

# AU-C Section 500

## *Audit Evidence*

Source: SAS No. 122; SAS No. 128.

See section 9500 for interpretations of this section.

Effective for audits of financial statements for periods ending on or after December 15, 2012.

### Introduction

#### Scope of This Section

.01 This section explains what constitutes audit evidence in an audit of financial statements and addresses the auditor's responsibility to design and perform audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to be able to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor's opinion.

.02 This section is applicable to all the audit evidence obtained during the course of the audit. Other AU-C sections address

- specific aspects of the audit (for example, section 315, *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*);
- the audit evidence to be obtained regarding a particular topic (for example, section 570, *The Auditor's Consideration of an Entity's Ability to Continue as a Going Concern*);
- specific procedures to obtain audit evidence (for example, section 520, *Analytical Procedures*); and
- the evaluation of whether sufficient appropriate audit evidence has been obtained (for example, section 200, *Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the Conduct of an Audit in Accordance With Generally Accepted Auditing Standards*, and section 330, *Performing Audit Procedures in Response to Assessed Risks and Evaluating the Audit Evidence Obtained*).

[Revised, August 2012, to reflect conforming changes necessary due to the issuance of SAS No. 126.]

#### Effective Date

.03 This section is effective for audits of financial statements for periods ending on or after December 15, 2012.

#### Objective

.04 The objective of the auditor is to design and perform audit procedures that enable the auditor to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to be able to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor's opinion.

## Definitions

.05 For purposes of generally accepted auditing standards, the following terms have the meanings attributed as follows:

**Accounting records.** The records of initial accounting entries and supporting records, such as checks and records of electronic fund transfers; invoices; contracts; the general and subsidiary ledgers; journal entries and other adjustments to the financial statements that are not reflected in journal entries; and records, such as work sheets and spreadsheets, supporting cost allocations, computations, reconciliations, and disclosures.

**Appropriateness (of audit evidence).** The measure of the quality of audit evidence (that is, its relevance and reliability in providing support for the conclusions on which the auditor's opinion is based).

**Audit evidence.** Information used by the auditor in arriving at the conclusions on which the auditor's opinion is based. Audit evidence includes both information contained in the accounting records underlying the financial statements and other information.

**Management's specialist.** An individual or organization possessing expertise in a field other than accounting or auditing, whose work in that field is used by the entity to assist the entity in preparing the financial statements.

**Sufficiency (of audit evidence).** The measure of the quantity of audit evidence. The quantity of the audit evidence needed is affected by the auditor's assessment of the risks of material misstatement and also by the quality of such audit evidence.

## Requirements

### Sufficient Appropriate Audit Evidence

.06 The auditor should design and perform audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence. (Ref: par. .A1–.A26)

### Information to Be Used as Audit Evidence

.07 When designing and performing audit procedures, the auditor should consider the relevance and reliability of the information to be used as audit evidence. (Ref: par. .A27–.A34)

.08 If information to be used as audit evidence has been prepared using the work of a management's specialist, the auditor should, to the extent necessary, taking into account the significance of that specialist's work for the auditor's purposes, (Ref: par. .A35–.A37)

- a. evaluate the competence, capabilities, and objectivity of that specialist; (Ref: par. .A38–.A44)
- b. obtain an understanding of the work of that specialist; and (Ref: par. .A45–.A48)
- c. evaluate the appropriateness of that specialist's work as audit evidence for the relevant assertion. (Ref: par. .A49)

**.09** When using information produced by the entity, the auditor should evaluate whether the information is sufficiently reliable for the auditor's purposes, including, as necessary, in the following circumstances:

- a. Obtaining audit evidence about the accuracy and completeness of the information (Ref: par. .A50–.A51)
- b. Evaluating whether the information is sufficiently precise and detailed for the auditor's purposes (Ref: par. .A52)

## **Inconsistency in, or Doubts Over Reliability of, Audit Evidence**

**.10** If

- a. audit evidence obtained from one source is inconsistent with that obtained from another or
- b. the auditor has doubts about the reliability of information to be used as audit evidence,

the auditor should determine what modifications or additions to audit procedures are necessary to resolve the matter and should consider the effect of the matter, if any, on other aspects of the audit. (Ref: par. .A53)

## **Application and Other Explanatory Material**

### **Sufficient Appropriate Audit Evidence (Ref: par. .06)**

**.A1** Audit evidence is necessary to support the auditor's opinion and report. It is cumulative in nature and is primarily obtained from audit procedures performed during the course of the audit. It may, however, also include information obtained from other sources, such as previous audits (provided that the auditor has determined whether changes have occurred since the previous audits that may affect its relevance to the current audit<sup>1</sup>), or a firm's quality control procedures for client acceptance and continuance. In addition to other sources inside and outside the entity, the entity's accounting records are an important source of audit evidence. Also, information that may be used as audit evidence may have been prepared using the work of management's specialist. Audit evidence comprises both information that supports and corroborates management's assertions and any information that contradicts such assertions. In addition, in some cases, the absence of information (for example, management's refusal to provide a requested representation) is used by the auditor and, therefore, also constitutes audit evidence.<sup>2</sup>

**.A2** Most of the auditor's work in forming the auditor's opinion consists of obtaining and evaluating audit evidence. Audit procedures to obtain audit evidence can include inspection, observation, confirmation, recalculation, reperformance, and analytical procedures, often in some combination, in addition to inquiry. Although inquiry may provide important audit evidence and may even produce evidence of a misstatement, inquiry alone ordinarily does not provide sufficient audit evidence of the absence of a material misstatement at the assertion level, nor is inquiry alone sufficient to test the operating effectiveness of controls.

**.A3** As explained in section 200, reasonable assurance is obtained when the auditor has obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to reduce audit

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph .10 of section 315, *Understanding the Entity and Its Environment and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement*.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph .A32 of section 200, *Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the Conduct of an Audit in Accordance With Generally Accepted Auditing Standards*.

risk (that is, the risk that the auditor expresses an inappropriate opinion when the financial statements are materially misstated) to an acceptably low level.<sup>3</sup>

**A4** The sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence are interrelated. *Sufficiency* is the measure of the quantity of audit evidence. The quantity of audit evidence needed is affected by the auditor's assessment of the risks of misstatement (the higher the assessed risks, the more audit evidence is likely to be required) and also by the quality of such audit evidence (the higher the quality, the less may be required). However, obtaining more audit evidence may not compensate for its poor quality.

**A5** *Appropriateness* is the measure of the quality of audit evidence (that is, its relevance and reliability in providing support for the conclusions on which the auditor's opinion is based). The reliability of evidence is influenced by its source and nature and is dependent on the individual circumstances under which it is obtained.

**A6** Section 330 requires the auditor to conclude whether sufficient appropriate audit evidence has been obtained.<sup>4</sup> Whether sufficient appropriate audit evidence has been obtained to reduce audit risk to an acceptably low level and, thereby, enable the auditor to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor's opinion, is a matter of professional judgment. Section 200 contains discussion of relevant factors when the auditor exercises professional judgment regarding whether sufficient appropriate audit evidence has been obtained.<sup>5</sup>

### **Sources of Audit Evidence**

**A7** Some audit evidence is obtained by performing audit procedures to test the accounting records (for example, through analysis and review, by reperforming procedures followed in the financial reporting process, and by reconciling related types and applications of the same information). Through the performance of such audit procedures, the auditor may determine that the accounting records are internally consistent and agree to the financial statements. However, accounting records alone do not provide sufficient appropriate audit evidence on which to base an audit opinion on the financial statements.

**A8** More assurance is ordinarily obtained from consistent audit evidence obtained from different sources or of a different nature than from items of audit evidence considered individually. For example, corroborating information obtained from a source independent of the entity may increase the assurance that the auditor obtains from audit evidence that is generated internally, such as evidence existing within the accounting records, minutes of meetings, or a management representation.

**A9** Information from sources independent of the entity that the auditor may use as audit evidence include confirmations from third parties, analysts' reports, and comparable data about competitors (benchmarking data).

### **Audit Procedures for Obtaining Audit Evidence**

**A10** As required by and explained further in section 315 and section 330, audit evidence to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the auditor's opinion is obtained by performing the following:<sup>6, 7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph .06 of section 200.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph .28 of section 330, *Performing Audit Procedures in Response to Assessed Risks and Evaluating the Audit Evidence Obtained*.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraphs .A49–.A54 of section 200.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraphs .05–.06 of section 315.

<sup>7</sup> Paragraphs .06–.07 of section 330.

- a. Risk assessment procedures
- b. Further audit procedures, which comprise
  - i. tests of controls, when required by the AU-C sections or when the auditor has chosen to do so, and
  - ii. substantive procedures, which include tests of details and substantive analytical procedures.

**.A11** The audit procedures described in paragraphs .A14–.A26 that follow may be used as risk assessment procedures, tests of controls, or substantive procedures, depending on the context in which they are applied by the auditor. As explained in section 330, audit evidence obtained from previous audits may, in certain circumstances, provide appropriate audit evidence, provided that the auditor has determined whether changes have occurred since the previous audit that may affect its relevance to the current audit.<sup>8</sup>

**.A12** The nature and timing of the audit procedures to be used may be affected by the fact that some of the accounting data and other information may be available only in electronic form or only at certain points or periods in time. For example, source documents, such as purchase orders and invoices, may exist only in electronic form when an entity uses electronic commerce or may be discarded after scanning when an entity uses image processing systems to facilitate storage and reference.

**.A13** Certain electronic information may not be retrievable after a specified period of time (for example, if files are changed and if backup files do not exist). Accordingly, the auditor may find it necessary, as a result of an entity's data retention policies, to request retention of some information for the performance of audit procedures at a later point in time or to perform audit procedures at a time when the information is available.

### *Inspection*

**.A14** Inspection involves examining records or documents, whether internal or external, in paper form, electronic form, or other media or a physical examination of an asset. Inspection of records and documents provides audit evidence of varying degrees of reliability, depending on their nature and source and, in the case of internal records and documents, the effectiveness of the controls over their production. An example of inspection used as a test of controls is inspection of records for evidence of authorization.

**.A15** Some documents represent direct audit evidence of the existence of an asset (for example, a document constituting a financial instrument such as a stock or bond). Inspection of such documents may not necessarily provide audit evidence about ownership or value. In addition, inspecting an executed contract may provide audit evidence relevant to the entity's application of accounting policies, such as revenue recognition.

**.A16** Inspection of tangible assets may provide reliable audit evidence with respect to their existence but not necessarily about the entity's rights and obligations or the valuation of the assets. Inspection of individual inventory items may accompany the observation of inventory counting. For example, when observing an inventory count, the auditor may inspect individual inventory items (such as opening containers included in the inventory count to determine whether they are full or empty) to verify their existence.

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph .A38 of section 330.

*Observation*

**.A17** Observation consists of looking at a process or procedure being performed by others (for example, the auditor's observation of inventory counting by the entity's personnel or the performance of control activities). Observation provides audit evidence about the performance of a process or procedure but is limited to the point in time at which the observation takes place and by the fact that the act of being observed may affect how the process or procedure is performed. Section 501, *Audit Evidence—Specific Considerations for Selected Items*, addresses the observation of the counting of inventory.<sup>9</sup>

*External Confirmation*

**.A18** An external confirmation represents audit evidence obtained by the auditor as a direct written response to the auditor from a third party (the confirming party) in paper form or by electronic or other medium. External confirmation procedures frequently are relevant when addressing assertions associated with certain account balances and their elements. However, external confirmations need not be restricted to account balances only. For example, the auditor may request confirmation of the terms of agreements or transactions an entity has with third parties; the confirmation request may be designed to ask if any modifications have been made to the agreement and, if so, their relevant details. External confirmation procedures also are used to obtain audit evidence about the absence of certain conditions (for example, the absence of a side agreement that may influence revenue recognition). See section 505, *External Confirmations*, for further guidance.

*Recalculation*

**.A19** Recalculation consists of checking the mathematical accuracy of documents or records. Recalculation may be performed manually or electronically.

*Reperformance*

**.A20** Reperformance involves the independent execution of procedures or controls that were originally performed as part of the entity's internal control.

*Analytical Procedures*

**.A21** Analytical procedures consist of evaluations of financial information through analysis of plausible relationships among both financial and nonfinancial data. Analytical procedures also encompass such investigation as is necessary of identified fluctuations and relationships that are inconsistent with other relevant information or that differ from expected values by a significant amount. See section 520 for further guidance.

**.A22** *Scanning* is a type of analytical procedure involving the auditor's exercise of professional judgment to review accounting data to identify significant or unusual items to test. This may include the identification of unusual individual items within account balances or other data through the reading or analysis of, for example, entries in transaction listings, subsidiary ledgers, general ledger control accounts, adjusting entries, suspense accounts, reconciliations, and other detailed reports. Scanning may include searching for large or unusual items in the accounting records (for example, nonstandard journal entries), as well as in transaction data (for example, suspense accounts and adjusting journal entries) for indications of misstatements that have occurred. Electronic audit procedures may assist the auditor in identifying unusual items. When the auditor selects items for testing by scanning and those items are tested, the auditor obtains audit evidence about those items. The auditor's scanning

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraphs .11–.15 of section 501, *Audit Evidence—Specific Considerations for Selected Items*.

also may provide some audit evidence about the items not selected for testing because the auditor has exercised professional judgment to determine that the items not selected are less likely to be misstated.

#### *Inquiry*

**.A23** Inquiry consists of seeking information of knowledgeable persons, both financial and nonfinancial, within the entity or outside the entity. Inquiry is used extensively throughout the audit, in addition to other audit procedures. Inquiries may range from formal written inquiries to informal oral inquiries. Evaluating responses to inquiries is an integral part of the inquiry process.

**.A24** Responses to inquiries may provide the auditor with information not previously possessed or with corroborative audit evidence. Alternatively, responses might provide information that differs significantly from other information that the auditor has obtained (for example, information regarding the possibility of management override of controls). In some cases, responses to inquiries provide a basis for the auditor to modify or perform additional audit procedures.

**.A25** Although corroboration of evidence obtained through inquiry is often of particular importance, in the case of inquiries about management intent, the information available to support management's intent may be limited. In these cases, understanding management's past history of carrying out its stated intentions, management's stated reasons for choosing a particular course of action, and management's ability to pursue a specific course of action may provide relevant information to corroborate the evidence obtained through inquiry.

**.A26** Regarding some matters, the auditor may consider it necessary to obtain written representations from management and, when appropriate, those charged with governance to confirm responses to oral inquiries. See section 580, *Written Representations*, for further guidance.

## **Information to Be Used as Audit Evidence**

### ***Relevance and Reliability (Ref: par. .07)***

**.A27** As noted in paragraph .A1, although audit evidence is primarily obtained from audit procedures performed during the course of the audit, it also may include information obtained from other sources (for example, previous audits, in certain circumstances, and a firm's quality control procedures for client acceptance and continuance). The quality of all audit evidence is affected by the relevance and reliability of the information upon which it is based.

#### *Relevance*

**.A28** Relevance relates to the logical connection with, or bearing upon, the purpose of the audit procedure and, when appropriate, the assertion under consideration. The relevance of information to be used as audit evidence may be affected by the direction of testing. For example, if the purpose of an audit procedure is to test for overstatement in the existence or valuation of accounts payable, testing the recorded accounts payable may be a relevant audit procedure. On the other hand, when testing for understatement in the existence or valuation of accounts payable, testing the recorded accounts payable would not be relevant, but testing such information as subsequent disbursements, unpaid invoices, suppliers' statements, and unmatched receiving reports may be relevant.

**.A29** A given set of audit procedures may provide audit evidence that is relevant to certain assertions but not others. For example, inspection of documents related to the collection of receivables after the period-end may provide

audit evidence regarding existence and valuation but not necessarily cutoff. Similarly, obtaining audit evidence regarding a particular assertion (for example, the existence of inventory) is not a substitute for obtaining audit evidence regarding another assertion (for example, the valuation of that inventory). On the other hand, audit evidence from different sources or of a different nature may often be relevant to the same assertion.

**.A30** Tests of controls are designed to evaluate the operating effectiveness of controls in preventing, or detecting and correcting, material misstatements at the assertion level. Designing tests of controls to obtain relevant audit evidence includes identifying conditions (characteristics or attributes) that indicate performance of a control and identifying deviation conditions that indicate departures from adequate performance. The presence or absence of those conditions can then be tested by the auditor.

**.A31** Substantive procedures are designed to detect material misstatements at the assertion level. They comprise tests of details and substantive analytical procedures. Designing substantive procedures includes identifying conditions relevant to the purpose of the test that constitute a misstatement in the relevant assertion.

### *Reliability*

**.A32** The reliability of information to be used as audit evidence and, therefore, of the audit evidence itself is influenced by its source and nature and the circumstances under which it is obtained, including the controls over its preparation and maintenance, when relevant. Therefore, generalizations about the reliability of various kinds of audit evidence are subject to important exceptions. Even when information to be used as audit evidence is obtained from sources external to the entity, circumstances may exist that could affect its reliability. Information obtained from an independent external source may not be reliable, for example, if the source is not knowledgeable or a management specialist lacks objectivity. While recognizing that exceptions may exist, the following generalizations about the reliability of audit evidence may be useful:

- The reliability of audit evidence is increased when it is obtained from independent sources outside the entity.
- The reliability of audit evidence that is generated internally is increased when the related controls, including those over its preparation and maintenance, imposed by the entity are effective.
- Audit evidence obtained directly by the auditor (for example, observation of the application of a control) is more reliable than audit evidence obtained indirectly or by inference (for example, inquiry about the application of a control).
- Audit evidence in documentary form, whether paper, electronic, or other medium, is more reliable than evidence obtained orally (for example, a contemporaneously written record of a meeting is more reliable than a subsequent oral representation of the matters discussed).
- Audit evidence provided by original documents is more reliable than audit evidence provided by photocopies, facsimiles, or documents that have been filmed, digitized, or otherwise transformed into electronic form, the reliability of which may depend on the controls over their preparation and maintenance.



**.A33** Section 520 provides further guidance regarding the reliability of data used for purposes of designing analytical procedures as substantive procedures.<sup>10</sup>

**.A34** Section 240, *Consideration of Fraud in a Financial Statement Audit*, addresses circumstances in which the auditor has reason to believe that a document may not be authentic or may have been modified without that modification having been disclosed to the auditor.<sup>11</sup>

***Reliability of Information Produced by a Management's Specialist***  
**(Ref: par. .08)**

**.A35** The preparation of an entity's financial statements may require expertise in a field other than accounting or auditing, such as actuarial calculations, valuations, or engineering data. The entity uses a management's specialist in these fields to obtain the needed expertise to prepare the financial statements. Failure to do so when such expertise is necessary increases the risks of material misstatement and may be a significant deficiency or material weakness.<sup>12</sup>

**.A36** When information to be used as audit evidence has been prepared using the work of a management's specialist, the requirement in paragraph .08 applies. For example, an individual or organization may possess expertise in the application of models to estimate the fair value of securities for which no observable market exists. If the individual or organization applies that expertise in making an estimate which the entity uses in preparing its financial statements, the individual or organization is a management's specialist and paragraph .08 applies. If, on the other hand, that individual or organization merely provides price data regarding private transactions not otherwise available to the entity which the entity uses in its own estimation methods, such information, if used as audit evidence, is subject to paragraph .07, but it is not the use of a management's specialist by the entity.

**.A37** The nature, timing, and extent of audit procedures with regard to the requirement in paragraph .08 may be affected by such matters as the following:

- The nature and complexity of the matter to which the management's specialist relates
- The risks of material misstatement of the matter
- The availability of alternative sources of audit evidence
- The nature, scope, and objectives of the work of the management's specialist
- Whether the management's specialist is employed by the entity or is a party engaged by it to provide relevant services
- The extent to which management can exercise control or influence over the work of the management's specialist
- Whether the management's specialist is subject to technical performance standards or other professional or industry requirements

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<sup>10</sup> Paragraph .05 of section 520, *Analytical Procedures*.

<sup>11</sup> Paragraph .A11 of section 240, *Consideration of Fraud in a Financial Statement Audit*.

<sup>12</sup> See section 265, *Communicating Internal Control Related Matters Identified in an Audit*, for further guidance.

- The nature and extent of any controls within the entity over the work of the management's specialist
- The auditor's knowledge and experience of the field of expertise management's specialist
- The auditor's previous experience of the work of that specialist

*The Competence, Capabilities, and Objectivity of a Management's Specialist (Ref: par. .08a)*

**.A38** Competence relates to the nature and level of expertise of the management's specialist. Capability relates to the ability of the management's specialist to exercise that competence in the circumstances. Factors that influence capability may include, for example, geographic location and the availability of time and resources. Objectivity relates to the possible effects that bias, conflict of interest, or the influence of others may have on the professional or business judgment of the management's specialist. The competence, capabilities, and objectivity of a management's specialist, and any controls within the entity over that specialist's work, are important factors with regard to the reliability of any information produced by a management's specialist.

**.A39** Information regarding the competence, capabilities, and objectivity of a management's specialist may come from a variety of sources, such as the following:

- Personal experience with previous work of that specialist
- Discussions with that specialist
- Discussions with others who are familiar with that specialist's work
- Knowledge of that specialist's qualifications, membership in a professional body or industry association, license to practice, or other forms of external recognition
- Published papers or books written by that specialist
- An auditor's specialist, if any, that assists the auditor in obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence with respect to information produced by the management's specialist

**.A40** Matters relevant to evaluating the competence, capabilities, and objectivity of a management's specialist include whether that specialist's work is subject to technical performance standards or other professional or industry requirements, for example, ethical standards and other membership requirements of a professional body or industry association, accreditation standards of a licensing body, or requirements imposed by law or regulation.

**.A41** Other matters that may be relevant include

- the relevance of the capabilities and competence of the management's specialist to the matter for which that specialist's work will be used, including any areas of specialty within that specialist's field. For example, a particular actuary may specialize in property and casualty insurance but have limited expertise regarding pension calculations.
- the competence of the management's specialist with respect to relevant accounting requirements, for example, knowledge of assumptions and methods, including models, when applicable, that are consistent with the applicable financial reporting framework.

- whether unexpected events, changes in conditions, or the audit evidence obtained from the results of audit procedures indicate that it may be necessary to reconsider the initial evaluation of the competence, capabilities, and objectivity of the management's specialist as the audit progresses.

**.A42** A broad range of circumstances may threaten objectivity, for example, self-interest threats, advocacy threats, familiarity threats, self-review threats, and intimidation threats. Safeguards may reduce such threats and may be created either by external structures (for example, the profession, legislation, or regulation of the management's specialist) or by the work of the management's specialist environment (for example, quality control policies and procedures).

**.A43** Although safeguards cannot eliminate all threats to the objectivity of a management's specialist, threats such as intimidation threats may be of less significance to a specialist engaged by the entity than to a specialist employed by the entity, and the effectiveness of safeguards such as quality control policies and procedures may be greater. Because the threat to objectivity created by being an employee of the entity will always be present, a specialist employed by the entity cannot ordinarily be regarded as being more likely to be objective than other employees of the entity.

**.A44** When evaluating the objectivity of a specialist engaged by the entity, it may be relevant to discuss with management and that specialist any interests and relationships that may create threats to the specialist's objectivity and any applicable safeguards, including any professional requirements that apply to the specialist, and to evaluate whether the safeguards are adequate. Interests and relationships creating threats may include the following:

- Financial interests
- Business and personal relationships
- Provision of other services

*Obtaining an Understanding of the Work of the Management's Specialist (Ref: par. .08b)*

**.A45** An understanding of the work of the management's specialist includes an understanding of the relevant field of expertise. An understanding of the relevant field of expertise may be obtained in conjunction with the auditor's determination of whether the auditor has the expertise to evaluate the work of the management's specialist, or whether the auditor needs an auditor's specialist for this purpose.<sup>13</sup>

**.A46** Aspects of the field of the management's specialist relevant to the auditor's understanding may include

- whether that specialist's field has areas of specialty within it that are relevant to the audit.
- whether any professional or other standards and regulatory or legal requirements apply.
- what assumptions and methods are used by the management's specialist and whether they are generally accepted within that specialist's field and appropriate for financial reporting purposes.
- the nature of internal and external data or information the management's specialist uses.

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<sup>13</sup> Paragraph .07 of section 620, *Using the Work of an Auditor's Specialist*.

**.A47** In the case of a management's specialist engaged by the entity, there will ordinarily be an engagement letter or other written form of agreement between the entity and that specialist. Evaluating that agreement when obtaining an understanding of the work of the management's specialist may assist the auditor in determining for the auditor's purposes the appropriateness of

- the nature, scope, and objectives of that specialist's work;
- the respective roles and responsibilities of management and that specialist; and
- the nature, timing, and extent of communication between management and that specialist, including the form of any report to be provided by that specialist.

**.A48** In the case of a management's specialist employed by the entity, it is less likely that there will be a written agreement of this kind. Inquiry of the specialist and other members of management may be the most appropriate way for the auditor to obtain the necessary understanding.

*Evaluating the Appropriateness of the Work of the Management's Specialist (Ref: par. .08c)*

**.A49** Considerations when evaluating the appropriateness of the work of the management's specialist as audit evidence for the relevant assertion may include

- the relevance and reasonableness of that specialist's findings or conclusions, their consistency with other audit evidence, and whether they have been appropriately reflected in the financial statements;
- if that specialist's work involves use of significant assumptions and methods, the relevance and reasonableness of those assumptions and methods; and
- if that specialist's work involves significant use of source data, the relevance, completeness, and accuracy of that source data.

***Information Produced by the Entity and Used for the Auditor's Purposes (Ref: par. .09a–b)***

**.A50** In order for the auditor to obtain reliable audit evidence, information produced by the entity, including any management's specialist, that is used for performing audit procedures needs to be sufficiently complete and accurate. For example, the effectiveness of an audit procedure, such as applying standard prices to records of sales volume to develop an expectation of sales revenue, is affected by the accuracy of the price information and the completeness and accuracy of the sales volume data. Similarly, if the auditor intends to test a population (for example, payments) for a certain characteristic (for example, authorization), the results of the test will be less reliable if the population from which items are selected for testing is not complete.

**.A51** Obtaining audit evidence about the accuracy and completeness of such information may be accomplished concurrently with the actual audit procedure applied to the information when obtaining such audit evidence is an integral part of the audit procedure itself. In other situations, the auditor may have obtained audit evidence of the accuracy and completeness of such information by testing controls over the preparation and maintenance of the information. In some situations, however, the auditor may determine that additional audit procedures are needed.

**.A52** In some cases, the auditor may intend to use information produced by the entity for other audit purposes. For example, the auditor may intend to use the entity's performance measures for the purpose of analytical procedures or use the entity's information produced for monitoring activities such as reports of the internal audit function. In such cases, the appropriateness of the audit evidence obtained is affected by whether the information is sufficiently precise or detailed for the auditor's purposes. For example, performance measures used by management may not be precise enough to detect material misstatements. [As amended, effective for audits of financial statements for periods ending on or after December 15, 2014, by SAS No. 128.]

### **Inconsistency in, or Doubts Over Reliability of, Audit Evidence (Ref: par. .10)**

**.A53** Obtaining audit evidence from different sources or of a different nature may indicate that an individual item of audit evidence is not reliable, such as when audit evidence obtained from one source is inconsistent with that obtained from another. This may be the case when, for example, responses to inquiries of management, internal audit, and others are inconsistent or when responses to inquiries of those charged with governance made to corroborate the responses to inquiries of management are inconsistent with the response by management. Section 230, *Audit Documentation*, includes a specific documentation requirement if the auditor identified information that is inconsistent with the auditor's final conclusion regarding a significant finding or issue.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Paragraph .12 of section 230, *Audit Documentation*.