



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

1. Introduction

This document contains the Scheme Rules applied by NICEIC Certification in 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 1. The document contains details about how to obtain Certification by undergoing Assessment at an Assessment Centre approved by NICEIC Certification, 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 NICEIC Certification. 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, which are often undertaken within the complete range of work activity. Appendix 2 lists non-gas safety legislation and other requirements that are outside the scope of the Scheme. Employers, employees and the self-employed should recognise the responsibilities and duties they have under all legislation that encompasses their range of work.

3. Policy Statements

It is the policy of NICEIC Certification that impartial Assessment shall be open to any and all Individuals meeting the Scheme entry requirements (see section 5) regardless of race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, religion, sexuality, political belief, disability or age.

The Scheme shall be available to Individuals both with and without preparatory training.

It is the policy of NICEIC Certification to take all reasonable steps to offer methods of Assessment that cater for the needs of Individuals with learning and physical difficulties. 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.

4. Scheme Criteria

The criteria that define Assessments are produced at a national level by the ACS Scheme 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 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)
- Emergency Service Provider/Meter installer

For Individuals working in multiple sectors, modules known as changeover Assessments are available to avoid re-assessing common areas where competence has already been proven. The combining of modules allows Assessment to be tailored to an Individual's needs.

Individuals applying for the first time under this scheme will undertake an initial assessment, however, for those individuals 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: FREEPHONE 0500 600 545.

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 a declaration of category for the Individual making the application.

Category 1

Category 1 individuals are experienced gas fitting operatives from within or outside of the United Kingdom, they are:

- I. Seeking to renew expiring or expired certificates of gas safety competence i.e. HSC ACoP, ACS or Gas Services N/SVQs
- 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. Operatives in this category must present evidence of their gas fitting qualifications and experience to the Assessment Centre. (Attached translation of this information will be necessary when not presented in English).

Individuals applying for Initial or Reassessment must present to the Assessment Centre all appropriate certificates of gas safety competence, or an authentic record of information held by a certification body.

Category 2

Individuals must provide evidence that they hold qualifications relevant to the area of gas work they are seeking to obtain certification in. These qualifications must have enabled competence to be demonstrated in the generic work activities associated with fossil fuelled appliances/equipment and/or pipework installation, including, any of the following work activities, flueing or ventilation or the installation, maintenance or commissioning of such appliances. Individuals must present evidence to the Assessment Centre prior to the commencement of assessment.

Examples of appropriate qualifications include:

- a) Plumbing craft qualification or N/SVQ (oil and/or solid fuel options) – suitable initially for domestic or commercial central, water heating or pipework installation.
- b) Pipefitter/welder craft qualification or N/SVQ – suitable initially for commercial pipework, pipework commissioning and meter installation.
- c) Heating and Ventilation craft qualification or N/SVQ – suitable initially for commercial pipework and appliance installation.

- d) Refrigeration Engineer/fitter craft qualification or N/SVQ – suitable initially for commercial appliance and pipework installation.

Additionally, individuals in this category must provide written evidence to the Assessment Centre confirming that they have undertaken 'on the job' gas installation and/or maintenance training and have experience of gas work that has been carried out under the direct supervision of a competent operative(s) employed by a CORGI registered business that would support their application for the range of assessment to be undertaken. This evidence must be in writing from the employer detailing precisely the areas of gas work previously carried out.

Note: A number of NICEIC Certification approved centres operate a Basic Gas Utilisation training programme that may be suitable to support a Category 2 applicant. Individual centres should be contacted for details.

Category 3

Category 3 individuals are new entrants to the gas industry, as such, they are without a relevant related qualification and/or experience, entering employment for the first time or changing career direction.

An applicant in this category will not be able to provide acceptable evidence of relevant qualifications and gas work experience. Therefore the application is not acceptable.

Individuals in this category are be advised to seek training and experience which will result in attainment of a National/Scottish Vocational Qualification (N/SVQ) in Gas Services, Installation and Maintenance at Level II or III or to obtain employment with a CORGI registered business who is willing to provide an auditable extended period of company 'in house' or 'centre based' gas training programme and organisational support to the operative prior to taking ACS assessment.

Note: A number of NICEIC Certification approved centres operate a Basic Gas Utilisation training programme that may be suitable to support a Category 3 individual. 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 a training programme 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.

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

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 CORGI registration withdrawn; 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 Assessments, which can be tailored to reflect an Individual's area of work. Each Assessment is subdivided into elements that reflect the competence that an Individual is required to demonstrate in accordance with Assessment criteria.

The Assessment(s) require an Individual to complete practical and/or written assessments dependent upon the modules selected. Where necessary, Individuals may be asked oral questions posed 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:

- a) General conduct
 - b) Provision of tools and equipment necessary to undertake any required practical Assessment. In the event that an Individual provides his/her own material, then these will be subject to approval by the Assessor prior to use.
 - c) Provision of protective clothing and safety equipment necessary for the Assessments attempted. In the event that an Individual provides his/her own protective clothing and safety equipment, then these will be subject to approval by the Assessor prior to use.
 - d) Provision of reference documentation, 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 necessary information, to enable the answering of 'open book' questions. In the event that an Individual provides his/her own material, then these will be subject to approval by the Assessor prior to use.
 - e) Provision by the Assessment Centre of full instructions to enable the completion of both written and practical Assessments.
 - f) In the event that an Individual does not satisfy the full range of 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.
- Note: With the agreement of the Individual taking assessment, the transmission of results to NICEIC Certification and subsequent Certification may be delayed, dependant on the assessment being taken, which are:
 - Initial assessment, by up to a maximum of 3 months after registration until all assessments attempted are completed (after 3 months the Individual will be required to retake any incomplete Assessments).

Re assessment by up to a maximum of 30 working days after registration until all assessments attempted are completed (after 30 working days the Individual will be required to retake any incomplete Assessments).

7. Certification

The Assessment Centre will indicate to Individuals the provisional outcome of their Assessment within 10 working days of the completion of the Assessment. This indicated result will still be subject to verification, following which records will be transmitted to NICEIC Certification. Assessment Centres may only recommend Certification, the final decision rests with NICEIC Certification. In the event that the recommendation for Certification is not accepted, NICEIC Certification and the Assessment Centre will work to resolve any issues within 20 working days of receipt of the recommendation and the Assessment Centre shall inform the Individual of any outcome other than Certification.

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

Certificates of competence issued contain the following details: the scope of the Certification; the Individual's 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 NICEIC Certification, its display or use being subject to extant Certification.

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

Unless NICEIC Certification 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

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

Upon receiving written notification of the withdrawal of Certification, howsoever determined, the Individual shall forthwith: cease use and distribution of any stationary, advertising or literature bearing the NICEIC Certification logo; return to NICEIC Certification appropriate certificates; cease carrying out work within the scope of Certification that has been withdrawn; and follow any other instructions included in the written notification. Withdrawal of an Individual's Certificate(s) will be made public via identification in suitable industry publications and details will be submitted to CORGI.

Individuals have the right of appeal to NICEIC Certification as described in clause 10 below.

9. Complaints

Individuals may make a complaint concerning this Scheme to the Assessment Centre attended or to NICEIC Certification. 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 NICEIC Certification and shall be made available to any Individual on request. The Individual has the right of appeal against a decision reached by NICEIC Certification (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. All appeals must be submitted in writing with a remittance of £100 that is refundable if the appeal is successful. Whilst under appeal, except in exceptional circumstances, Individuals holding relevant and current Certification shall continue to be recognised as certificated within the Scheme.

Individuals have the right to be represented at an appeal hearing, but must inform NICEIC Certification 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. An appeals panel will 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 NICEIC Certification. Following evaluation of the appeal the decision will be formally notified to the Individual. The Individual has the right of a final appeal via an independent arbiter acceptable to both parties whose decision will be final. The total cost of appeals by an Individual shall be borne by them where the appeal, at any stage, is not upheld by NICEIC Certification under these Scheme Rules.

11. General Conditions

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

NICEIC Certification will not be responsible for any losses or alleged losses incurred by any individual, company or organisation where scheme rules are not met.

12. Publicity

Certification does not allow the use of the logos either of NICEIC Certification or of the UKAS unless under a formal agreement for such use. The scope of Certification of an Individual must be available to members of the public. Through this Scheme, information about an Individual's Certification may be given either by NICEIC Certification or by CORGI and shall be limited to facts concerning the scope of Certification.

13. Confidentiality

NICEIC Certification shall hold an Individual's 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 NICEIC Certification, Assessment Centres and CORGI) shall ensure that they and 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 assessment 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 NICEIC Certification under these Scheme Rules.

15. Guidance on CORGI Registration

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 CORGI registered (either by a sole trader or via their employer) and in possession of a valid certificate of competence covering the work area concerned.

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

Note: An individual holding an ACS certificate may still be refused registration with CORGI. Applicants should also seek guidance from CORGI on the full requirements of registration.

Contact Details

NICEIC Certification

Whitting Valley Road
Old Whittington
Chesterfield
S41 9EY

Tel: 0800 519 5190
Fax: 01246 269049
Email: certification@niceicertification.com
Website: www.niceicertification.com

CORGI

1 Elmwood
Chineham Business Park
Crockford Lane Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG24 8WL

Tel: 01256 372200
Website: www.trustcorgi.com

UKAS

21-47 High Street
Feltham
Middlesex
TW13 4UN

Tel: 020 8917 8400
Website: www.ukas.com

Appendix 1

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 NICEIC Certification where assessment can be undertaken.

Assessor

A person approved and registered by NICEIC Certification who is qualified to supervise Assessments.

Certification

The issue of a certificate of competence following successful Assessment.

CORGI

CORGI, appointed by the Health and Safety Executive to operate a National Database of Gas Fitting Operatives containing details of Individuals undertaking this Scheme.

Individual

A person applying for Assessment/Certification, undergoing Assessment or in receipt of certificate(s).

NICEIC Certification

NICEIC Certification, 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 Committee

The committee drawn from all sector of the gas industry with responsibility for the operation of the nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives (ACS).

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 NICEIC Certification.

Appendix 2

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
- Construction (Head Protection) Regulations
- Noise 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)



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