

1 Introduction

This document describes the Scheme Rules applied by Blue flame Certification for the operation of the United Kingdom Gas Industry's 'Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives'.

Definitions of terminology utilised throughout this document can be found in Appendix 1.

This document explains how an individual can obtain Certification by undergoing Assessment at Blue flame Certification Limited Assessment centre (or one of its approved Third Party Partner Assessment Centres).

Certification for successful candidates may only be achieved within the Scope of Accreditation awarded by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

2 Scope

These Scheme Rules cover the process necessary for the Certification of an Individual Gas Fitting Operative by Blueflame Certification. These Rules only apply to Assessment and do not cover any prior training.

The Blue flame Certification Scheme assesses an Individuals competence to carry out safe gas work. The Scheme is not intended to assess competence in other areas which may be undertaken within the complete range of activity. Note 2 details non gas safety legislation and other requirements that are outside the Scheme scope. All operatives and employers should be aware of their responsibilities and statutory duties that cover their range of work.

3 Policies

Blue flame Certification will make available Assessments to all individuals who meet the Scheme and/or Operational Requirements (see clause 5) regardless of race, colour, creed, ethnic origin, nationality, marital status, gender, political affiliations or beliefs, age or disability.

Blue flame Certification will take all steps necessary to offer Assessments to individuals with special needs.

Individuals are invited to indicate any special needs at the time of Application and each situation will be individually considered.

4 Criteria of The National ACS Scheme

Gas Safety criteria for the Scheme is devised by Standards Setting Body (SSB) under the direction of the Health and Safety Executive. The Scheme is modular in nature which undergoes regular change and amendment in line with standards and statutory requirements amendments.

The complete list is available on request to Blue flame Certification and the criteria against which an applicant is assessed against are available from CORGI via their website.

The Scheme consists of a number of specific work areas:

Domestic Natural Gas (NG)

Domestic Liquefied Natural Gas (LPG)

Commercial (NG and LPG)

Commercial Catering (NG and LPG)

Emergency Service Provider/Meter Installer (NG)

A number of specialist modules eg. Swimming Pool Boilers, Instrumentation Technicians, Fusion Joining etc.

Where competence has already been proven a number of changeover modules are available which avoids the duplication of assessing common areas.

The combining of assessments and particularly packaging of modules enables assessments to be tailored to individuals needs and work areas.

For advice on appropriate modules candidates should contact their nearest Blue flame Certification Approved Assessment centre by ringing 01782 576811

5 Application

An application form will be provided by Assessment centres and this must be completed with all details prior to commencement of Assessment.

The Application Form requires a declaration of Category by the individual requesting Assessment.

There are basically 3 Categories available that describe a candidate's eligibility:

Category 1 applicants are experienced gas fitting operatives from within or outside of the United Kingdom.

They are:

seeking to renew expiring or expired certificates of gas safety competence i.e. HSC ACoP, ACS or Gas Services S/NVQ's

seeking assessment and certification to extend their range of gas work

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 the English Language)

Operatives not meeting Category 1 requirements are deemed **Category 2** and:

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. Applicants must present evidence to the Assessment centre prior to the commencement of Assessment.

Examples of appropriate qualifications include:

plumbing craft qualification or S/NVQ (oil and/or solid fuel options) - suitable initially for domestic or commercial central, water heating or pipework installation

pipefitter/welder craft qualification or S/NVQ – suitable initially for commercial pipework, pipework commissioning and meter installation

heating and ventilation craft qualification or S/NVQ – suitable initially for commercial pipework and appliance installation

refrigeration engineer/fitter craft qualification or S/NVQ- suitable initially for commercial appliance and pipework installation.

Additionally applicants 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 Gas Safe Register™ 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**

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

Category 3

These 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.

Applicants who fall into this category should seek advice and guidance from either their local training establishment, Assessment Centre, Prior Learning (APL) advisor at an S/NVQ centre or Blue flame Certification.

All individuals must declare at Application any circumstances whereby they have been deemed incompetent in gas safety matters, had either Gas Safety Register™ Registration or gas safety competence certificate withdrawn.

Any failure to do so may result in any subsequent certification in gas safety competence being suspended or withdrawn.

6 Assessment

Operatives wishing to be assessed under the scheme are able to 'tailor' the Assessments undertaken to reflect their areas of work.

Assessment criteria laid down consists of a number of elements against which candidates are required to demonstrate competence.

For candidates holding an ACS Certificate a suite of Re-Assessment modules may be taken which consists of a reduced Assessment as compared with 'Initial Assessment' for non ACS Certificate Holders.

ACS Certificate holders who wish to extend their areas of work are required to undertake 'Initial ACS Assessments' in those areas.

For both 'Initial' and 'Re-Assessment', candidates are required to complete written and/or practical Assessments which are dependent upon the type of Assessment undertaken.

If necessary candidates may be asked Oral questions by an Assessor.

Attendance at Assessment centres requires that all candidates must adhere to all health, safety and conduct requirements as indicated by the Assessment centre.

The Assessment centre will also provide:

tools and equipment necessary to carry out practical tasks. Candidates with special needs who bring their own tools will require to have them approved by an Assessor prior to their use.

Protective clothing and equipment as necessary.

Reference, normative, industry and legislative documentation will be provided to enable the candidate to select information to answer 'open book' questions. In the event that the candidate provides own material or sources adapted from training material then this will be required to be approved by an Assessor prior to use.

All necessary manufacturers instructions will be provided

The Assessment centre will indicate to candidates on completion of Assessments a provisional outcome and will supply Form 024 prior to the candidate leaving the centre. Candidates will be informed that Internal Verification is required to be carried out and if this results in a differing view to the provisionally reported outcome then the candidate will be informed immediately. Candidates will also be informed that any decision made by the Assessment centre is a recommendation only.

The process of Assessment, referral, re-Assessment and supply of information to The Gas Safe Register™ is contained in Flowcharts in Tables 1 to 3 appended to these Scheme Rules

Candidates will be informed that the final decision on certification lies with Blue flame Certification.

Assessment centres will provide Blue flame Certification with all necessary paperwork to enable a certification decision to be made within 20 working days of completion of module or suite of modules. Candidates may give permission to the centre if they wish this to be extended.

Blue flame Certification will endeavour to make the certification decision, issue Certificates as well as download information to the National Database within 20 working days of receipt of correct and complete candidate paperwork from the Assessment centre. Although given in good faith, times quoted for the provision of the Services are intended as estimates only, and are not therefore to be treated as being of the essence of this Contract.

Transmission of a candidates result to Blue flame Certification may be delayed for a period of 90 working days subsequent to the completion of a module or suite of modules with the candidate's permission. After 90 working days the Assessment Centre has to transmit the candidates paperwork to Blue flame Certification. After 90 working days the candidate will have to re-take any incomplete Assessments

The application Form completed by candidates includes a disclaimer box which if ticked by the candidate will mean that an employer has not been given permission to receive information regarding results of assessments or copies of successful candidates certificates if requested.

7 Certificates

The Certificate of Competence issued, which are designed to prevent counterfeiting, contains the following information:

Blue flame Certification name

The UKAS registered logo with Blue flame Certification UKAS registration number

Date of certificate issue

Contact telephone number of Blue flame Certification

The national insurance number of the certificate holder.

The date of birth of the certificate holder

A description of each gas safety assessment with its issue and expiry date (which will be 5 years from the date each assessment was completed).

The certificate holder's signature

On the reverse side of the Certificate:

A clear warning statement that:

'the 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.

Statements also to the effect that:

'Confirmation that the certificate holder is competent in the gas safety assessment(s) contained on the certificate, and is also employed by a Gas Safe Register™ registered business, can be obtained from Gas Safe Register™, PO Box 6804, Basingstoke, Hants, RG24 4NB

'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 Blue flame Certification and must be surrendered on demand'

Note: Non payment of agreed Fees to either an Assessment Centre or Blue flame Certification will result in the candidates paperwork not being processed for Certification purposes.

8 Suspension and Withdrawal of Certificates

Any misuse of the Blue flame Certification Logo, breach of these Scheme Rules or failure to pay any agreed Fees will result in the suspension or withdrawal of Certification.

Corrective actions may be agreed to be implemented, however, if these are not implemented withdrawal procedures will be implemented.

When a Certificated operative receives notice of withdrawal of Certification, he/she will immediately return Certificates to Blue flame Certification and cease carrying out work within the scope of the withdrawn Certification. Withdrawal of an Individuals Certificate will be made public via suitable industry publications and details will be forwarded to the National Database.

There is a right of appeal as outlined in 10.

9 Complaints

Individuals have a right of complaint against any aspect of the Scheme.

Complaints must be in writing and can be addressed to either an Assessment centre or Blue flame Certification.

Complaints will be investigated and formally reported to the complainant as laid down in procedures available at all Blue flame Certification Assessment centres.

All individuals raising a complaint have a right of Appeal subsequent to a decision as described in 10.

10 Appeals

Any decision not to issue, suspend or withdraw Certification and results of a formal complaint investigation may be appealed against.

Appeals must be notified to Blue flame Certification in writing addressed to the Scheme Manager (address below) and a remittance of £200 submitted which will be refunded in full if the Appeal is successful.

If the Appellant holds current and appropriate Certification he/she will remain Certificated until the outcome of the Appeal is known.

Individuals have the right to representation at an Appeal hearing after notifying Blue flame Certification that they wish to be represented.

Representation may be by a friend, colleague, trade union representative or legal council.

The Appeal must be notified in writing to the Scheme Manager of Blue flame Certification within 30 days of a complaint decision.

Blue flame Certification will convene an Appeals panel, consisting of the Scheme Manager and a member of the Governing Board nominated by the chairman with the date notified to the Appellant in writing.

The Individual has the right to object to any member of the Panel and Blue flame Certification will re-constitute an alternative. The Appeal will be held within 30 days of receipt of request from the Appellant with the results notified in writing to the Appellant within 5 days after the close of the Appeal hearing.

The Individual has a final right of Appeal against the initial Appeal's findings and an Independent arbiter will be appointed to mutual agreement, whose decision will be final.

Note: Non payment of agreed Fees to either an Assessment Centre or Blue flame Certification will result in the candidates paperwork not being processed for Certification purposes.

11. General

Blue flame Certification has the right to carry out verification and on-going monitoring of a Certificated Operative as deemed necessary during the period of validity of Certification (usually 5 years from the date of Certification).

This monitoring will be carried out to determine continuing satisfactory performance and/or to investigate any evidence received indicating lack of competence.

An Individual's responsibilities, duty of care and statutory requirements are not diminished on receipt of Certification.

12 Publicity

Holding of Certification by an Individual does not confer the right to use of either Blue flame Certification or UKAS logos unless an agreement is in place.

Scope of Certification held by an Individual must be made available to public domain and such information may be provided by either Blue flame Certification or The Gas Safe Register™

13 Confidentiality

Individuals details are held and used as indicated on the Application for Assessment Form by Blue flame Certification subject to the Data Protection Act (latest edition).

Organisations that are subject to the Scheme and its Rules will ensure that they and all staff keep in confidence any private or confidential information relating to an Individual applying for or holding Certification under the Scheme.

14 Fees

The costs of Assessment and related Certification Fees will be levied by the Assessment centre that the candidate applies to.

If Certificated candidates require a duplicate Certificate, Blue flame Certification will levy a Fee of £29.90

If Certificated candidates report non receipt of Certificates a period of 4 working weeks will elapse before re-issue of Certificate is made but provided free of charge

If a duplicate Certificate is required due to error on the part of Blue flame Certification, one will be provided free of charge.

15 Gas Safe Register™ Registrations

Individuals must be both Gas Safe Register™ registered (either as a sole trader or via their employer) and in possession of a valid certificate of competence for the areas of work concerned, before any gas work within the scope of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations- latest edition is carried out.

Upon successful completion of an Assessment(s) and Certification issued,

Blue flame Certification will download the scope of Certification to The Gas Safe Register™ updating the National Database of Gas Fitting Operatives.

Individuals should contact The Gas Safe Register™ for details of Registration and issue of Gas Safe Register™ cards.

16 Contacts

Blue Flame Certification

Unit 8, High Carr Network Centre,
Millennium Way
High Carr Business Park
Newcastle under Lyme
Staffordshire, ST5 7XE
Tel 01782 576811
Fax 01782 576819
e-mail richard@blueflamecertification.com

Gas Safe Register™

PO Box 6804
Basingstoke
Hampshire, RG24 4NB
Tel 0800 408 5577

Note 1- Definitions

Scheme

The Nationally Accredited Scheme for Individual Gas Fitting Operatives, as detailed within the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations- latest edition.

Scheme Rules

This publication

UKAS

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service, the National Body which Accredits Certification Bodies (such as Blueflame Certification) and recognised by the United Kingdom Government.

Blue flame Certification

Blue flame Certification Limited, accredited by UKAS for operating the Scheme described within this document.

The Gas Safe Register™

Appointed by the UK Health and Safety Executive to operate the National Database of Gas Fitting Operatives which contains details of Individuals participating in this Scheme.

Individual

Any person applying for Assessment and Certification, undertaking of Assessments or a holder of a Certificate(s).

Certification

Certificate of competence issue subsequent to successful Assessment

Assessment

An Individuals activity that when complete demonstrates competence.

Assessment Centre

Blue flame Certification Limited location and other locations approved by Blue flame Certification Limited

Assessor

A person Approved by Blue flame Certification who is qualified to supervise and assess candidates

Verification

The process of verifying candidate's examination paperwork by an Assessment Centre's Internal Verifier.

Blue flame Certification Ltd

Registered Office:
6 Marsh Parade,
Newcastle under Lyme,
Staffordshire, ST5 1DU
Registered in England and Wales
No 5182566

NON GAS SAFETY LEGISLATION AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE ACS SCHEME**General**

Examples of non-gas safety legislation and other requirements that are outside the scope of the scheme, and are not covered by competency assessment, are detailed below. This is not a definitive listing but is intended to provide guidance to the breadth of legislation that covers the work of gas fitting operatives.

Candidates are encouraged to secure relevant qualifications and training in all areas of work they carry out. Assessment Centres may offer assessments in other areas of work, such as legislation, safety, electrical and plumbing, but such assessments are not features of the Accredited Certification Scheme for Gas Operatives.

Legislation etc, relevant to the work of gas fitting operatives but outside the scope of the scheme

- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations. (Not directly work related).
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act, including:
 - * Working at height, for example ladder work and working from steps, in activities such as working on roofs, installing flues, accessing roof spaces.
 - * Building work, for example penetrating structures, in activities such as making openings for flues, ventilation, and pipes. Also, for example, lifting flooring, and notching joists.
 - * Sweeping chimneys - that is sweep work associated with, but not involving, disconnection and refitting a gas appliance.
- The Electricity at Work Regulations.
- The Electricity Supply Regulations (as amended).
- British Standard 7671 (IEE Wiring Regulations).
- Construction (Design & Management) Regulations.
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, for example risk assessment and associated procedures.
- The Provision of Work Equipment Regulations, for example tools and equipment are suitable for the use they are going to be put to.
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations, for example lifting and handling, moving appliances, pipework, and equipment.
- Workplace Regulations, for example workplace ensures health, safety and welfare.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations, for example that PPE is fit and proper for the purpose intended and will be maintained and replaced as required.
- The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations, for example working in obligatory 'head protection zones'.
- The Noise at Work Regulations, for example working in 'hearing protection zones'.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations, for example recognition and protection from exposure to hazardous materials used by the trade.
- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, for example work on insulated pipes and asbestos pipe.
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations, for example work on water pipe.
- Water Undertakers Bylaws and British Standard 5449 and British Standard 6700, for example any water system pipework or equipment.
- Building Regulations, for example those that are non-gas specific/related, and protected shafts.
- Factories Act.
- Gas Meter Regulations.
- Gas Quality Regulations.
- Boiler (Efficiency) Regulations.
- The Pressure Systems and Transportable Gas Container Regulations 1989.
- The Gas Meters (Information on Connection and Disconnection) Regulations 1996