

Scheme Rules for the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives

1. Introduction

This document contains the BPEC Certification Ltd Scheme Rules for the operation of the UK gas industry's 'Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives'. A definition of terms used throughout this document is given in appendix 2. The document contains details about how to obtain Certification by undergoing Assessment at an Assessment Centre approved by BPEC Certification Ltd, within the scope of accreditation awarded by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

2. Scope

These Scheme Rules cover the steps necessary for the Certification of an individual by BPEC Certification Ltd. These Scheme Rules apply only to Assessment and Certification and not to any training which may have been undertaken prior to the Assessment.

The Scheme will assess an individual's competence to carry out gas work safely. The Scheme is not intended to assess an individual's competence in other areas of work. Appendix 1 lists the non-gas safety legislation and other requirements that are outside the scope of the Scheme. Employers, employees and self-employed individuals should recognise the responsibilities and duties they have under all legislation that encompasses their full range of work.

3. Policy Statements

It is the policy of BPEC Certification Ltd that impartial Assessment shall be open to any and all individuals meeting the Scheme entry requirements regardless of race colour, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, religion, sexuality, political belief, ability or age. Preparatory training is not a pre-requisite for assessment.

Individuals are invited to indicate any special needs that they wish to be taken into consideration at the time of application. Each declared situation will be considered on an individual basis. BPEC Certification Ltd to take all reasonable steps to offer methods of Assessment that provide for the needs of individuals with learning and physical difficulties.

4. Scheme Criteria

The criteria that define Assessments are ratified by the ACS Executive Committee. The Scheme is modular in design and the number and nature of modules available are subject to periodic change.

A current list of modules is available on request. The current scope of UKAS accreditation for BPEC Certification Ltd. can be obtained via the UKAS web site (see section 16 for contact details). Modules are grouped into general work sectors, comprising:

- Domestic Natural Gas
- Commercial (Non Domestic)
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)
- Commercial Catering
- Emergency Service Provider/Meter installer

For individuals working in two or more of the above sectors, changeover Assessments are available to avoid re-assessing common areas where competence has already been proven.

Candidates applying for the first time under this scheme will undertake an initial assessment. Candidates who are renewing their assessments under this scheme may be eligible to take a re-assessment.

For advice regarding the appropriate modules required to cover the work activities of an individual, contact should be made with the local Assessment Centre, details of which can be found by calling 0845 644 6558 or visiting our website www.bpec.org.uk

5. Application

All formal applications shall be made on the application form provided, which must be complete in all its details before Certification can be processed. The application form requires the following information.

- Candidate name and address
- Candidate National Insurance number
- 2 passport sized photographs
- Copies of relevant qualifications and/or evidence of gas work experience
- A declaration of the category for the individual making the application

Individuals should contact their local Assessment Centre for advice if they unsure of their category, or the requirements relating to it. (See below)

Candidate Categories

Category 1

Applicants who are experienced gas-fitting operatives who hold ACS, ACoPs, S/NVQ or City & Guilds Gas Qualifications and who is either seeking:

- Initial ACS assessment
- Re-assessment on initial ACS assessment
- Extension of certification to include additional work range

Category 2

Application conditions require that this applicant obtains employment with a gas registered business that is willing to provide an extended period of company "in house" gas training and organisational support prior to taking the ACS assessment.

Applicants must provide evidence that they hold qualifications demonstrating competence in work activities associated with fossil fuelled appliances/equipment and/or pipe work installation. Examples of appropriate qualifications include:

- Plumbing craft qualification or S/NVQ
- Pipe fitter/welder craft qualification or S/NVQ
- Heating and Ventilating craft qualification or S/NVQ
- Refrigeration Engineer craft qualification or S/NVQ

Category 3

Category 3 applicants are new entrants to the gas industry and have no relevant qualifications or experience.

Application conditions require that this applicant obtains employment with a gas registered business that is willing to provide an auditable extended period of company "in house" gas training and organisational support prior to taking the ACS assessment. (The alternative route for this category of applicant is to seek training and experience that will result in the attainment of an N/SVQ in Gas Services Installation and Maintenance at level II or III)

Note: A number of BPEC Certification Ltd. approved centres may operate training programmes that may be suitable to support a Category 2 or Category 3 applicant. Individual centres should be contacted for details.

The duration and content of the training programme will be determined by the scope of gas work to be undertaken. Evidence in the form of a portfolio of the completion of such training must be presented to the Assessment Centre prior to the operative taking assessments.

Alternatively an N/SVQ within the Mechanical Engineering Sector with related 'on the job' gas training and experience in the intended areas of gas work to be carried out will also support a future application.

All individuals should declare to the Assessment Centre any situation in the past where: they have been deemed incompetent in matters of gas safety; they have had a gas competency certificate or qualification or gas registration withdrawn or they have been dismissed from employment on the grounds of gas safety incompetence. A failure to declare any such issues may invalidate any Certification awarded.

6. Assessment

The Scheme comprises a number of gas-safety related Assessments; Each Assessment is subdivided into elements that reflect the competence that an individual is required to demonstrate in accordance with the Assessment Criteria. The Assessment(s) require and Individual to complete practical and/or written assessments dependent on the modules selected. Where necessary, individuals may be asked oral questions by an Assessor.

Individuals must comply with instructions given to them at the Assessment Centre regarding conduct and safety and must abide by any documented requirements, including the following:

- General conduct
- Provision of tools and equipment necessary to undertake any required practical Assessment. In the event that an individual provides his/her own tools or equipment, these will be subject to approval by the Assessor before use.
- Provision of protective clothing and safety equipment necessary for the Assessments attempted. In the event that an individual provides their own protective clothing and safety equipment, these will be subject to approval by the Assessor before use.
- Provision of necessary reference documentation, and industry or legislative source publications and other material for use in the Assessments. In the event that an individual provides his/her own material, then these will be subject to approval by the Assessor before use.
- Provision by the Assessment Centre of full instructions to enable the completion of both written and practical Assessments.
- In the event that an individual does not satisfy the full range of performance and knowledge criteria required by an Assessment, a partial re-assessment may be allowed, covering only those elements or tasks where Assessment was incomplete.
- Assessment Centres shall advise such individuals as to the areas where re-assessment may be necessary.

7. Certification Process

The Assessment Centre will indicate to individuals the provisional outcome of their Assessment within 10 working days of the completion of their assessment. This result will still be subject to verification, following which records will be transmitted to BPEC Certification Ltd. Assessment Centres may only recommend Certification; the final decision rests with BPEC Certification Ltd.

BPEC Certification Ltd. will endeavour to provide successful Individuals with Certification with 20 days of receipt of correctly completed paperwork from the Assessment Centre.

Certificates of competence issued contain the following details: the scope of the Certification; the Individuals full name; certificate number; national insurance number; date of birth; a description of each assessment; the expiry date of the certification; the certificate holders signature; and a clear warning statement that the certificate is only valid when presented on original paper. Photocopied certificates are not evidence of competence and should not be accepted as such. The certificate remains at all times the property of BPEC Certification Ltd.

Replacement or duplicate certificates can be obtained from BPEC Certification Ltd. A fee, paid in advance and in line with current Certification fees will be charged by BPEC Certification Ltd. in the event of any such request.

Unless BPEC Certification Ltd. has a specific formal arrangement with an employer or any other third party, certificates will be issued directly to the individual assessed. Where employer agreements exist, they will specifically require that original certificates must be issued to the certificated Individual.

8. Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

BPEC Certification Ltd. reserves the right to suspend or withdraw Certification upon evidence of a breach of the Scheme Rules, misuse of the BPEC Certification Ltd mark or logo or failure to pay the agreed fees (also see section 14). BPEC Certification Ltd may prescribe corrective actions to remedy the breach with a reasonable time limit for implementation, normally one month. If, after the time limit expires, implementation of corrective actions has not been completed, instigation of withdrawal procedures will commence.

Upon receiving written notification of the withdrawal of Certification, the individual shall forth immediately: return to BPEC Certification Ltd appropriate certificates; cease carrying out work within the scope of certification that has been withdrawn; cease use and distribution of any stationary, advertising or literature bearing the BPEC Certification Ltd logo; and follow any other instructions included in the written notification.

Withdrawal of an individuals Certificate(s) will be publicised in suitable industry publications and details of the withdrawal will be submitted to the Gas Registration Body. Individuals have the right of appeal to BPEC Certification Ltd as described in clause 10 below.

9. Complaints

Individuals may make a complaint concerning this scheme to the Assessment Centre attended or to BPEC Certification Ltd. Complaints will be investigated, reported, resolved and the results of any investigation will be communicated in writing to the individual. Complaint procedures shall be in place at each Assessment Centre and BPEC Certification Ltd and shall be made available to any individual on request. The Individual has the right of appeal against any decision reached by BPEC Certification Ltd (see clause 10 below).

10. Appeals

Individuals have the right of appeal against any of the following: the results of a complaint investigation; a decision not to issue a certificate; or a decision to withdraw a certificate.

Individuals have the right to be represented at an appeal hearing, but must inform BPEC Certification Ltd in writing of this intention. Representation may be by a legal, trade union or any other body or colleague.

The initial appeal must be made within 15 days of notification of a decision. BPEC Certification Ltd will thoroughly investigate any appeal and make a decision on the appeal within a reasonable time period (usually one month), and submit the findings of the investigation to the appellant. If the appellant wishes to appeal against this decision, they must notify BPEC Certification Ltd within 7 days of notification of the decision. An independent Appeals Committee will then be convened and its constitution will be communicated to the individual. The individual has the right to object to the constitution. In such cases an alternative panel will be proposed by BPEC Certification Ltd. Following evaluation of the appeal the decision will be formally notified to the individual. The total cost of appeals by an individual shall be borne by them where the appeal, at any stage, is not upheld by BPEC Certification Ltd under these Scheme Rules.

11. General Conditions

Certification is subject to the Scheme Rules. BPEC Certification Ltd reserves the right to carry out verification as deemed necessary to confirm continuing satisfactory performance, or act upon evidence received concerning lack of competence. Certification does not discharge or lessen an Individual's responsibilities, statutory or otherwise.

BPEC Certification Ltd will not be responsible for any losses or allege losses incurred by any individual company or organisation where scheme rules are not met.

12. Publicity

Certification does not allow the use of logos either BPEC Certification Ltd or of UKAS unless a formal agreement for such use is given. The scope of certification of an individual must be available to members of the public. Information about an individual's Certification may be given either by BPEC Certification Ltd or by CORGI and shall be limited to facts concerning the scope of certification.

13. Confidentiality

BPEC Certification Ltd shall hold an Individuals details in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and shall use the data only for the purposes as indicated on the application form.

All official parties to the Scheme (comprising BPEC Certification Ltd, Assessment Centres and the Gas Registration Body shall ensure that they and all their staff shall keep in full confidence all information of a private, confidential or secret nature. At no time shall such information be disclosed to any third party except as permitted within these Scheme rules to enable the official parties to carry out their duties and obligations.

14. Fee Structure

Fees for Assessment and Certification will be levied by the Assessment Centre and must be paid in full. Non payment to the centre may result in an individuals assessments results being held at the centre.

The cost of any complaint investigations or appeals by an individual shall be borne by the individual where the complaint or appeal is not upheld by BPEC Certification Ltd under these Scheme Rules.

15. Guidance on Registration

When issuing a certificate of competence, BPEC Certification Ltd shall download the scope of Certification to the Gas Registration Body to update the National Database of Gas Fitting Operatives. Individuals should contact the Gas Registration Body for information regarding the issue of an identification card or an update of that card to cover new areas of Certification.

Individuals working within the scope of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations should note that gas work must not be carried out by any individual unless that individual is both registered (either by a sole trader or via their employer) and in possession of a valid certificate of competence covering the work area concerned.

Note: An Individual holding an ACS certificate may still be refused Gas Registration. Applicants should also seek guidance from the Gas Registration Body on the full requirements of registration.

16. Assessment Centre Arrangements

Start times, finish times, and break times etc will vary between Assessment Centres. Please contact the Assessment Centres for details of specific arrangements.

17. Contact Details

BPEC Certification Ltd
2 Mallard Way
Derby
DE24 8GX

Tel: 0845 644 6558
Fax: 0845 121 1931
Email: info@bpecc.co.uk
Web Site: www.bpec.org.uk

Gas Safe Register™
PO Box 6804
Basingstoke
RG24 4NB

Tel: 0800 408 5577
Email: register@GasSafeRegister.co.uk
Web Site: www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk

UKAS
21-47 High Street
Feltham
Middlesex
TW13 4UN

Tel: 0208 917 8400
Web Site: www.ukas.com

Thank you for choosing a BPEC Certification Ltd approved Assessment Centre. We are committed to providing a fair and impartial assessment. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact BPEC Certification Ltd. or your local Assessment Centre.



Appendix 1 Legislation and Requirements outside the Scope of the Scheme

This appendix lists legislation and requirements that lie outside the scope of this Scheme and which are not covered by competency assessment. The list is not definitive but is intended to provide guidance to the breadth of work of gas fitting operatives where relevant qualifications and training should be encouraged.

- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act
- Electricity at Work Regulations
- Electricity Supply Regulations
- British Standards 7671 (IEE Wiring regulations)
- Construction (Design & Management) Regulations
- The reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- Provision of Work Equipment Regulations
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations
- Workplace Regulations
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations
- Control of Substances
- Hazardous to Health Regulations
- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations
- Water Supply (Water fittings) Regulations
- Water Byelaws (Scotland)
- Building Regulations (beyond gas safety)
- Factories Act
- Gas Meter Regulations
- Gas Quality regulations
- Boiler (Efficiency) Regulations
- The Pressure Systems (Safety) Regulations 2000
- The Gas Meters (Information on Connection and Disconnection) Regulations 1996
- OFGEM Approved Meter Installer (OAMI)
- Construction (Head Protection) Regulations
- Noise at Work Regulations

Appendix 2 Definition of Terms

- **Assessment**
The activity that an Individual must complete to demonstrate competence (see section 6 for details).
- **Assessment Centre**
A location approved by BPEC Certification Ltd where assessment can be undertaken.
- **Assessor**
A person approved and registered by BPEC Certification Ltd who is qualified to supervise Assessments.
- **Certification**
The Issue of a certificate of competence following successful Assessment.
- **Gas Safe Register™**
Appointed by the Health and Safety Executive as the Gas Registration Body for England, Scotland and Wales to operate a National Database of Gas Fitting Operatives.
- **Individual**
A person applying for: Assessment/Certification, undergoing Assessment or in receipt of certificate(s).
- **BPEC Certification Ltd**
BPEC Certification Ltd, accredited by UKAS for operating the Scheme described herein.
- **Scheme**
The Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas fitting Operatives (ACS), as described in the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
- **Scheme Rules**
This Document
- **UKAS**
The United Kingdom Accreditation Service, the organisation recognised by the UK Government as the national body for accrediting certification bodies such as BPEC Certification Ltd