% of the campaigns)?

Answer: Since all campaigns are subject to being selected for audit for POCMA certification, all campaigns should meet the 92.5% success criteria. However, if there are conditions beyond the control of the POC company and there is evidence that make goods have been offered, a campaign may still qualify for certification purposes without meeting these criteria.

Question: Are network and campaign audits received from POC publishers this year still valid given the changes to the POCMA Validation and Verification Guidance?

Answer: Yes, all audits completed in 2020 that adhere to the first version of the V&V guidance may be included when applying to the POCMA for certification.

Question: Does POCMA certification offer buyers any campaign guarantees?

Answer: POCMA certification demonstrates a POC company's compliance with the standards outlined in the Verification and Validation Guidance as verified by an authorized third-party auditor and that the underlying metrics provided to the buyer are accurately reported. It does not guarantee performance.

Question: Does a company have to pay POCMA for a network to be certified?

Answer: While a POC company does not have to be a member of the POCMA to apply for a network certification, there are fees that must be paid before the certification is issued.

Question: Once a POC company submits the required documents for certification, how long does the process take?

Answer: The certification review process by POCMA is expected to be completed within one month of submission, though this may change based on demand.

Question: Will the POCMA announce newly certified companies to the industry? If so how, and how often?

Answer: POCMA will include a list of member company product lines that have been certified on the POCMA website. The list will be updated as needed.

Question: The audit success criteria establish a 92.5% threshold as the baseline for compliance; however, there is an exception provision for “circumstances outside of the POC media company’s control” as long as there is documentation that a satisfactory make good was determined between the buyer and seller. Does the “make good” policy have to be related to falling below this threshold or can it be directly related to under delivery, which may or may not be related to meeting the 92.5% threshold?

Answer: The V&V guidance document establishes criteria for certification of a PoC company’s product line(s) and minimum audit and success standards for network and campaign audits. Buyers and PoC companies may use these or other standards to establish their “make good” policy.

Question: If the number of campaigns that I have currently is significantly different than what I had in my last fiscal year, can I audit 25% of my current campaigns and still comply with the POCMA Campaign Audit requirements?

Answer: The V&V guidelines are specific and straight forward regarding the minimum volume of campaign audits that must be completed in as part of a network’s certification process. To ensure that the process is equitable for all participating POC companies, any modifications to this guideline would require review and approval by the V&V committee and POCMA Board of Directors.