



Case study – Operation Hastings

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In February 2016, IBAC was advised of allegations that a former officer of the Electrotechnology, Printing, Information and Communications (EPIC) Industry Training Board had altered the final mark of a Licensed Electricians Assessment (LEA) examination to enable a candidate to pass when a licensed assessor had previously evaluated the candidate as a fail.

Background

EPIC Industry Training Board has been endorsed by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), the electrical regulator for Victoria, as an approved assessor for the purpose of conducting LEA assessments.

The LEA consists of three assessments (comprising theory, practical and safe working practice elements). A candidate must achieve at least 75 per cent in each assessment to be considered competent to apply to ESV for an electrician's license.

What did IBAC do?

IBAC undertook an investigation, Operation Hastings, to determine if there was any evidence to support the allegation of serious corrupt conduct, specifically to determine if an offence had been committed under the Crimes Act 1958. The investigation examined all relevant documents and interviewed staff of the EPIC Industry Training Board who were involved in adjudicating, assessing or administration of the LEA.

What were the outcomes?

IBAC found there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegation that the former officer unlawfully altered the final mark of a LEA examination.

Lessons learned, challenges and outtakes

IBAC identified a number of poor processes around EPIC Industry Training Board's LEA assessment including:

- the final examination mark was altered without consultation with either the initial assessor and/or the second assessor, which was contrary to ESV's assessment rules
- examinations were marked in pencil, and the name and signature of the assessor and the date of marking and review were not consistently recorded on examination, undermining the accountability of the assessment process
- storage of examinations was poor
- there was no auditable trail of access to the database on which the EPIC Industry Training Board recorded the results of assessments.

IBAC recommended, pursuant to section 159(1) of the *Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011* (IBAC Act), that EPIC Industry Training Board review and strengthen its processes around LEA assessments to address the issues identified in Operation Hastings. IBAC also recommended that ESV audit previous LEA assessments to confirm they comply with ESV's assessment rules.

Vulnerabilities and prevention measures

IBAC identified the following vulnerabilities and prevention measures as a result of Operation Hastings. Public sector agencies and others can build their corruption resilience by identifying if they are susceptible to these vulnerabilities and undertaking appropriate prevention measures.

Issue	Vulnerability	Prevention measures include:
Lack of adequate policies and procedures	Failure to conduct assessments in a fully accountable way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear policies and procedures regarding assessment processes, including processes to be followed to ensure accountability • Regular audits to ensure assessments are conducted in accordance with policies and procedures.
Poor internal compliance systems	Storage of information on database without the ability to audit access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate records management strategies and systems in place (following Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) standards) • Training and awareness of organisational records management and general records management standards (modules available on PROV website)
	Insecure storage of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, auditable trail of information (assessments) • Secure storage information (assessments), and ensuring access to databases is auditable • Ensure employees are provided with training on Information Privacy Principles pursuant to the <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i>.

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- investigating serious corruption and police misconduct
- informing the public sector, police and the community about the risks and impacts of corruption and police misconduct, and ways in which it can be prevented.

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