

Operational requirements for certification bodies operating the nationally accredited certification scheme

In accordance with the requirements of
BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012

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Operational requirements for certification bodies operating the nationally accredited certification scheme for individual gas fitting operatives

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is designed to provide clarification, interpretation and guidance on how to comply with BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 (Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons) and to ensure consistency amongst participating Certification Bodies (CBs) in their delivery of the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives (ACS).
- 1.2 Energy and Utility Skills Ltd facilitates and manages the Standard Setting Body (SSB) as agreed with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Whilst in that role, Energy & Utility Skills are the scheme owners of ACS.
- 1.3 The SSB is responsible for the establishment of an appropriate governance and consultative industry structure and associated processes that determine and agree competence criteria for gas fitting operatives. The SSB comprises of the Strategic Management Board (SMB), Standards Consultation Forum (SCF) and the Standards Development Unit (SDU) and Technical Working Groups, for further details of the SSB see Appendix 1.
- 1.4 ACS certificates of gas safety competence can only be issued by a CB that has been accredited in accordance with the requirements of BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012, by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).
- 1.5 The objectivity and impartiality of ACS is designed to give confidence that gas fitting operatives awarded ACS certification are competent to carry out gas work safely in the work activity described on the certificate. BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 and ACS require assessment to be carried out separately from training, to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the assessment process.
- 1.6 ACS applies to gas fitting operatives employed by businesses (including self-employed operatives) which, under the provisions of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR), are required to be registered with Gas Safe Register. However, ACS is available to gas fitting operatives who work outside of the GSIUR but are required under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) to ensure they are competent to carry out safe gas work.
Note: ACS does not apply where other acceptable routes to registration have been undertaken
- 1.7 ACS is designed to enable experienced gas fitting operatives to be assessed on their competence in the 'matters of gas safety' to carry out gas work safely and to be certificated to that effect.
- 1.8 A suite of Guidance Notes are also issued and approved by the SMB to provide further guidance and interpretation to CBs.

2. Scope

2.1 Considerations

The following matters have been considered in the process of deciding the scope of ACS:

- a. Gas legislation and gas normative documents, standards and Technical Bulletins etc. which impact directly on the competencies required to be able to carry out gas work (installation, maintenance and servicing safely).
- b. Non-gas safety legislation that impacts not only on the trade of a gas fitting business (employed or self-employed) but also on business in general.

ACS is designed to assess the competence of experienced gas fitting operatives in safe gas work.

2.2 Parameters

ACS assesses a gas fitting operative's competence to carry out gas work safely either through:

- a. Initial assessment. This is available to experienced gas fitting operatives taking specific assessment(s) in ACS for the first time i.e. have not had certificate(s) previously issued under the ACS or ACS-aligned Gas Services QCF/S/NVQ but hold other recognised qualification and experience.
- b. Re-assessment. This is only available to those gas fitting operatives renewing certificate(s) previously issued under the ACS, GCS or ACS-aligned Gas Services Qualifications, provided the following conditions are met.
 - i. **ACS Certificates** - the expired date of the ACS certificate(s) is within 12 months of the start date of the re-assessment.
 - ii. **ACS aligned Gas Services qualification** - the date of issue of the ACS-aligned Gas Services qualification certificate is within 72 months of the start date of the re-assessment.
 - iii. **Group Competency Scheme (GCS) Certificates** - the expired date of the GCS certificate(s) is within 12 months of the start date of the re-assessment.

If either of the dates above is beyond the specified period, the operative can only be assessed under the arrangements for Initial assessment.

2.3 Legislation and Standards

The Matters of Gas Safety criteria i.e. ACS criteria that are periodically updated by the SSB against the relevant legislation, normative and informative standards specific to safe gas work.

ACS is designed to operate in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man in accordance with the requirements of:

- a. BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 Certification of Persons.
- b. ACS Operational Requirements (this document).
- c. ACS Guidance notes as published by the Standard Setting Body (SSB)
- d. The National Gas Safety Assessment Criteria.
- e. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
- f. Relevant Manufacturer's Instructions

- g. Relevant British Standards.
- h. Relevant Building Standards and Regulations.
- i. Gas Industry Normative Standards and Codes of Practice.
- j. Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedures (GIUSP).
- k. Technical Bulletins

3. Terms and Definitions

3.1 ACoP

Approved Code of Practice.

3.2 ACS

Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives (BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012).

3.3 Appeal

A request by an Applicant, Candidate or certificated person for re-consideration of any decision made by a CB related to their desired certification status.

3.4 Applicant

A Person applying for ACS Assessment.

3.5 Assessment Centre (AC)

A location which is equipped to conduct practical and written assessments, in accordance with the rules of ACS and within the scope for which approval has been granted by a Certification Body.

3.6 Assessor (Examiner)

A person nominated by an AC, approved and registered with a CB to evaluate both the Knowledge & Understanding (K& U) and practical task competencies of the candidate.

3.7 Assessor ACS Competency Matrix

Competency Matrix produced by the SMB that defines the ACS Assessments that may be carried out by Assessors by way of holding comparable ACS Certification.

3.8 Awarding Organisation (AO)

A body recognised by the qualification regulators of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland which certifies conformity to a qualification scheme other than ACS.

3.9 Candidate

A person who has fulfilled specified pre-requisites for ACS assessments and entered into a commercial contract with a CB to undertake ACS assessments.

3.10 Certification Body (CB)

A UKAS accredited body that awards certification of gas safety competence in accordance with BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012.

3.11 Closed book

A method of answering written questions, without reference to resource material.

3.12 Competence in safe gas work

In relation to gas fittings, the experience, knowledge, understanding and practical skills to carry out gas work in such a way as to prevent danger to life and property.

3.13 Designated Person (DP)

A nominated person at an AC who is registered with and approved by a CB to undertake the role of managing and co-ordinating the assessment process and for ensuring that effective communication is maintained between the AC and the CB on matters affecting the assessment of candidates.

3.14 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Assessment and verification of the quality and impartiality management systems and assessment processes and procedures of an AC by the CB. For ACS the nominated person (s) carrying out this function is generally known as the External Verifier (EV).

3.15 External Verifier

A person appointed by a CB to assess and verify the quality management systems and assessment procedures operated by an Approved Assessment Centre.

3.16 Group Competence Scheme (GCS)

The scheme for approval of an employer by a CB accredited by UKAS against the requirements of BS EN ISO/IEC 17021: 2015 to self-certificate their employees for re-assessment for registration with Gas Safe Register.

3.17 Gas fitting operative

A person who undertakes work as defined in GSIUR.

3.18 GIUSP

Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedures (GIUSP).

3.19 Gas safety assessment

Assessment of a gas fitting operative to ensure they demonstrate the competence to carry out gas work safely by undertaking performance and/or knowledge & understanding assessment.

3.20 Gas Safe Register

The registration body approved by the Health and Safety Executive in the United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey, with responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the register of businesses carrying out gas work within the scope of the GSIUR.

- 3.21 **GSIUR**
Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
- 3.22 **GN8**
Guidance note 8: Assessment centre guidance for processing candidates with UK Qualifications and Certification competences and their suitability for accessing ACS assessments.
- 3.23 **GN8A**
Guidance Note 8A: Assessment Centre guidance for processing candidates with gas work experience gained legally from sectors of Industry outside of the scope of the Gas Safety Installation & Use Regulations (GSIUR's) and holding no gas qualifications.
- 3.24 **HSE**
Health and Safety Executive.
- 3.25 **HSE NI**
Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
- 3.26 **HSWA**
Health and Safety at Work Act.
- 3.27 **Initial assessment**
ACS assessment being undertaken by a candidate for the first time
- 3.28 **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)**
Internal quality assurance of the assessment process and procedures within an approved AC.
- 3.29 **Internal Verifier (IV)**
A person approved and registered with a CB to conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the assessment process.
- 3.30 **Invigilator**
A person authorised by the AC who is competent to supervise and administer K&U examinations, but does not evaluate the competence of the candidate.
- 3.31 **K & U**
Knowledge and Understanding.
- 3.32 **MLP**
Managed Learning Programme (MLP).
- 3.33 **MI's**
Manufacturer/manufacturers' instructions.

- 3.34 **New Entrant**
New entrants to the gas industry without a relevant related qualification and/or experience, entering employment for the first time or changing career direction.
- 3.35 **N/SVQ**
National/Scottish Vocational Qualification
- 3.36 **On-site assessment location**
An assessment site remote from the AC which has been approved by the Certification Body.
- 3.37 **Open book**
A method of answering written knowledge and understanding questions with reference to resource material.
- 3.38 **Oral question**
Reworded or rephrased questions asked by the assessor to provide supplementary evidence to support the assessment recommendation, requiring a single response.
- 3.39 **Practical assessment**
An assessment method designed to test the gas fitting operative's practical skills and competence.
- 3.40 **Practical evidence**
Evidence that a gas fitting operative produces while undertaking practical assessment.
- 3.41 **QCF**
Qualification and Credit Framework
- 3.42 **Re-assessment**
The assessment of a candidate holding a valid or expired ACS/GCS or other assessment/certificate currently or previously held by a gas fitting operative.
- 3.43 **RQF**
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)
- 3.44 **Satellite Centre**
A secure location which is equipped to deliver practical and theory assessments only, subject to the Certification Body's approval process and procedures.
- 3.45 **SRA**
Safety Risk Assessment (SRA).
- 3.46 **Standards Consultation Forum (SCF):**

An Industry group that discusses and recommends via consensus the necessary changes to the competence criteria arising from changes to technical standards, gas safety related issues and technological innovation.

3.47 Standards of training in gas work (IGEM/IG/1)

Criteria and requirements for the development and delivery of training programmes in gas work.

3.48 Standards Setting Body (SSB)

A body approved by the HSE to facilitate the industry Standards Setting Function (SMB and SCF) and to develop proposed change options for the SCF to debate in relation to new and amendments to existing competence criteria.

3.49 Strategic Management Board (SMB)

The Board is a body of industry stakeholder representatives who provide governance and validate recommendations made by the SCF.

3.50 Technical Working Group (TWG)

A subordinate SSB group consisting of industry technical experts who monitor the changes to standards, technology and working practice which impact on ACS.

3.51 United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

The organisation appointed and recognised by a memorandum of understanding with the UK Government as the national body for accrediting organisations operating BS EN ISO/IEC 17024 and BS EN ISO/IEC 17021 certification schemes.

4. Management of Impartiality

4.1 The CB shall document its structure, policies and procedures to ensure that the design, access to delivery and award of certification are undertaken impartially.

The CB shall include in its analysis any threats to its impartiality, its activities and those of the AC or any other business it is with that could pose such a threat, any issue that could cause a potential or actual conflict of interest, or that could affect the objectivity of the certification process and these will be recorded and considered on an on-going basis.

5. Structure of the Certification Body in relation to Training

5.1 New entrant applicants i.e. category 3 applying for the first time to take ACS assessments must complete a MLP recognised in accordance with the Standards of training in gas work document (IGEM/IG/1) prior to undertaking assessment (s). All recognised MLPs shall be listed in Guidance note 8.

- 5.2 The CB shall have a process to identify and document the threats arising from delivering MLPs. For ACS this requires the CB to ensure that the AC does not compromise the impartiality and integrity of the assessment process when delivering MLPs or other training programmes not relating to Category 1 or 2 candidates.
- 5.3 The documented process shall acknowledge that training by a CB is a threat to impartiality and should indicate how the CB minimises or eliminates the threats identified. In support of this and on an on-going basis the CB shall:
- a. Demonstrate that the assessment and Certification processes are independent of training to ensure that confidentiality, security of records and impartiality is not compromised.
 - b. Analyse relationships and potential conflicts of interest where a CB has had direct involvement in enabling/facilitating a candidate's eligibility of the access route to undertake assessment.
 - c. Ensure that none of its AC's or candidates are given any impression that the use of both training and assessment services would bring an advantage to an applicant (and ensure that this does not happen in practice).
 - d. Ensure the trainer is not used for any part of an Assessment/IQA in the training subject area for a minimum period of two years of that training, unless the CB can demonstrate a shorter gap does not compromise impartiality of the exam process, outcomes and subsequent certification.

6. Resource requirements

6.1 Requirements, Roles and Responsibility requirements

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities for the end to end certification process:

6.1.1 Functions

Key functions within the Certification Process include:

- a. AC management.
- b. Assessment/Evaluation delivery and management.
- c. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) of the assessment process (AC responsibility)
- d. External Quality Assurance (EQA) of the assessment process (CB responsibility).
- e. Certification Decision making.
- f. CB management.

6.1.2 AC Management

- a. The AC shall appoint a designated person(s) responsible for:

- i. Facilitation, implementation and maintenance of the assessment process.
- ii. Appointment and training of all examination personnel.
- iii. Safety, by ensuring that assessment areas and assessments are carried out safely following the completion of a safety risk evaluation of the assessment equipment and location of practical tasks.
- iv. Ensuring a documented quality system is established, implemented and maintained to CB requirements.
- v. Arrangements to ensure that internal audits, management reviews and corrective actions are adequate, implemented and verified.
- vi. Arrangement of contract review (candidate application).
- vii. Maintaining impartiality of the assessment process.
- viii. Ensure storage, receipt and availability of assessment documentation.
- ix. Ensuring submission of all completed examination documentation as required by the CB (this may be via hard copy postal methods or Electronic transfer).
- x. Compile statistical data related to the assessment process.
- xi. Management of complaints including records and their resolution.
- xii. Reporting on performance of the quality system (including any preventative actions identified) to the AC's senior management for review and as a basis for improving the CB approved examination processes as applied to the AC.
- xiii. Tasks being delegated to named individuals.

b. Designated Person Competencies:

- i. Experienced administrator.
- ii. Understanding of AC and CB requirements relevant to ACS.

6.1.3 Assessors

6.1.3.1 Appointment and competence requirement of assessors.

Assessors must be:

- i. Appointed by the AC and approved by the CB prior to conducting assessments.
- ii. Competent in assessment processes and procedures.
- iii. Occupationally competent.

6.1.3.2 Assessment competence of assessors

Assessors must demonstrate ongoing competence in assessment processes and procedures and hold or working towards a qualification (up to a maximum of one year) in one of the following:

- i. D32 Assess Candidate Performance.
- ii. A1 Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods.
- iii. A2 Assess Candidates' Performance through Observation.
- iv. Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement.

- v. Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement.
 - vi. Teacher training qualifications which include any of the above.
- or
- vii. The assessor must be competent in assessment processes and procedures to the satisfaction of the CB by undertaking a programme of learning which meets the requirements of the Learning and Development National Occupational Standard at the time of the award; Assess Learner Achievement and to the ongoing satisfaction of the CB.

Note: where working towards an assessor qualification all assessment decisions must be confirmed by a qualified assessor.

or

- viii. Alternatively hold a certificate of assessor competence that has equivalence to the above assessor awards and has been awarded by a CB accredited by UKAS to award such certificates in accordance with the requirements of BS EN ISO IEC 17024.

Note: Where working towards an assessor qualification the aspirant assessor shall be registered with an AO/CB to undertake one of the qualifications listed in vii or viii above. All assessment decisions must be validated by an impartial and qualified assessor.

6.1.3.3 Occupational competence of assessors

Assessors must demonstrate occupational competence by holding either of the following:

- i. ACS/GCS certification which is less than 5 years old for each ACS/GCS assessment they conduct with the exception of those assessments detailed in the ACS/GCS Assessor Competency Matrix i.e. 'Assessor ACS competency matrix' as issued and approved by the SMB.

or

- ii. A UK level 3 gas utilisation or building services qualification which is less than 5 years old which includes assessment(s) equivalent to the range of ACS assessments to be assessed with the exception of those assessments detailed in the ACS 'Assessor ACS competency matrix' as issued and approved by the SMB.

Note: all assessors need to have demonstrated competence through one of the above to prove initial competence relevant to the sectors in which they are to assess candidates.

- iii. Where ACS assessments or gas utilisation or building services qualification is older than five years Assessors shall demonstrate to the CB how competence is being maintained by demonstrating one of the following:

- Valid ACS certification for each ACS assessment they conduct with the exception of those assessments detailed in the 'Assessor ACS Competency Matrix' as issued and approved by the SMB.

or

- Maintain an up to date CPD record for all assessments undertaken and a record of dual or observed assessment carried out by a peer Assessor with the exception of those assessments detailed in the 'Assessor ACS Competency Matrix'.

Note: ACS Assessments do not have to be obtained from an ACS centre approved by a different Certification Body but Assessments must be undertaken in an Assessment centre that the Assessor does not normally carry out ACS Assessments within a previous two year period.

6.1.3.4 Responsibilities of Assessors

The Assessor shall:

- i. Brief the candidate on the requirements of the assessment process, including safe working practices.
- ii. Conduct assessments according to the rules and quality procedures of the CB
- iii. Uphold the quality and standards of the assessment process
- iv. Be impartial in judging candidate performance by reference to the assessment criteria and CB assessment documentation
- v. Observe candidates' performance at appropriate stages of the assessment
- vi. Evaluate candidates' performance against the performance criteria in each gas safety assessment/job category and record assessment results
- vii. Evaluate the outcome of K&U assessments
- viii. Question the candidate orally, during or immediately following assessment, as required.
- ix. Record the assessment outcomes on the appropriate assessment documentation
- x. Make available completed assessment documentation to the AC's designated person
- xi. Record the reasons for an assessment being referred, terminated or not started as prescribed by the CB.

6.1.4 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

Internal quality assurance of the assessment process shall be achieved by Internal Verifiers (IV).

- a. IVs must demonstrate ongoing competence in IQA processes and procedures and:
 - i. Be appointed by the AC and approved by the CB.
 - ii. Be familiar with the requirements of ACS.

- iii. Be qualified or working towards a qualification (up to a maximum of 1 year) in IQA of assessment processes and practices holding one of the following qualifications:
 - D34, Internally Verify the Assessment Process.
 - V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process.
 - Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices.
 - Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices.
 - Teacher training qualifications that include any of the above.

Note: Where working towards an IQA qualification all verification decisions must be confirmed by a qualified IV.

or

- iv. IVs must be competent in IQA of assessment processes and procedures to the satisfaction of the CB by undertaking a programme of learning which meets the requirements of the Learning and Development National Occupational Standard at the time of the award; Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Assessment and to the satisfaction of the CB.

or

- v. Alternatively hold a certificate of IQA competence that has equivalence to the above IV awards and has been awarded by a CB accredited by UKAS to award such certificates in accordance with the requirements of BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012.

Note: Where working towards an IV qualification the aspirant IV shall be registered with an AO/CB to undertake one of the qualifications listed in iv or v above. All assessment decisions must be confirmed by an impartial and qualified IV.

b. Occupational competence of IVs

IVs must meet the occupational competency requirements for assessors conducting ACS assessments or have access to independent personnel holding those competencies who have not had involvement with the assessment of individuals being verified, when:

- i. Conducting dual assessments.
- ii. Carrying out technical appraisals of assessors.
- iii. Verifying completed assessment documentation.
- iv. Liaising with the CB on technical matters and assessment processes and procedures.
- v. Other matters requiring technical interpretation relating to assessment is required.
- vi. Investigating and resolving complaints and or appeals.

c. Responsibilities for IVs

IQA shall be undertaken through:

- i. Observing assessments.
- ii. Discussion with candidates and Assessors.
- iii. Monitoring examination records for all assessors.

The frequency of those activities shall be such that the IV is confident that the performance of all assessors, invigilators and the examination processes are in accordance with CB and AC requirements.

The IQA shall maintain documented evidence of those activities for scrutiny by, and discussion with the CB's EV. The IV shall:

- Verify samples of candidate examination documentation. The size of the verification sample shall be set by the IV and agreed with the CB. A copy of this agreement shall be recorded.
- Help to identify and resolve any issues of concern relating to examinations.
- Keep records of corrective actions taken to address deficiencies in the process.

6.1.5 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

The CB must ensure that the AC continue to meet approval requirements and operational standards through a programme of regular external quality assurance audits, those audits are carried out by an External Verifier (EV) appointed by the CB.

Appointment and qualification requirements of personnel responsible for the external quality assurance of assessment processes and practices.

a. EVs must be:

- i. Authorised by the CB.
- ii. Be familiar with the requirements of ACS and BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012.
- iii. Be qualified or working towards a qualification (up to a maximum period of one year) in external quality assurance of assessment processes and practices in *one* of the following qualifications:
 - D35 Externally Verify the Assessment Process.
 - V2 Conduct External Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process.
 - Level 4 Award in the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices.
 - Level 4 Certificate in Leading the External Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices

or

- iv. The EV must demonstrate competence in external quality assurance of assessment processes and practices to the satisfaction of the CB that meets the requirements of the Learning and Development National Occupational Standard at the time of the award; Externally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Assessment.

or

- v. Alternatively a certificate of External Verifier competence that has equivalence to the above verifier awards that has been issued by a Certification Body accredited by UKAS to issue such certification in accordance with the requirements of BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012.

Note: where the EV is working towards an EQA qualification all reports and decisions must be validated by an approved EV.

b. Occupational competence of EV's

EV's must demonstrate their ongoing occupational competence by holding a building or mechanical engineering services qualification acceptable to the CB or have acceptable auditable evidence of their experience in building or mechanical engineering services

and

Maintain a verifiable CPD record which demonstrates how occupational competence is being maintained.

Where an EV is not occupationally competent in the gas utilisation sector, they must have access to independent technical expertise from occupationally competent personnel to support them where the external quality assurance process requires technical support and interpretation when:

- i. Conducting dual assessments.
- ii. Carrying out technical appraisals of assessors and or IVs.
- iii. Verifying Assessor and IV CPD records.
- iv. Liaising with the IVs on technical matters and assessment processes and procedures.
- v. Other matters requiring technical interpretation relating to assessment or internal quality assurance is required.
- vi. Investigating and resolving complaints and or appeals.

c. Responsibilities of EVs

EV's shall be undertaken through:

- i. Monitoring the AC for its standards of assessment, management and administrative processes and procedures.
- ii. Where required, undertake duties in connection with an AC initial approval.
- iii. Not be an employee of the same organisation as the AC on which they are carrying out EQA duties.
- iv. Fulfilling duties in connection with the quality assurance arrangements for ACS, including:
 - Monitoring AC documented systems and administrative arrangements.
 - Monitoring quality assurance controls and procedures.
 - Ensuring that physical assessment resources are adequately maintained.
 - Ensuring compliance with correct/approved assessment practices and procedures.
 - Checking assessments are correctly administered and methods and performance criteria are consistently applied.
 - Resolving any issues of uncertainty relating to assessment.
 - Maintaining a record of visits/audits and reporting to the CB regarding operation of the AC.
 - Ensuring impartiality is maintained and specifically that assessments are carried out independently of any training associated with the assessment process.

6.1.6. Certification Decision

The decision for certification of candidates can only be made by the CB and must be based solely on the information gathered during the assessment process as part of its quality assurance procedures. The CB shall describe the mechanism it has in place to carry out the certification decision.

Appointment, and Competences and requirements of the decision maker:

- i. Personnel who make certification decisions shall be employed, trained, familiar with the requirements of the scheme, ISO 17024 and authorised by the CB.
- ii. Personnel who make certification decisions shall have sufficient knowledge of and experience with the certification process to determine if the certification requirements have been met.
- iii. Those personnel involved in making the certification decision shall not have participated in any examination, IQA or ACS related training of the candidate.
- iv. Be qualified with an appropriate qualification as required by the CB or educated to secondary level.

6.2 Adequacy of premises equipment and resources

The AC shall use adequate premises, including examination sites, equipment and resources for carrying out its certification activities and shall ensure the following:

- a. All assessments are compliant with the current competence criteria, the arrangements, conditions and provisions specified for the assessment.
- b. Evidence that ACs have implemented changes and confirm where additional practical provision is required that the AC can deliver revised assessment (s) in a specified timeframe.

6.3 Approval of ACs by CBs

- a. In granting approval/re-approval to an AC, CBs will need to be assured that the AC is able to effectively meet all of the requirements of the CB, and the relevant parts of BS EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012, the ACS assessment criteria and these Scheme Operational Requirements.
- b. The CB must carry out a full audit of the AC's facilities for all of the assessments it has applied for, its quality/impartiality processes and procedures as well as ensuring that the facilities and procedures required to carry out the K&U Theory examinations meet Scheme and CB requirements.
- c. The maximum Candidate to Assessor Ratio is 4:1 unless the AC can demonstrate satisfactorily to the CB that an increase can be managed. It will be also reliant on the practical provision needed to facilitate a ratio that can be managed for each assessment module for which it grants approval.
- d. AC approval will be valid for up to a maximum of three years, after which a full re-approval of all assessments for which approval has been granted will be required or in accordance with CB procedures which may differ from the third year re-approval of all approved assessments (see Clause 6.2).
- e. An AC can be owned and/or operated by a CB or by a Third Party.
- f. A CB may give an AC approval to operate at a satellite location providing the AC demonstrates that the AC QMS controls the satellite location. The CB will check that a suitable practical assessment area, a room for conducting theory assessments, appropriate health and safety and security arrangements are in place as part of its annual surveillance program.
- g. Where an AC delivers assessment at a satellite location, the satellite practical facility will be subject to requirements as e) above.
- h. The AC performance will be subject to EQA audits by the CB. After initial approval an EQA visit must be undertaken in accordance with the CB audit plan. Frequency of audits will then normally be annually, but subject to satisfactory performance the frequency may be extended or reduced as appropriate by the CB where the AC level of ACS Assessments is at a low rate and demonstrates that its management system continues to be effectively implemented.
- i. Unsatisfactory performance will result in an increase of the frequency of audits, as determined by the CB and may lead to sanctions being applied by the CB.
- j. Where an AC has its approval withdrawn for any reason due to being involved in malpractice or maladministration, the CB shall:
 - Inform UKAS of the removal of the approval
 - Inform any other relevant party e.g. any other CB that may be affected by that removal.

Note: Where an AC "migrates" to another CB, the new CB has the discretion to determine whether an EQA audit of the AC is necessary during that year. The new CB shall ascertain if any sanctions have been applied to the AC and take any appropriate action.

In the above case the EQA audit must cover all of the approved assessments delivered by the AC within the period of approval.

7. Records and information requirements

Management of certification and assessment and candidate records

The retention and security of all certification and assessment record documentation shall be the property and responsibility of the CB.

7.1.1 The AC shall provide details of all records of the assessment which make up the completed assessments and results for Certification decision purposes and audit by the EV, after which the assessment records shall be stored in accordance with the CB procedures.

7.1.1.1 The assessment documentation shall include:

- i. The AC approved number reference.
- ii. Name, address and National Insurance Number (or a unique identification number supplied by Gas Safe Register) of each Candidate.
- iii. A record of the training, experience and qualification evidenced to meet the pre-requisite criteria to allow access to ACS assessment.
- iv. Dates of assessment undertaken i.e. both practical and written.
- v. Each Candidate's completed application and assessment results records.
- vi. The Assessor(s)' and IV (s)' identification.
- vii. A photographic/digital image of each Candidate to Passport acceptable standard.
- viii. Evidence presented to verify candidate identity where required as below
- ix. K&U Theory Examination paperwork
- x. Practical and all other examination and assessment paperwork

7.1.1.2 Candidates undertaking assessment for the first time and unknown to the CB, their approved AC or Gas Safe Register must provide evidence of their identity.

This evidence may be provided by any of the following documents:

- i. A current valid Passport.
- ii. A current valid Driving Licence (photo ID card type).
- iii. A photo ID card issued by the UK Border Agency or;
- iv. A valid Home Office issued work permit, accompanied by a current international passport.

- v. Other Photo I/D issued by any other Governmental agency.

In exceptional cases, e.g. students or trainees, not in possession of any of the above identification, the following examples of suitable identification are acceptable:

- vi. Birth certificate.
- vii. Travel pass, including a photograph.
- viii. Under 21 ID cards issued by local authority.

Note: AC's should only retain details of any of the documents (7.1.1.2 above, items i to viii) provided by applicants and shall not take and retain copies of these documents.

7.1.2 Candidate assessment documents and assessment records shall be retained by the CB and/or the AC for a minimum period of six years.

Note: The six year retention period will enable the candidates' assessment records to be accessed during the five year validity of the certificate of competence.

Arrangements must be made between the CB and the AC for the storage of assessment records. Under this arrangement, the CB shall retain the right to access the records in accordance with agreements made between the two parties, and security/storage arrangements shall be checked during EQA audits.

Where a CB withdraws its approval of an AC or, by notice of intent, the AC switches from its current CB to another, the AC shall either:

- a. Return all assessment record documentation associated with the CB concerned.

or

- b. Securely retain the assessment record documents held on behalf of the CB, but allow access to the records by the original CB concerned to confirm continuing security arrangements.

7.1.3 Assessment documentation provides documentary evidence of the assessment outcome. It shall:

- a. Give the method of achievement in specific practical assessments and the knowledge and understanding required to carry them out.
- b. Contain the performance criteria that were assessed and the evidence showing how each performance criteria has been satisfied.
- c. Be signed by the Assessor and where audited by the IV countersigned by the IV.
- d. Be securely logged and retained by the AC or to the CB's requirements.

7.1.4 CB's shall collect and maintain statistical data to reaffirm on an annual basis the fairness, validity, reliability and general performance of each examination.

7.2 Public information

- 7.2.1 The CB shall confirm, upon request, as to whether an individual holds a, valid certification issued by that CB and the scope of that certification, except where the law requires such information not to be disclosed.
- 7.2.2 The CB shall by suitable means record and publish the details of any withdrawn Certification

7.3 Confidentiality

The CB shall establish documented policies and procedures for the maintenance and release of information. This will include the following:

- 7.3.1 Information regarding a candidate is not disclosed without consent (excluding confirmation of validity or by law).
- 7.3.2 Arrangements for the release of information (with/without consent) and also ensure confidentiality when related bodies involved.
- 7.3.3 The download arrangements to Gas Safe Register will be subject to Contractual arrangements between Gas Safe Register and the CB.

7.4 Security

The CB shall develop and document policies and procedures necessary to ensure security throughout the entire certification process and shall include the following:

- 7.4.1 Assessment Security in approved AC's.

The AC shall ensure:

- i. Operating procedures are in place which ensure that Candidates cannot gain an unfair advantage or have the opportunity to collude with other Candidates. This will include the prevention of use of a Candidate's electronic technology, such as mobile phones, tablets, laptop computers etc.
- ii. Assessment installations, appliances and systems are designed to prevent predictability of the assessment.
- iii. Assessment documentation supplied to the centre by the CB is used and not amended. Any amendment proposals shall be submitted to the CB and shall only be implemented formally approved by the CB.
- iv. Only authorised AC staff have access to assessment material and records.
- v. Assessment confidentiality and impartiality are maintained at all times.
- vi. Prior to any practical assessment taking place, the assessment area, installations, appliances and any associated faults shall satisfy the requirements of the ACS practical provisions documents.

7.4.2 Assessment provisions

- a. The AC shall ensure:
 - i. Practical assessment areas in the AC simulate realistic work conditions and environment.
 - ii. Tools, instruments, MIs and equipment provided by the AC and used for the assessment are regularly checked for safety, serviceability and calibration and, where necessary, a record is maintained of those that require periodic calibration, inspection or testing. Calibration, inspection and test certificates shall be retained.
 - iii. Candidates intending to use their own tools, instruments and equipment do so only in agreement with the AC and present prior evidence to the AC that any calibration, inspection or test documentation is valid.
- b. Use of AC assessment provisions and facilities for use other than ACS assessments.
 - i. Where an AC intends to offer gas safety assessment to more than one qualification, it shall notify the CB of its intention to do so.
 - ii. When conducting assessments, it shall be apparent which qualification assessment(s) is/are being undertaken.
 - iii. The AC shall ensure that, in working to satisfy another qualification, the requirements of ACS and the CB are not compromised in any manner.
 - iv. The AC shall ensure the following:
 - AC management and competence of personnel is maintained
 - provision of equipment to meet ACS assessment requirements is maintained
 - Confidentiality and security of ACS assessment documents and records are maintained.
 - ACS equipment not required for other assessment purposes is suitably protected to prevent unauthorised interference etc.

ACS assessment documentation, records and the AC's quality system procedures shall not be used in connection with any other assessment or training schemes delivered in the AC.

7.4.3 Assessment Safety

The AC shall discharge its duties relating to all legislation applicable to the operation of the AC.

The AC shall ensure:

- a. Where, for the purposes of practical assessment, an appliance or installation, of necessity, has to be in a state that would not comply with gas safety legislation and or standards, the designated person at the AC shall take steps to ensure that life and property are not put at risk prior to, during or after an assessment.
- b. A Safety Risk Assessment (SRA) must be conducted prior to carrying out assessments, whether in an AC or at an on-site location. Details must be recorded and retained by the

- AC. Periodic reviews must be conducted by a competent person in the AC to confirm that satisfactory levels of safety are being maintained.
- c. The Assessor shall intervene and stop an assessment whenever a candidate's action, or lack of action, is immediately or imminently dangerous to life, property or equipment. Where the cause for intervention is of a serious nature, the assessment will be terminated. The Assessor shall record on the Candidate's assessment documentation the reasons for stopping the assessment. Where the intervention is of a less serious nature, the Assessor, at their discretion, may decide to re-start the assessment. The Assessor shall record on the Candidate's assessment documentation the reasons for stopping the assessment.
 - d. Each assessment appliance, installation and materials are recorded or identified by a unique referencing system.
 - e. Assessment areas are fitted with all the necessary safety cut-off and isolation devices
 - f. Assessors are familiar with the location and operation of such devices and are conversant with the emergency and evacuation procedures for the site. There shall be adequate identification of these devices and a procedure in place which describes the actions necessary when these are activated and then re-instated. The devices must be subject to ongoing regular checks for satisfactory operation and the AC must record these checks.
 - g. An accident and incident recording book is maintained, detailing any accident or incident involving the assessment process and that these are reported in accordance with health and safety legislation and where required by law, the CB shall be informed in writing of any such events.
 - h. Accidents and incidents are investigated, and improvements initiated as required
 - i. Instructions must be readily available and prominently displayed for access to first aid and qualified first aid personnel.

8. Certification schemes

Energy & Utility Skills operate as the scheme owner for ACS (see paragraph 1.2), to manage and facilitate that role they are responsible for the following:

Note: CBs shall ensure that the requirements contained within this section and the relevant sections of Clause 8 of the BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 standard are met. Where the scheme owner does not meet these obligations the CB must bring the issue concerned to the attention of the National Accreditation Body (UKAS).

- 8.1 ACS defines categories of competence for the various scopes of gas work.
- 8.2 ACS contains the following categories of competence by which gas fitting operatives are able to demonstrate their gas safety competence for the scope of work they intend to carry out:
 - a. Domestic Natural Gas (NG) appliances, pipework and meters.

- b. Emergency Service Provider and Meter Installer.
- c. LPG Domestic appliances, pipework and meters.
- d. Non-Domestic appliances, pipework and meters.

Note: There are also a number of Limited Scope assessments that will allow gas fitting operatives to undertake out specific and limited ACS assessments gas work activities.

The SSB on behalf of industry publishes in separate documentation the assessment criteria and is responsible for their development, maintenance and for issuing those to CBs.

CBs are responsible for designing and delivering ACS assessments in accordance with assessment criteria.

8.3 The assessment criteria sets out and describes the following:

- a. Range of certification.
- b. Pre-requisites.
- c. Assessments methods for Initial certification and Recertification.
- d. Performance Criteria.
- e. Knowledge and Understanding criteria.
- f. Practical provisions.
- g. Normative and informative document references.

8.4 Energy & Utility Skills facilitates and manages the development and maintenance of this certification scheme by:

Facilitating changes to the assessment criteria brought about by the following:

- i. Changes to Technical Standards and Legislation (including Technical Bulletins (TBs) issued by Gas Safe Register) which impact on the assessment criteria.
 - ii. Changes subsequent to Gas Safety related issues i.e. identified critical gas safety risks which impact on the assessment criteria.
 - iii. Technological changes which impact on the assessment criteria.
 - iv. General maintenance of the assessment criteria.
- b. Updates (where required) to assessment criteria takes place twice per annum, in two six monthly cycles. The updated assessment criteria is normally issued to CBs within the following timescales:
- i. By the end of June.
 - ii. By the end of December.
 - iii. Following receipt of validated assessment criteria, CB's normally have a 3 month period to implement the changes at all AC's that are affected by the changes to the assessment criteria.

Note: In exceptional circumstances, and provided it is approved by the SMB, these timescales may be changed when it is agreed that an important update is necessary.

- c. Updates and subsequent development of the assessment criteria is facilitated by Energy & Utility Skills through the Standard Setting Body (SSB) which utilises the following functions:
- i. **Strategic Management Board (SMB):** To act as the highest authority in respect of matters relating to the development and implementation of competence requirements on “matters of gas safety”.
 - ii. **Standards Consultation Forum (SCF):** The industry consultation forum that makes recommendations to the SMB in accordance with its terms of reference. In addition to industry groups this forum includes representatives from the Awarding Body Committee (ABC) which is attended by all ACS CBs and other Awarding Bodies (ABs) awarding non ACS awards recognised by Energy & Utility Skills and Gas Safe Register. Details of the representation of the SCF can be found on the Energy & Utility Skills website.
 - iii. **Standards Development Unit (SDU):** To ensure that the requirements for amended or new competence criteria or assessment specifications are developed in accordance with the standard setting processes. That role is resourced by Energy & Utility Skills and includes a Technical Working Group (TWG) which is attended by the CBs and other industry technical experts.
 - iv. **Awarding Body Committee (ABC):** committee responsible for consistent delivery of ACS assessments in accordance with its Terms of Reference.
- d. Consultation with the industry takes place through the SCF function and can either take the one of the following routes:
- i. ‘Full’ industry consultation through a series of proposals put to industry by the SDU via the Energy & Utility Skills website, notification of such the consultation will normally take place through the Gas Safe Register Registered Gas Engineer magazine.
 - ii. ‘Maintenance’ which is defined as: a modification of assessment criteria, provision or scheme documentation as a result of changes to standards/normative documents or changes to technology of appliances already covered by an assessment.

The SDU will distinguish between what constitutes as a ‘Significant’ change to the assessment criteria and therefore will require FULL Industry consultation or if the change is considered to be ‘Maintenance’ to the competence criteria.

- e. Included in ACS development will be an on-going ‘Job Practice Analysis’ (see 8.4g) to evaluate the validity and relevance of MoGS assessment criteria relevant to the categories and scope of work carried out by gas fitting Operatives. That exercise is facilitated by the SDU as part of the on-going development of the ACS scheme (detailed in clauses 8.4 a. to f.), through consultation with all interested parties involved in the SSB process.

- f. ACS is monitored through the data provided by Gas Safe Register through their ongoing surveillance of Gas Safe registered businesses. That data is presented to the CBs and is fed into the SSB process through the ABC. Changes to the assessment criteria can be proposed through the SCF structure should limitations to ACS be identified as a consequence of the information.
- g. A 'Job Practice Analysis' will ordinarily be facilitated utilising the processes and procedures listed in paragraphs 8.4.a. to 8.4.g. on an on-going basis. However, should the UKAS audits of CBs identify any changes in working practices, normative and informative standards then a Job Practice analysis will be facilitated by the SSB.

9. Certification process requirements

9.1 Application process

Candidate application for Assessment

9.1.1 Candidate's responsibilities for Application to carry out initial Assessment. The Candidate shall provide:

- i. Recently taken photograph(s) or digital image of passport quality must be supplied, as specified by the CB.
- ii. Original valid pre-requisite certificates of competence or proof of appropriate gas training and experience achieved through a training scheme approved under the Standards for Training document.
- iii. If Certificates are lost then confirmation of Certification details via "authentic record of information held by the Certification Body" e.g. an Operative report "Screen Dump" or any other "suitable print out" as decided by the CB can be provided to the applicant (refer to guidance note 11).
- iv. Evidence to support their identity when required as described within the CB's contractual agreement with Gas Safe Register.
- v. A declaration in writing of their category status (see clause 9.1.4) on the CB Application Form.
- vi. National insurance number or a unique identification number supplied by Gas Safe Register.
- vii. Date of birth.
- viii. Name and address.

9.1.1.1 Candidate's responsibilities. Application for Re-assessment. The candidate shall provide:

- i. Recently taken photograph(s) or digital image of passport quality must be supplied, as specified by the CB.
- ii. Evidence to support their identity when required as described within the CB's agreement with Gas Safe Register.

Note: ACs should only retain details of any of the above documents provided by applicants and must not take and retain copies of document ii above.

- iii. Original valid pre-requisite certificates of competence or vocational qualification (the expiry date of the certificate must not be greater than 12 months - see guidance note 11).
- iv. National insurance number or a unique identification number by Gas Safe Register.
- v. Date of birth.
- vi. Name and address

9.1.2 AC responsibilities. The AC shall, on behalf of the CB:

- i. Accurately process all candidates seeking assessment and certification and ensure that all requirements of 9.1 above have been met.
- ii. Ensure that the photograph/digital image meets the correct specification before sending to the CB.
- iii. Verify the likeness of photograph(s) or digital images provided by the candidate, and forward a minimum of one photograph/digital image (number to be specified by the CB) to the CB for onward transmission to Gas Safe Register.
- iv. Seek evidence to support their identity when required, as described within the CB's agreement with Gas Safe Register 7.1.1.2.
- v. Ensure that candidates hold valid original certificate(s) or if Certificates are lost then confirmation of Certificates details via "authentic record of information held by the Certification Body e.g. an Operative report "Screen Dump" or "Suitable Print out" can be provided to the applicant by the CB for the appropriate pre-requisite gas safety assessments when extending or renewing their scope of work, recording details.
- vi. Notify candidates in writing that gas work must not be carried out unless they hold a valid gas safety certificate for that work category and that they must be employed by a gas installation business that is registered with Gas Safe Register or is registered as a sole trader with Gas Safe Register before undertaking such work that is within the scope of GSIUR.

Note: False, inaccurate or misleading declarations by applicants may result in the CB withdrawing or cancelling any subsequently issued ACS certificates issued by that CB.

9.1.3 General Application Conditions

- i. As a condition of application, the CB shall require the applicant to supply information regarding their gas work experience and/or qualifications.
The application process shall require the applicant to specify each type of gas work they wish to carry out and the experience category they come within.
- ii. Where there is specific or material cause to doubt the validity of an application, the AC shall validate the information provided with every application as necessary, in the process of approval or rejection of that application.

- iii. If an application is rejected, the CB or AC shall give the applicant prompt notification with reasons for rejection.

9.1.4 The AC shall apply the classification of applicants detailed as follows:

Category 1 applicants are experienced gas fitting operatives from within or outside of the UK, i.e.:

- i. Seeking to renew expiring or expired certificates of gas safety competence or gas utilisation qualification.
- ii. Seeking assessment and certification to extend their range of gas work.
- iii. Foreign nationals seeking to obtain certificates of gas safety competence enabling them to meet UK gas work requirements must present evidence of their gas fitting qualifications and experience to the AC. Translations of this information will be necessary when not presented in English and must be independently translated by a sworn translator of English and include an appropriate recognition statement confirming the translators eligibility.
- iv. Seeking to obtain ACS certificates of gas safety competence holding a gas valid and recognised qualification e.g. GCS, QCF, RQF or S/NVQs.

Category 2 applicants who do not hold a Gas Fitting qualification shall have evidence that they:

- i. Hold qualifications detailed in Guidance Note 8 and provide written evidence to the AC confirming that they have undertaken work experience and training for the range of assessments to be undertaken. That evidence shall include:
 - a written statement from a registered business detailing precisely the type, range and volume of gas work carried out.

or

- ii. Are undertaking a vocational qualification which has a requirement of gas work to be included in the award, and where ACS certification is an integral part of that qualification.

or

- iii. Meet the requirements of guidance note 8a (Candidates with Gas work experience gained legally from sectors of Industry outside of the scope of the Gas Safety Installation & Use Regulations).

Applicants that do not satisfy the criteria of Categories 1 or 2 shall be classified as a new entrant to the industry and considered as Category 3 applicants.

Category 3 applicants are new entrants to the gas industry and, as such, they are without a relevant related qualification and/or experience, entering employment for the first time or changing career and are therefore ineligible to undertake any ACS Assessments.

Category 3 applicants shall have evidence that they:

- i. Have undertaken a managed learning programme (MLP) recognised by the SSB which meets the requirements of IGEM/IG/1.
- or
- ii. Alternatively, these applicants have successfully undertaken a RQF award which has a requirement of gas work to be included in the award.

9.2 Assessment structure

9.2.1 The CB shall design, develop and implement the gas safety assessments using the agreed Matters of Gas Safety criteria as set by the SSB and should address the following:

- a. Assessments shall comprise a combination of practical assessment (PA) with oral questioning where appropriate, to underpin the Candidate's performance, and by written selective response K & U questions.
- b. Each assessment shall reflect the competence that a Candidate is required to demonstrate in accordance with the assessment criteria with oral questioning where appropriate, to underpin the Candidate's performance.
- c. CB must design K & U questions to ensure the risk of candidates guessing the correct answer i.e. a minimum of three plausible distractors.
- d. The CB shall ensure that changes in content of normative and/or legislative documents that affect the outcome of assessments are implemented by:
 - i. Amending assessment documentation and provisions to take any changes into account in accordance with agreed schedules for implementation
 - ii. Ensuring that ACs conduct assessments that include agreed changes and from a date in accordance with agreed schedules for implementation, as directed by the SMB.

9.3 Assessment process

9.3.1 Gas Safety Assessments

Assessment(s) shall require candidates to:

- a. Complete a practical assessment and
- b. Complete a written assessment and
- c. Where necessary, correctly answer oral questions on practical and/or written assessments.

9.3.2 Practical Assessments

- a. Evidence of gas safety competence shall be primarily provided through practical assessment.
- b. All practical and oral questioning of a Candidate to confirm understanding shall be carried out by a CB-approved Assessor.

9.3.3 Written knowledge and understanding (K & U) assessments

- a. Written questions shall assess the candidate's essential knowledge and understanding of gas safety in those aspects of safe gas work which is not feasible in the practical assessment.
- b. The assessment(s) may include closed book questions. Where these are used, the CB shall consider whether this type of questioning is appropriate, at the design stage. The questions shall be selective response and formatted, for example of the multiple choice or short answer response type.
- c. True/false or Yes/No type questions must not be used unless the answer requires a further explanation or justification.
- d. Where electronic examination assessment is utilised it must comply with the scheme marking requirements and be authorised for use by the CB.
- e. All questions shall be answered correctly.
- f. The K & U assessment should be undertaken in close association with the PA.
- g. The K & U assessment shall be undertaken in a suitable, quiet, location where candidates shall be seated at separate tables with adequate space between them.
- h. The AC shall provide stationery required to complete assessment(s).
- i. The K & U assessment shall take place in the presence of at least one Assessor. Invigilators may be utilised for the administration and supervision of K& U examinations but evaluations of competence can only be made by a suitably qualified Assessor.
- j. Candidates shall be informed that they may communicate only with the Assessor/Invigilator during the written assessment.
- k. Candidates may be allowed to use their own reference material which enables open book questions to be answered. The AC shall check such material does not compromise the integrity of the assessment.
- l. Reference material shall be normative, industry or legislative source publications, or material adapted or adopted from training programmes, or other sources provided they require gas safety knowledge to be used to select the information needed to demonstrate competence.
- m. Marking and scoring of assessments shall conform to CB practice. The AC shall provide candidates who do not answer all questions correctly after a first attempt with a new clean response/answer sheet on which to record their subsequent answers.
- n. The assessment process is set out in tables 1, 2 and 3.
- o. The assessor and candidate must confirm the authenticity of completed assessment documentation.

9.3.4 Oral questions - K & U assessments and PA

All questioning shall be carried out by a CB approved Assessor.

Where competence is fully demonstrated, oral questioning is not necessary. However, an Assessor may question a Candidate orally whenever he/she considers it necessary to confirm that the Candidate is competent. Oral questions may be asked at the discretion of the Assessor, to supplement the evidence provided by the Candidate's practical assessment.

The Assessor may ask oral questions during or immediately following a PA and/or on completion of the K & U assessment.

- a. Questions shall be relevant to the assessment criteria.
- b. The Assessor shall not ask a candidate a leading or closed question.
- c. The Assessor shall not coach or lead a candidate towards providing correct answers.

9.3.5 Assessment Duration

A competent performance shall require candidates to complete assessments within the time allocated by the CB in accordance with its procedures.

Assessors may, discretionally, allow additional time for candidates to complete the assessment if, in their opinion, a candidate would be able to complete the assessment in a competent manner. Additional time will also provide for flexibility where there are unforeseen assessment contingencies.

The allowance should only be made when it helps candidates to progress to a successful completion during the extended period. The allowance shall not be made if the Assessor decides that a candidate will not be competent at the end of the allocated time. An allowance shall not be made to enable candidates to have time for repeats or corrections that would help them pass.

9.4 Certification recommendation

The Assessor shall make a recommendation for consideration by the CB based on the outcome of the assessments. The only recommendations that shall be made are:

- a. The candidate is recommended for certification, or
- b. The candidate is not recommended for certification.
- c. Only the CB shall make the Certification decision, based on the evidence of the assessment provided by the AC (see paragraph 6.1.6).

9.5 Suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of certification

A CB has the authority to withdraw all or part of an operative's certificate of competence for example in the event that:

- a. A lack of applied gas safety competence is established and evidence of which is provided to the CB for review.
- b. There is certificate misuse by a certificated operative.
- c. Any reasons deemed appropriate by the CB as described in their Quality procedures.

The CB issuing the certificate and withdrawing it shall inform the certificated operative as a result of a justified complaint and:

- d. Request the operative to return the certificate(s) concerned to the CB
- e. Provide information to Gas Safe Register of this withdrawal in the agreed format.
- f. The CB shall by suitable means record the details of any withdrawn Certification

The operative shall have the right of appeal against the decision to withdraw the certificate of competence.

9.6 Recertification process

- a. The CB shall have documented procedure(s) for implementation of the recertification process, in accordance with the certification scheme requirements.
- b. Changes to the scheme requirements and in particular the competence criteria includes both initial certification and recertification in that the competence criteria for both is updated in accordance with this document.
- c. The recertification period is currently set at a five year cycle.
- d. Recertification criteria is determined by changes to normative standards, technology, working practices and the retention of essential gas safety competence.

9.7 Certificate of Competence

General:

- a. The CB shall:
 - i. At the time of certificate issue, notify individuals in writing:
 - That gas work must not be carried out unless the individual holds a valid certificate(s) including the appropriate core pre-requisite certificate(s) for that category of gas work and that they are employed by a business which is registered with Gas Safe Register before undertaking such work that is within the scope of GSIUR.
 - That If any circumstances arise that affect their capability to be able to fulfil their requirements of the competencies detailed on their certificates(s) they are obliged to inform the CB of any such circumstances with immediate effect.
 - That the certificate should be produced on request from any person with a valid reason to see it.
 - That they must comply with the relevant provisions of the certification scheme.

The CB shall issue a certificate of gas safety competence when it is satisfied that the Candidate:

- ii. Has demonstrated competence in the area of gas work covered by that certificate.
- iii. Satisfies all eligibility pre-requisites.

The CB shall issue certificates to Candidates or in accordance with the contractual arrangements entered into between the CB and candidate. The CB shall ensure that temporary and interim certificates are not issued.

Candidate enquiries regarding certification and the entry of results onto the Gas Safe Register database should be addressed to the CB. Each certificated area of gas work contained on the certificate shall be valid up to the expiry date.

Note: further information on certification issue and expiry relating to 'MOT' style Certification can be found in Guidance note 13

b. Certificate Design

The design of the certificate is the responsibility of the CB issuing the certificate, but in all instances shall include the items described below.

The security of the certificate shall be designed to reduce the risks of counterfeiting. The certificate shall contain the following information:

- i. Name of the CB.
- ii. A unique identification.
- iii. UKAS Logo, with the UKAS registration number allocated to the CB.
- iv. Date that the Certificate was issued.
- v. Contact telephone number of the CB.
- vi. Forename and surname of the certificate holder.
- vii. The certificate holder's National Insurance number or a unique allocated identifier for non-UK Nationals.
- viii. Date of birth of the certificate holder.
- ix. Code and a description of each gas safety assessment with expiry date(s) (which normally will be five years from the date when each assessment described has been completed).

Note: The date of issue of the certificate will not suffice to meet requirement ix.

- x. Provision for the certificate holder's signature.
- xi. The CB representative's signature.
- xii. Statements as follows:
 - "The holder of this certificate has been deemed competent in the areas of gas safety detailed on the certificate. For the holder of this certificate to undertake gas work legally within the scope of GSIUR, they must be registered with Gas

Safe Register. Confirmation of this registration can be obtained from Gas Safe Register.

- "Certificates are not valid beyond the expiry date or if the appropriate core gas safety assessment is not held or has expired".
- "Certificates remain the property of the Certification Body and shall be surrendered on demand".
- Certificate is only valid when presented on original paper by the certificate holder, duly signed. Certificate photocopies are not evidence of competence and should not be accepted as such.

The certificate may be in either hard copy or electronic format

9.8 Fairness, Equality and Special needs

CB policies and procedures shall be fair and equitable among all candidates, and must comply with applicable legislation.

CBs shall ensure they offer methods of assessment that cater for the needs of candidates and that will allow adjustment to be made in order to allow access the certification process.

9.9 Complaints and Appeals and Referral Procedures

Key lines of enquiry for the investigation of a complaint made against a certificated person.

Introduction

The purpose of conducting the complaint investigation is to ascertain whether the:

- certificated person has failed to apply or maintain their competence and or
- approved AC has been involved with malpractice or maladministration or otherwise and or
- a complaint is justified

The following key lines of enquiry provide for a consistent approach for Certification Bodies when responding to and investigating complaints received from Gas Safe Register or others which could bring into question the validity of the qualification or certificate of competence issued by a CB.

Key lines of enquiry

- a. The CB confirms receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days detailing;
 - The CB standards of service for conducting the investigation
 - Name and contact details of the person carrying out the investigation
 - Where possible an estimated date for reporting its findings and any actions.
- b. The CB carries out its investigation in accordance with its published procedures and standards of service and will as a minimum:

- Review all relevant application, examination and assessment documentation completed by the certificated person named in the complaint.
 - Conduct (and make a record of) interview(s) with AC staff involved in the certification process.
 - Conduct (and make a record of) an interview with the person named in the complaint.
 - Where appropriate obtain (and record) evidence from other witnesses and or persons relevant to the complaint e.g. Gas Safe Register inspector, customer etc.
- c. The CB makes any decision relating to the competence of the person named in the complaint based on objective evidence only.
- d. The CB records the findings of the investigation, implement any required actions and advise the complainant of the outcome in writing, any actions taken and confirming that these key lines of enquiry have been carried out.

Note the above key lines of enquiry relate to certificated persons who hold a qualification or certificate of competence that would enable them to register as a class of person with Gas Safe Register.

10. Management system requirements

- 10.1 The CB shall ensure that each AC (including satellite centres) has a Quality Management System (QMS) capable of demonstrating consistent achievement of the requirements for ACS operation and assessment delivery requirements.

The AC shall:

- a. Define and document its quality policy and impartiality policies, in accordance with the CB's requirements. A policy/mission statement shall be relevant to the AC's organisational goals and the expectations and needs of its customers.
- b. Ensure that its policies are understood, implemented and maintained throughout the organisation.
- c. Establish, document and maintain a documented system that ensures that all activities within the AC conform to the AC's policy and the CB's requirements.
- d. Review the documented system (by way of Internal Auditing, quality/management review meetings) at sufficient frequency to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness and to ensure that it remains in line with the policies and objectives of the AC and CB
- e. Maintain records of all such review meetings and make them available for audit by the CB at AC Approval and during EQA audits.

- 10.2 The AC shall include (but not limited to), in its quality system, a reference to:

- a. Description of the AC organisation.
- b. Standards of Service offered, including provision of assessments and the time period of notification of results to the CB.
- c. Quality and impartiality system procedures including records of any identified Risks.

- d. Staff training, development and qualification records.
- e. IV duties and responsibilities.
- f. Register of approved Assessors/IVs/Invigilators.
- g. Assessor duties and responsibilities.
- h. Assessment facilities.
- i. Register of assessments approved by the CB and which may be delivered.
- j. Register and description of equipment available for practical assessment.
- k. Arrangements for security of assessment installations, appliances, systems, areas, records and documentation.
- l. Assessment results.
- m. Arrangements for security of candidate records and information.
- n. Complaints and appeals procedures.
- o. Personnel who manage, perform and verify work affecting quality and impartiality, particularly those personnel who have responsibility and authority to:
 - Initiate action to prevent the occurrence of any non-conformity relating to the assessment process or to the quality/impartiality systems.
 - Identify and record any problem relating to the assessment process or to the quality/impartiality system.
 - Initiate, recommend or provide solutions through designated channels.
 - Verify the implementation of solutions.

10.3 Internal Audit and Management System Review

Internal Audit: The AC must conduct an internal audit of the whole quality system at least annually. The frequency of internal audits may be reduced by the CB where the AC demonstrates that its management system continues to be effectively implemented.

a. Competences.

Personnel conducting internal audits shall be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- i. Experience in administration.
- ii. Understanding of ACS and CB requirements relevant to the certification and the documented quality system and not had a direct input into the process being audited.

b. Responsibilities.

Personnel conducting internal audits shall be responsible for:

- iii. Planning to audit.
- iv. Conducting the audit.
- v. Documenting results.
- vi. Documenting corrective actions.

10.4 Management System Review

At least annually the AC shall carry out a System/Management/Quality review of its processes and procedures to ascertain their continuing maintenance of processes and procedures to ensure the Scheme is being operated to these requirements and the criteria and that any Risks to Impartiality or independence are identified.

A typical Agenda (but not exhaustive) will comprise the following areas for consideration and meetings will be subject to the production of minutes and any actions required identified:

- Review of minutes from the previous meeting.
- Assessment results, (including statistical data).
- Assessment procedures.
- Assessors' roles and responsibilities.
- Assessment facilities.
- Consistency of assessment standards.
- Ongoing Risk Assessment of Impartiality and Conflict of Interests
- Staff training and development.
- Security of assessment areas, materials and records.
- The overall quality performance/conformity with quality procedures.
- Internal verification.
- External verification.
- Assessment Centre action plans.
- Internal audits.
- Customer, Candidate and Certification Body Complaints.

Table 1: Initial Theory Assessment Result Flow Chart

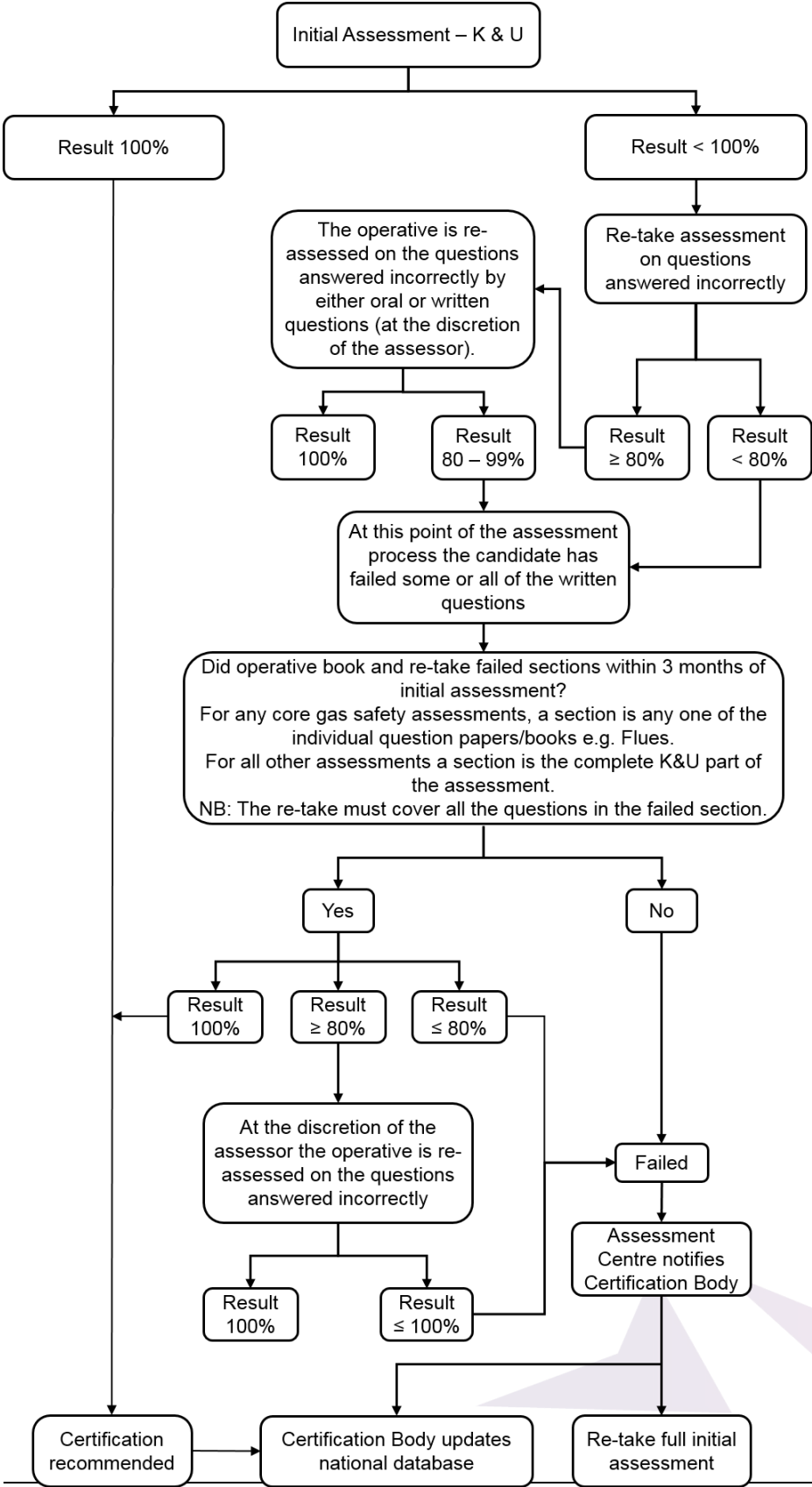


Table 2: Initial Practical Assessment Result Flow Chart

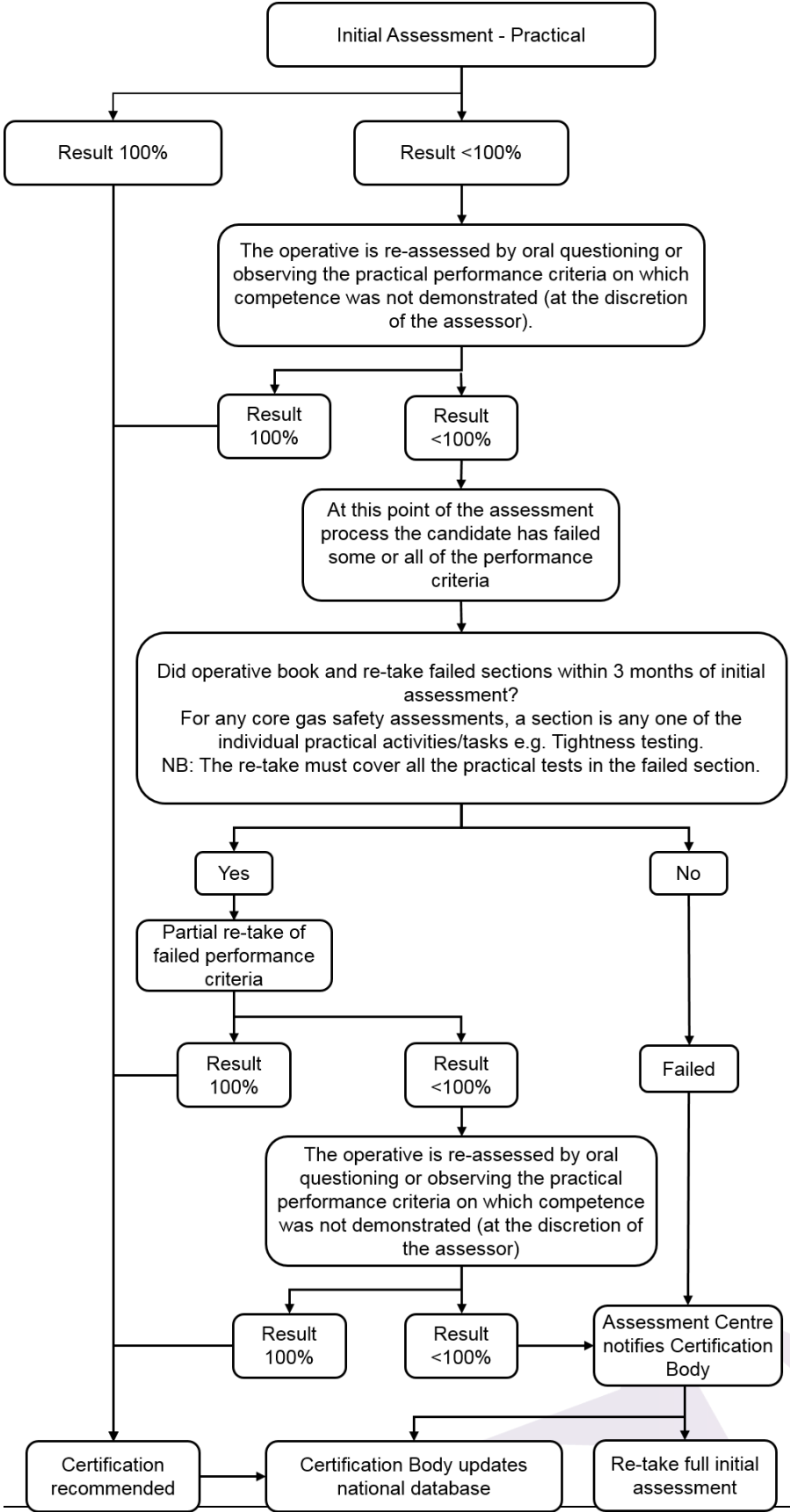
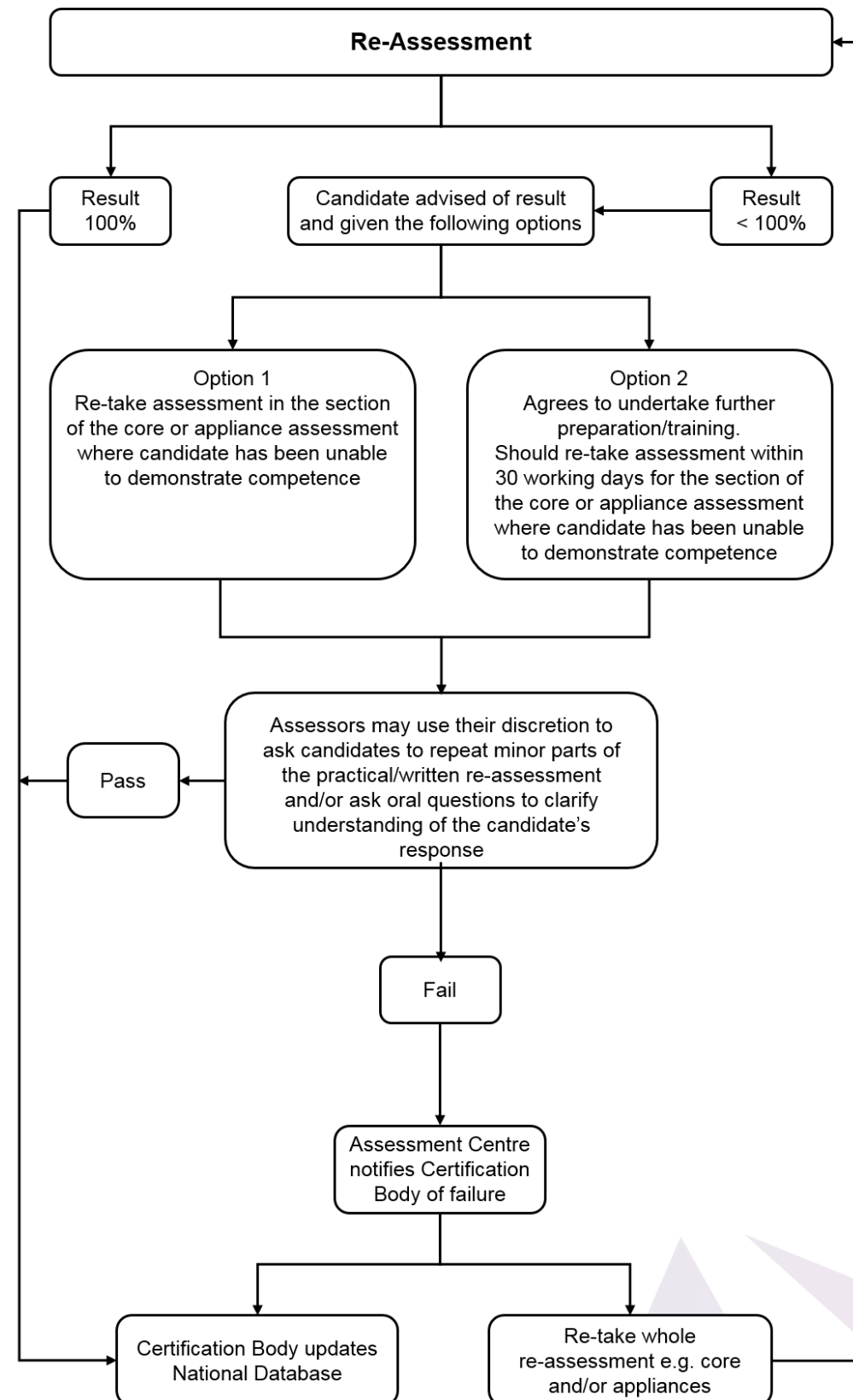


Table 3: Re-Assessment Result Flow Chart

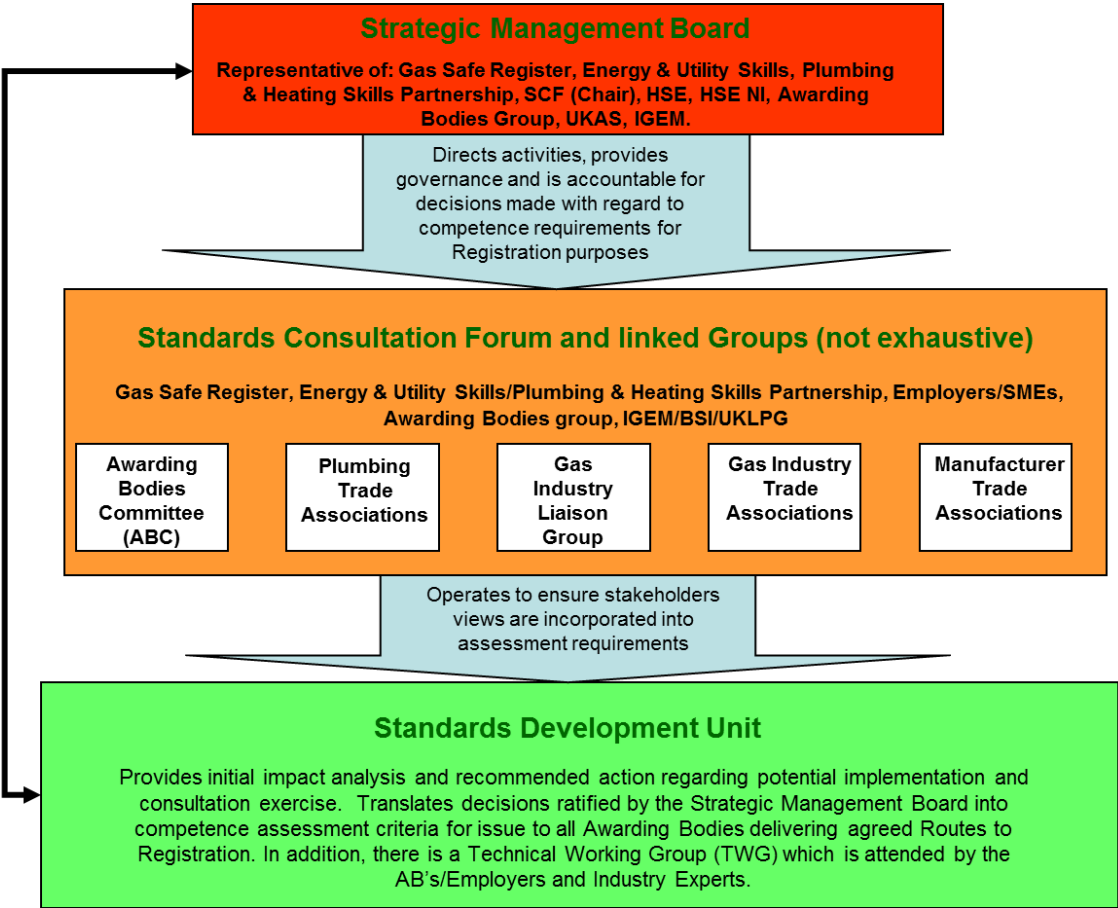


Document change record

Operational requirements	Issue date
ISBN: 0-9524550-2-1 (CD ROM EDITION) (Includes addenda 1-9).	02/02
CD Rom re-titled Operational Requirements and amended content.	01/03
Electronic Edition January 2005.	01/05
Inclusion of new section - 5.6 Certification Surveillance	01/05
Inclusion of new Annex – ACS Scheme Committee	01/05
Additional text to 3.31.1 and reposition of paragraphs in Section 3.31 Category 2 Applicants	07/06
Amended and reordered content to meet with changes to BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012	04/14
Amended content following feedback from Certification Bodies	09/17

Appendix 1

Standard Setting Body Structure



Appendix 2

References

- BS EN ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 Conformity assessments – general requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.
- Guidance notes (developed and issued by Energy & Utility Skills) on Operational requirements for certification bodies operating the nationally accredited certification scheme for individual gas fitting operatives.
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
- L56. Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances.
- Standards of training in gas work.
- Health and Safety at work etc. Act.
- Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedures (GIUSP).
- Standards of training in gas work (IGEM/IG/1)

Relevant documents are listed in Gas Safe Register's 'Legislative, normative and informative document list'.

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