

Assessment Governance and Processes

Construction Skills Certificate Scheme

&

Quarrying Skills Certificate Schemes



Table of Contents

About this Document	1
Introduction	3
Responsibility	4
1: The CSCS and QSCS Assessment Process	8
2: Planning the Assessment Process	9
3: Coordinating the CSCS and QSCS Assessment Process	11
4: Preparing for the CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event	13
5: CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Activities	15
6: CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Emergencies	18
7: Post CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Activities	19
8: Non-Attendance or Lateness, Deferral Requests or Deadline Extension Requests	21
9: Marking of CSCS and QSCS Assessment	22
10: CSCS and QSCS Assessment Rechecks, Reviews, Re-sits, Referrals, Repeats &	23
Appeals	
11: CSCS and QSCS Appeal of Assessment Results	25
12: Security of CSCS and QSCS Assessment Documentation, Processes and Material	26
13: Internal Verification of CSCS and QSCS Assessment	28
14: External Authentication of CSCS and QSCS Assessment	29
15: CSCS and QSCS Results Approval	31
APPENDIX 1. Appeal of CSCS and QSCS Assessment Result Procedure	33
APPENDIX 2. Policy on CSCS and QSCS Assessment Record Retention and Disposal	36
APPENDIX 3. Sample CSCS and QSCS Assessment Result Allocation	38
APPENDIX 4. Adaptations	39
APPENDIX 5. Glossary of Terms	44

About this Document

Overview

The SOLAS Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) and Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme (QSCS) Assessment Governance and Processes document underpins the planning, coordination, conduct, marking and storage of assessments, the recording and approval of results, and the verification and authentication of all CSCS and QSCS assessments leading to the request of an award from recognised bodies whose awards are within or aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This document was prepared by SOLAS to meet the requirements of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Acts 1999 and the Education & Training Act 2012.

The documents and systems listed below are also related to SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment rules and processes:

- a) SOLAS Construction Skills Certificate Scheme and Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme Policy on Assessment Development, Marking and Grading
- b) SOLAS Overarching Quality Assurance Manual
- c) SOLAS Construction Skills Certificate Scheme and Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme Candidate Guide to Assessment
- d) SOLAS Construction Skills Certificate Scheme and Quarry Skills Certificate Scheme Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice

Where there is any lack of clarity or a conflict of interpretation, the content of this document takes precedence. Requests for changes to this document should be made to the Construction Services Unit Manager (email: csuinfo@solas.ie).

Scope

The document applies to CSCS and QSCS assessment activities conducted by external providers operating the SOLAS quality assurance system. The document provides all assessment personnel with a set of overarching requirements which will enable a common approach to assessment practice across all CSCS and QSCS activity. As such, the rules are designed to encompass best practice in assessment. Where the contents of this document differ from the rules of an Awarding Body, rules of the Awarding Body take precedence. Non-conformance with the requirements outlined in this document or any of the above-listed documents constitutes a non-conformance with SOLAS Quality Assurance policies and procedures.

1. Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE - CSCS AND QSCS ASSESSMENT RULES AND PROCESSES

The purpose of the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes document is to ensure the assessment of candidates is fair and consistent and is administered in line with SOLAS and relevant awarding body requirements

1.2 SCALE - CSCS AND QSCS ASSESSMENT RULES AND PROCESSES

The SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes document covers the following areas:

- a) Planning and coordination of assessment
- b) Preparing for, conducting and concluding assessment events
- c) Marking assessments
- d) Handling candidate assessment non-attendance or lateness and deferrals
- e) Feedback approach
- f) Handling candidate assessment rechecks, reviews, and re-sits, repeats and appeals (APPENDIX 1)
- g) Maintaining the security of assessment
- h) Conducting internal verification and external authentication
- i) Conducting the results approval process
- j) Requesting certification
- k) Maintaining assessment records and evidence (APPENDIX 2 & 3)
- l) Providing assessment adaptations and supports to meet the needs of candidates with disabilities (APPENDIX 4)

1.3 APPLICATION - CSCS AND QSCS ASSESSMENT RULES AND PROCESSES

The document applies to all CSCS and QSCS training and assessment activities conducted by approved external providers operating the SOLAS quality assurance system. These requirements cover all assessment processes (including on-line assessment activities) undertaken by a candidate, which are an agreed part of the validated programme leading to an award. The CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and operations rules will be

reinforced through the SOLAS Code of Conduct and or Memoranda of Understanding, which indicates the SOLAS approved service provider subscribes to the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes.

1.4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

These SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes do not deal with any specific arrangements that SOLAS may put in place for assessment under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

2. Responsibility - CSCS and QSCS Assessment Rules and Processes

2.1 MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

SOLAS approved training organisations (ATOs) are responsible for managing the assessment process through the allocation of appropriate resources, time, expertise and staff development to support all stages of the assessment process. The SOLAS approved ATO will appoint a designated individual, for example, a training manager shall have overall responsibility for the integrity and operations of the assessment rules and processes.

2.2 COORDINATION RESPONSIBILITIES

CSCS and QSCS assessments are coordinated and administered in accordance with the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and processes. Within a SOLAS approved training organisation or an Education Training Board the assessment coordination is typically undertaken by an internal verifier with appropriate responsibility and authority.

2.3 ASSESSMENT SUPERVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The SOLAS approved training organisation and its assessment designated staff are responsible for ensuring their appointed assessors/invigilators fully comprehend their duties and responsibilities. Assessment supervision ensures that the conduct and integrity of assessment complies with quality assurance requirements of the awarding body and SOLAS.

The range of assessment related duties and responsibilities for appointed assessors/invigilators shown below are typical and indicative but not exclusive or exhaustive:

- a) Verifying candidate identity in assessment
- b) Supervising assessments events, including online and practice assessments
- c) Ensuring assessment rules, legislative rules, and health and safety requirements are observed and implemented throughout the entire assessment
- d) Marking assessments and recording assessment outcomes in accordance with the SOLAS marking scheme
- e) Undertaking relevant administration

2.4 **ROLE OF ASSESSOR**

The role of the ATO's assessor is to ensure assessment events are conducted in accordance with the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and processes. Assessors are required to fully know and understand the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and processes before commencing a SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment event.

2.5 **ROLE OF ASSESSOR POST ASSESSMENT**

A candidate's performance and related knowledge is assessed in a range of areas to ensure their knowledge, skill and competence demonstrated meets the requirements of the national standards for the award. Assessor responsibilities include:

- a) Assessing and reviewing candidates' assessment evidence against the assigned assessment criteria appropriate to the award standard
- b) Allocating assessment marks in accordance with the CSCS and QSCS marking and grading criteria
- c) Apply the CSCS and QSCS assessment grades in a fair and consistent manner
- d) Providing feedback on formative assessments and provisional summative assessment results to the programme participant

2.6 ATO INTERNAL VERIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Internal verification is the review and evaluation of the assessment process and provisional results by a SOLAS ATOs designated person other than those involved in conducting the assessment event and or assessing candidates' assessment performances.

Internal verification includes checking assessment procedures have been applied and the checking/monitoring of the conduct of assessment and of assessment results to ensure candidate evidence exists and that results and grades are properly computed and recorded.

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Those responsible for internal verification must:

- a) Monitor assessment results on a sample basis
- b) Acknowledge good practice and identify any areas for improvement
- c) Complete, date and sign the Internal Verification Report
- d) Review assessment documentation and records
- e) Check that all assessment procedures were adhered to
- f) Communicate findings to relevant assessment personnel and to management
- g) Submit all relevant assessment documentation to the SOLAS assigned organisation for implementing external authentication and assessment results approval processes
- h) Carry out any other administrative duties related to internal verification

2.7 EXTERNAL AUTHENTICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

External authentication is the independent review of assessment processes and results. The purpose of external authentication is to ensure the credibility of SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and processes and ensure that assessment results have been marked in a valid and reliable way in compliance with the requirement of the national standard for the awarding body.

External authentication includes checking and authentication of internal verification reports, sampling a range of candidate evidence and moderating assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification. It also involves the provision of constructive feedback to ATOs, completion of External Authentication Reports, outlining areas for improvement and good practice, and providing recommendations on assessment results for consideration by the Results Approval Panel.

2.8 RESULTS APPROVAL PANEL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Results Approval Panel (RAP) is a decision making forum which formally reviews and approves provisional assessment results and authorises requests for certification. The RAP reviews all information submitted, including the External Authentication Report, the Internal Verification Report along with all appropriate assessment-related records and reports. Having adjudicated on the evidence presented the RAP will then make an evidence based decision regarding the authorization of assessment results. The RAP is prohibited from issuing Pass or Upgrade of results by compensation.

Section 1 CSCS and QSCS Assessment Processes

Throughout the CSCS and QSCS assessment processes the following will apply:

- 1.1 The ATO shall have overall responsibility for the implementation of the CSCS and QSCS assessment processes
- 1.2 The ATO shall assign relevant assessment duties to designated assessment personnel
- 1.3 The ATO shall ensure assessment duties are carried out in a way that preserves the integrity of the assessment process, assessment instruments, assessment evidence and assessment records are made available for authentication purposes
- 1.4 Conflicts of interest are notified to SOLAS and managed¹
- 1.5 All designated ATO assessment personnel are responsible for the accurate and timely completion and sign-off of all relevant assessment documentation
- 1.6 Any record, as defined in the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003, is made available according to second provider FOI procedure
- 1.7 All documentation to be stored in line with SOLAS GDPR Policies, and made available to SOLAS on request
- 1.8 The rights of the CSCS and QSCS candidates are at all times respected and candidates are treated with confidentiality, fairness, courtesy and dignity. In carrying out their duties assessment personnel do not engage in any activity that constitutes bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- 1.9 CSCS and QSCS candidates are entitled to feedback during the programme and/or assessment in a timely, accurate and constructive way. Feedback received from a Candidate is to be made available to the SOLAS Construction Services Unit for the purpose of continuous improvement of programmes and services

¹ Conflict of interest in the assessment process refers to any situation which compromises, or appears to compromise the objectivity of personnel involved in the assessment process (e.g. conducting an assessment in which a family member or friend is being assessed / the same person undertaking the conduct and verification of the same assessment).

Section 2 Planning the Assessment Process

2.1 PRE-ASSESSMENT INFORMATION TO CSCS AND QSCS CANDIDATES

The ATO is required to specify, the date, the time and location of a named assessment on the SOLAS computer management system. ATOs are required to provide assessment information to candidates prior to the event including:

- a) Information on the assessment methodology, for example, practical assessment and theory assessments and multiple choice
- b) Outline the duration of the assessment
- c) Outline the expected standards of attainment for particular grades and the marking criteria used to achieve grades
- d) State when and how candidates will be informed of assessment outcomes
- e) Indicate when performance feedback will be provided to candidates
- f) Candidates are advised on the processes and procedures relating to rechecks, reviews, re-sits and appeals of assessment(s) prior to assessment event
- g) Advise candidates on their responsibilities during the course of the assessment event, including their need to adhere to health and safety requirements
- h) Remind candidates of the rules of conduct during the assessment, including rules concerning the use of unauthorised assistance, materials or devices
- i) Candidates are informed of the relevant instructions relating to the specific assessment
- j) Advise candidates on matters pertaining to an emergency during the assessment event

2.2 CSCS AND QSCS ASSESSMENT ATTEMPT:

A candidate entering as assessment location or venue is required to sign an attendance sheet (register). Any candidate who is registered and admitted to the assessment location or venue for the purpose of undertaking an assessment is deemed to have “attempted” the assessment.

2.3 SOLAS APPROVED RESULTS APPROVAL PANEL

The results of all CSCS and QSCS assessments are approved through the SOLAS assessment results approval process. All CSCS and QSCS assessment results are provisional until the assessment results are formally approved by the SOLAS approved Results Approval Panel.

2.4 APPEALS PROCESS

All assessment events and outcomes will be subject to the SOLAS Assessment Appeals Process. Please refer to Section 11 of this document for further information.

Section 3 Co-ordinating the CSCS and QSCS Assessment Process

The co-ordination of the assessment process by the ATO ensures the following services, resources and supports are activated and are in place in order to provide the candidate with the most suitable assessment environment and experience:

- 3.1 Appropriate and relevant resources and personnel are in place to support the co-ordination of the SOLAS CSCS and QSCS assessments, as specified
- 3.2 Communication mechanisms for the dissemination of information on assessment to assessment personnel and candidates are in place and implemented
- 3.3 Assessment personnel are briefed on, have access to and comply with the relevant elements of:
 - a. SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Assessment Governance and Processes document
 - b. Relevant legislation regarding Equality, Health and Safety, etc.
 - c. Any additional Awarding Body requirements, if relevant
- 3.4 Responsibilities related to the assessment process are clearly assigned
- 3.5 Assessment personnel are technically competent to carry out the roles assigned to them
- 3.6 The training needs of assessment personnel related to assessment are identified and addressed
- 3.7 Assessment personnel have sufficient resources including such items as site facilities and equipment etc to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities
- 3.8 Approved SOLAS assessment procedures are implemented for each SOLAS CSCS and QSCS scheme or programme
- 3.9 Assessment arrangements and schedules are inputted into the SOLAS computer management system
- 3.10 A system for the approval and co-ordination of reasonable accommodation requests is in place; please see Appendix 4 for further information
- 3.11 A process for dealing with issues of candidate compassionate consideration is in place and operational. Acceptable reasons for requesting compassionate consideration by a candidate to the collaboration provider may include the following:

- a. Sickness, as evidenced by a doctor's medical certificate
- b. Family bereavement
- c. Other reasons that are accepted by the relevant ATO²

Any procedure in relation to compassionate consideration should require the candidate to provide appropriate evidence/documentation, for example, a statement from a medical practitioner

3.12 The ATOs has arrangements in place for internal verification (on conduct of assessment process, results and peer review) and the relevant personnel briefed in advance of assessment

3.13 The ATO is responsible for ensuring the administration of all relevant assessment documentation is submitted to the SOLAS approved organisations for external authentication, in a timely manner and all document is fully complete, correct, accurate and in line with the prescribed requirements. Any discrepancies in the submitted documentation from the ATO may result in sanction, up to and including the termination of the SOLAS approval to deliver SOLAS programmes.

² **QQI - Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers**

- a. physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- b. a physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, or other incapacitating illness of the candidate
- c. recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- d. severe accident
- e. domestic crisis
- f. terminal illness of a close family member
- g. other extenuating circumstances

Section 4 Preparing for the CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event

4.1. PREPARATION OF THE ASSESSMENT LOCATION

The ATO assessor will implement the following:

- 4.1.1 The assessment environment is appropriate for the assessment event and complies with health and safety legislation
- 4.1.2 The assessment location has been set out with the required materials, in accordance with the assessment being held
- 4.1.3 Clock(s) are available and clearly visible to each candidate
- 4.1.4 Candidates do not have access to assessment papers before the assessor conducts the assessment event

4.2. PRE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

The ATO assessor will implement the following:

- 4.2.1 All candidates sign an attendance sheet immediately upon entry into the assessment location and complete any necessary documentation
- 4.2.2 Each candidate's identity is verified and recorded
- 4.2.3 Assessments paper packs are not to be opened without first ensuring the seal of the assessment paper pack is in order and the correct and full complement of assessment papers are in place for the assessment which is about to begin. The assessor shall record this event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 4.2.4 In the case of Assessments in digital format the assessor must follow the instructions when downloading
- 4.2.5 No candidate shall receive an assessment paper or commence practical work unless the candidate has signed the attendance sheet or been recorded as present by the assessor/invigilator
- 4.2.6 Conditions detailed in the specific instructions in the assessors/invigilators Instructions are met
- 4.2.7 Advise candidates of the rules of conduct during the assessment, including adherence to health and safety requirements
- 4.2.8 Advise all candidates of the assessment rules as specified in the Candidates

Instructions and the Assessors Instructions

- 4.2.9 Candidates are informed of the relevant instructions relating to the specific assessment
- 4.2.10 The assessment is run in accordance with the conditions of assessment as detailed in the assessment programme
- 4.2.11 Assessment instruments and assessment materials are distributed to each candidate.
- 4.2.12 Candidates do not bring into the assessment room, or have in their possession, any materials other than those explicitly permitted for that assessment. This applies particularly to mobile phones and electronic devices
- 4.2.13 Candidates are advised on the processes and procedures relating to re-sits, rechecks, reviews and appeals

Section 5 CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Activities

The ATO assessor will implement the following:

- 5.1 The assessor and candidates all strictly adhere to health and safety legislation
- 5.2 The assessment is stopped immediately, if a candidate engages in an unsafe practice and assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.3 Candidates are in position in good time before the start of assessment and remain in place until the assessment duration has expired and candidates have left the area
- 5.4 Candidates do not commence on valid/live assessments prior to the formal announcement of the assessment commencement
- 5.5 Candidates are supervised at all times to ensure candidates do not avail of unfair assistance by consulting unauthorised material or by communicating with any other candidate or unauthorised person in any manner
- 5.6 The time allotted for the assessment is accurately observed
- 5.7 A tardy candidate is compliant with all elements stated in the Pre Assessment Activities Section 4.1
- 5.8 Candidates remain silent during written assessments
- 5.9 Candidates fully comply with the on-line system requirements during on-line assessments
- 5.10 No candidate is allowed to undertake an assessment under the influence of alcohol or any other behaviour modifying drug or substance, save such drugs as are formally and duly prescribed for medical purposes by an authorised medical practitioner
- 5.11 No candidate is allowed to communicate with any other candidate during the course of an assessment event
- 5.12 No candidate is allowed to pass materials to any other candidate or to receive materials from any other candidate
- 5.13 No candidate is to communicate with any person, databank or information source either internal or external to the assessment location, either in person or electronically
- 5.14 No candidate receives information from any person external to the assessment location, except through the Assessor/Invigilator

- 5.15 Candidates do not borrow materials from other candidates
- 5.16 Conduct of the assessment is monitored and any unplanned events (including assessment breaches) are recorded and dealt with in accordance with Section 6
- 5.17 Implement the applicable rules governing late arrival and early departure of a candidate; no candidate will be allowed to leave an assessment location for the first 10 minutes or last 5 minutes of the assessment event
- 5.18 No candidate shall be allowed to enter the assessment location after an assessment event has been in progress for ten minutes save with the explicit permission of the ATO³, which shall not be given if any candidate has left the location A time extension will not be granted. Please refer to Section 8 of this document for further guidance. The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.19 No candidate will be given permission to attend a toilet, save in the event of sickness or with a Doctor's certificate during the assessment event unless the candidate is authorised to leave an assessment location and is accompanied by a person nominated, prior to the assessment, by the ATO
- 5.20 Candidates are not allowed to leave an assessment area unless the assessor has collected his/her answer script(s)
- 5.21 A candidate who leaves the assessment location during the assessment event without the permission of the assessor shall not be re-admitted for the remainder of the assessment. The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.22 In the event a candidate becomes distressed or ill, the assessor must be immediately informed the appropriate assigned ATO personnel Such a candidate will be allowed to leave the assessment location and is accompanied by a person nominated, prior to the assessment, by the ATO. In such circumstances, and at the discretion of the ATO, a time extension may be allowed to the candidate to complete the assessment. The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.23 No candidate is allowed to behave in a manner, which disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the assessment

³ Personnel assigned by the ATO.

- 5.24 No candidate is allowed to behave in a manner which interferes with the general quiet nature of an assessment event, or which interferes with or disrupts the work of any other candidate or of the orderly organisation and management of the assessment event
- 5.25 A candidate whose behaviour is disruptive and who persists in such behaviour following a warning will be reported to the appropriately assigned ATO personnel
- 5.26 Any expulsion of the disruptive candidate from the assessment location will be at the discretion of the appropriately assigned ATO personnel in consultation with the assessor/invigilator. In such circumstances the assessor will retain all materials issued to the candidate. The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.27 In the event of equipment failure, where such equipment is essential for the conduct of the assessment, an appropriate time allowance shall be provided by the assessor to enable the candidate to complete the assessment. The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 5.28 The final 5 minutes of the assessment event is announced to all remaining candidates
- 5.29 The conclusion of the assessment is formally announced

Section 6 CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Emergencies

The ATO assessor will implement the following in the case of assessment event emergencies. Where it is necessary to evacuate the assessment location the assessor must ensure the following:

- 6.1 Make a note of the time that the assessment location was evacuated.
Instruct candidates to leave their assessment papers and answer scripts on their desks
- 6.2 Bring the candidates to a safe place having first instructed candidates that they must not discuss the assessment
- 6.3 While they are out of the assessment location, candidates are to be under continuous supervision
- 6.4 The assessor will inform the appropriate ATO authorised person of the emergency event
- 6.5 Re-start the assessment when the all clear is given
- 6.6 The candidates are to be allowed the full time lost by the emergency to complete the assessment
- 6.7 In the event of fire or other serious cause the safety of the candidates and Collaborating staff shall be the primary concern and the assessor shall evacuate the assessment location in an orderly manner and without delay. In such circumstances the assessment shall be declared void and shall be rescheduled
- 6.8 The assessor shall record any such event in the SOLAS Assessment Report and notify the Construction Services Unit Manager within 2 working days of incident.

Section 7 Post CSCS and QSCS Assessment Event Activities

Following the assessment event the ATO assessors will implement the following:

- 7.1 Candidates cease work on the assessment immediately upon instruction
- 7.2 The information required on the front of the assessment script is completed in respect of each script submitted
- 7.3 The remaining candidates remain seated while the candidates' answer scripts and all other assessment materials are being collected
- 7.4 Each candidate submits his/her script to the assessor that will check the attendance sheet confirming the answer script has been collected
- 7.5 The assessor will collect and account for all answer scripts and all related materials including assessment papers, candidates' instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices
- 7.6 A candidate who has finished their work at least 10 minutes before the time appointed for the conclusion of the assessment may be permitted to leave the assessment location on handing their answer script and all related materials including the assessment paper, the candidate's instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices to the assessor/invigilator
- 7.8 A candidate who completes their assessment during the last 10 minutes of the assessment shall be instructed to remain in their seat until the assessor has collected the candidate's answer script and all related materials including the assessment paper, the candidate's instructions, unused answer sheets, practical assessment pieces and I.T. storage devices. The candidate will not leave the assessment location until the time appointed for the conclusion of the assessment, unless permitted to do so by the assessor/invigilator
- 7.9 A candidate may not seek the return of an answer script once it has been handed to and accepted by the assessor/invigilator
- 7.10 The assessor will count and check the answer scripts as per signature sheet and place them with the attendance forms assessment papers, candidates' instructions and the SOLAS Assessment Report in a large envelope. The total number of candidates is to be reported on the envelope. The envelope is sealed and returned

to the appropriate ATO authorised person by hand or by registered post within 2 working days.

- 7.11 The assessor will ensure the security of assessment material is maintained at all times
- 7.12 The assessor will complete the SOLAS Assessment Report, which will cover the conduct of the assessment and noting of anything of significance, which needs to be brought to the attention of the appropriate assigned ATO personnel. If an assessment has taken place without any such information being necessary to report then the report is to be marked - "Assessment Conducted Satisfactory"
- 7.13 The assessor will ensure any complaints received from candidates regarding the improper conduct of the assessment requirements are recorded in the SOLAS Assessment Report and submitted to the appropriate assigned ATO personnel for processing
- 7.14 The assessor will ensure restricted assessment papers or material are not to be taken from the Assessment Location. Retention of any unauthorised material by a candidate will be taken as constituting evidence of infringement of the rules. The assessor shall record any such event in the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report
- 7.15 The assessor shall report all suspicions of breaches of rules in the Assessment Supervisor & Assessor Report as outlined in SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice

Section 8 Non-Attendance, Lateness and Deferral Requests

With regard to assessment non-attendance, lateness or an assessment deferral request, the following requirements apply:

- 8.1 A candidate is required for submit an assessment deferral request in writing to the ATO and must state the reason for the deferral request
- 8.2 The appropriate assigned ATO personnel will determine the response to the deferral request. Should a deferral request be permitted this must be record in the SOLAS Assessment Report on the day of the rescheduled deferred assessment
- 8.3 The assessor will advise tardy candidates that they will require the permission of the appropriate assigned ATO personnel in order to enter the assessment location and to sit the assessment. The assessor will record such incidents in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 8.4 The appropriate assigned ATO personnel will advise tardy candidates, before permission is granted to undertake the assessment that they will not be entitled to any compensation, including lost time and, that it may be in the best interests of the candidate to defer the assessment
- 8.5 The appropriate assigned ATO personnel will record the decision taken by candidate
- 8.6 Should the candidate decide to undertake the deferral option then the candidate and the ATO must adhere to 8.1 and 8.2 above
- 8.7 Should the candidate decide to sit the assessment after being advised of their options they will receive written permission from the appropriate assigned ATO personnel, which the candidate will presented to the assessor prior to commencing the assessment. The assessor will record such incidents in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- 8.8 Expected candidates that do not turn up for assessment event will be recorded in the SOLAS Assessment Report

Section 9 CSCS and QSCS Assessment Marking

When marking CSCS and QSCS assessments, the ATO is responsible for applying the following requirements:

- 9.1 Evidence of attendance of a candidate at an assessment by sign-in is recorded as an attempt, except in the case of a candidate who could not continue with an assessment due to sickness or unforeseen emergency
- 9.2 CSCS and QSCS assessments are marked in accordance with the SOLAS Policy on Assessment Development, Marking and Grading
- 9.3 A candidate's performance is marked in accordance with directions outlined in the assessment marking instructions
- 9.4 CSCS and QSCS Assessment results are recorded and collated using SOLAS approved documentation and systems
- 9.5 The use of photographic and or video evidence may be appropriate to record practical events
- 9.6 If plagiarism is suspected, it must be recorded and dealt with in line with the SOLAS Malpractice policy and procedures

All CSCS and QSCS assessment results are provisional until formally reviewed and ratified by a SOLAS approved Results Approval Panel (Section 15).

Section 10 Assessment Rechecks, Reviews, Re-sits and Appeals

Candidates who do not reach the required standards will be facilitated with a resit or a recheck of marks or a review of the assigned marks or ultimately submit an appeal request.

10.1. ATO RESPONSIBILITIES

ATO assessment personnel are required to be familiar with the SOLAS policy and procedures that govern re-sits, rechecks, reviews and the CSCS and QSCS Assessment Appeals Process. The ATO is responsible for advising candidates on the processes and procedures relating to rechecks, reviews, re-sits and appeals of assessment(s) prior to assessment event.

10.2. RE-SITS

The ATO in a timely manner will provide an appropriate and opportune time for a referral candidate to re-sit the assessment event. A re-sit will be arranged where a candidate has not achieved the required standard in the original assessment or the original assessment was abandoned due to sickness or emergency. The ATO will implement the following requirements:

- a) Repeat assessments are conducted in the same conditions as previously outlined for regular assessment event activities.
- b) An equivalent assessment is selected by the appropriate ATO staff member for repeat assessments, where applicable.
- c) Candidates are to be facilitated in receiving feedback on their repeat assessment, including viewing their marked assessment(s) in a timely, accurate and constructive manner.

10.3. RECHECK AND REVIEWS

If a referred candidate wishes to challenge the outcome of the assessment process the ATO will facilitate, in the first instance, a recheck of the assessment marks and, if necessary, a review of the allocated assessment marks.

When the ATO is administering assessment rechecks and reviews the following actions shall be implemented:

- a) Candidates are reminded of the processes and procedures that relate to rechecks, reviews and appeals
- b) A re-check of results is the first stage of the assessment review process. A recheck and or review application(s) for CSCS and QSCS must be received by the ATO no later than 10 working days after the assessment or no later than 10 working days from the receipt of results
- c) The ATO undertakes a re-check and or review of the assessment results and communicate the outcome in writing to the applicant within 10 working days from the completion of the re-check and or review
- d) Candidates are to be facilitated in receiving feedback on their assessment, including viewing their marked assessment(s) in a timely, accurate and constructive manner.
- e) Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Construction Services Unit.
- f) If a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the recheck and review processes the ATO is to advise the candidate of their right to make an appeal this is to challenge the outcome of rechecks or reviews
- g) All requests for rechecks, reviews, re-sits, and appeals are processed in accordance with procedures outlined in APPENDIX 1: Appeal of Assessment Results Procedure relevant timeframes outlined therein

Section 11 Appeal of Assessment Results

The ATO will facilitate an appeal application in the following circumstances:

- 11.1 Candidate believes that assessment results were recorded inaccurately (recheck)
- 11.2 Candidate believes that assessment was marked inappropriately (review)
- 11.3 The assessment rules were not properly implemented
- 11.4 Assessment conditions did not comply with specification. An appeal on these grounds will be considered if the candidate has reported the situation to the assessor during or immediately after the assessment. This will be documented in the SOLAS Assessment Report by the assessor
- 11.5 Compassionate or medical circumstances existed, which were not taken into account
- 11.6 Circumstances existed that may not have been covered by the assessment rules
- 11.7 New information becomes available that was not available to the original assessor
- 11.8 There is evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the assessment, which might have affected its outcome
- 11.9 For Appeal 'Review' assessment personnel are required to:
 - a. Consider the validity of the request
 - b. Conduct the appeal process in accordance with the Appeal of CSCS and QSCS Assessment Result Procedure (Appendix 1)
 - c. Communicate the outcome of the appeal in writing to the candidate within 10 working days of the conclusion of the appeals process
 - d. Advise candidates who are unsuccessful in their appeal about the mechanisms available for escalating the appeal
 - e. Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time.
 - f. Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Construction Services Unit

Section 12 Security of Assessment Documentation

CSCS and QSCS assessment requirements and procedures require the ATO to provide secure mechanisms for recording, storing and accessing candidates' records. Assessment outcomes require secure mechanisms for storage and confidentiality.

To protect assessment security and integrity, the following requirements are to be adhered to:

- 12.1 All assessment information and related documentation is treated as confidential.
- 12.2 Security protocols are applied at all times during:
 - a. the transit of assessment papers to and from assessment locations
 - b. the distribution of assessment documents to assessment personnel and candidates
 - c. during the marking of assessment
- 12.3 Only the required number of assessment papers are to be prepared in advance of the assessment event
- 12.4 Under no circumstances are model answer sheets to be copied or reproduced electronically or issued to any non-authorized individual, learner or candidate
- 12.4 All assessment papers are collected after the assessment event, including unused assessment papers
- 12.5 Unused assessment papers will then be destroyed in a secure manner
- 12.6 ATO personnel will be advised the designed person responsible for the management of the assessment processes if the security of an assessment is breached by theft, loss, damage, unauthorized disclosure, fire or any other circumstances
- 12.7 In the event of an alleged breach of assessment security, the ATO will implement SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Procedures for Managing Assessment System Malpractice
- 12.8 Assessment evidence submitted is recorded, as such, by the use of signature or receipts to prevent potential disagreements or misunderstandings between assessment personnel
- 12.9 File storage, back-up and recovery systems are in place for on-line and PC-based assessments

- 12.10 Assessment materials and, where possible, evidence of assessed work, including photographic evidence are retained until such time as all results have been approved, or in the case of results under appeal, until the appeals process has been exhausted
- 12.11 A record of the disposal/destruction of assessment evidence is maintained.
- 12.12 Disposal mechanisms for assessment evidence are appropriate, safe and confidential
- 12.13 The ATO will maintain accurate records of candidate attendance, achievement and certification, malpractice and appeals of assessment results are maintained
- 12.14 The ATO will retain any assessment record (as defined in the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003) is made available according to FOI procedure
- 12.15 The ATO and the SOLAS approved provider of external authentication, retain retrieval and accessible assessment records for a period of 7½ years
- 12.16 SOLAS approved providers of external authentication, will indefinitely retain retrieval and accessible formal minutes of Results Approval Panel meetings
- 12.17 Assessment outcomes will be maintained indefinitely on the SOLAS IT system
- 12.18 The ATO will provide a system for the storage and deletion and/or archiving, as appropriate, of hard copy or electronic copy of CSCS and QSCS provisional assessment records. A record of the disposal/destruction of assessment records, including electronic records, is to be also maintained
- 12.19 Disposal mechanisms for records are safe and confidential

Section 13 Internal Verification of Assessment

When implementing internal verification processes⁴, the ATO will adhere to the following requirements:

- 13.1 The internal verification of assessment is organised and conducted in accordance with SOLAS requirements
- 13.2 ATO internal verification personnel are fully briefed by the ATO on the role of internal verification of the conduct of the assessment process, internal verification of results and peer review
- 13.3 ATO assessment personnel are prohibited from verifying assessments, which they have instructed, supervised, conducted or marked
- 13.4 The ATO will ensure all appropriate assessment documentation and evidence is made available to the internal verification personnel
- 13.5 The assessment process is reviewed by the internal verifier to ensure that correct procedures have been consistently applied throughout up to this point in the assessment process
- 13.6 Internal Verification Reports are completed, dated and signed by the relevant internal verification personnel
- 13.7 Any non-conformances, areas of improvement or good practice identified are documented in the Internal Verification Report
- 13.8 All documentation arising from internal verification is made available to the SOLAS approved provider of external authentication, in order to assist external authentication personnel, Results Approval Panel and other officials, as appropriate
- 13.9 Issues identified in the Internal Verification Reports are addressed by the Results Approval Panel
- 13.10 It is imperative that confidentiality is maintained throughout the internal verification process

⁴ Internal Verification applies to 100% of Assessments.

Section 14 External Authentication of Assessment

The external authentication of assessment is arranged by SOLAS approved providers of external authentication. When implementing external authentication processes, the following requirements must be adhered to:

- 14.1 The external authentication of assessment is conducted as per the requirements of the relevant Awarding Body
- 14.2 The external authentication of assessment is carried out on a sample basis in line with a national sampling strategy
- 14.3 SOLAS approved providers of external authentication shall ensure that external authentication personnel are fully briefed on the role of the external authenticator
- 14.4 SOLAS approved providers of external authentication shall ensure external authentication personnel are suitably qualified to moderate assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification
- 14.5 The SOLAS approved providers of external authentication must provide all appropriate documentation and evidence to the external authentication personnel including internal verification reports
- 14.6 Any non-conformances, areas of improvement or good practice identified are to be verbally outlined to SOLAS approved providers of external authentication in a closing meeting and documented in the External Authentication Report and advise the SOLAS Construction Services Unit Manager
- 14.7 The SOLAS approved providers of external authentication will ensure External Authentication Reports are completed, dated and signed by the relevant external authentication personnel
- 14.8 SOLAS approved providers of external authentication will forward External Authentication Reports to the SOLAS Construction Services Unit Manager and the assigned Results Approval Panel
- 14.9 Issues identified in the External Authentication Reports are addressed by the Results Approval Panel
- 14.10 It is imperative that confidentiality is maintained throughout the external authentication process

Section 15 Results Approval

When conducting the results approval process, the SOLAS approved providers of external authentication will adhere to the following requirements:

- 15.1 The results approval process is organised and conducted as per the SOLAS Construction Services Quality Assurance System (CSQAS)
- 15.2 All provisional CSCS and QSCS assessment results are processed through the Results Approval Panel (RAP)
- 15.3 Results are approved by the chair of the RAP as having complied with CSQAS and awarding body requirements
- 15.4 The RAP is prohibited from issuing Pass or Upgrade of results by compensation.
- 15.4 Actions agreed during the results approval process are documented and dealt with appropriately prior to requesting certificates
- 15.5 All results approval documentation is fully signed off and retained on file indefinitely

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Appeal of Assessment Result Procedure

1 Purpose

- 1.1. To facilitate CSCS and QSCS candidates who wish to appeal an assessment decision.

2 Responsibility

- 2.1 The ATO is responsible for ensuring CSCS and QSCS candidates are informed of the appeals process and of their right to appeal an assessment result decision.
- 2.2 The Collaborating Provider is responsible for implementing this procedure.

3 Procedure

3.1 Appeal: Re-check

A re-check of the results of the assessment is the first stage of the appeals process. An appeal application must be received by the ATO no later than 10 working days from the date of assessment or no later than 10 working days on receipt of the formal assessment results.

3.1.1 Relevant Collaborating Provider assessment personnel will:

- a) Undertake a re-check of the assessment results and communicate the outcome of the re-check in writing to the candidate not later than 10 working days from the date the re-check is completed
- b) Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time as outlined in SOLAS CSCS and QSCS Policy on Record Retention and Disposal
- c) Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Construction Services Unit Manager and to the SOLAS approved Quality Assurance Organisation (e.g. ETB/NCS)
- d) In the event that the candidate is not satisfied with the re-check, relevant assessment personnel will communicate the process for a review of the assessment marks.⁵

- 3.1.2 If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the re-check process they are entitled to seek a review of the assessment. In this instance the ATO will arrange for a different

⁵ In the case of practical tests, re-check and appeal are based on assessment records unless there is visual recorded evidence of the practical assessments

assessor to review the candidate's assessment paper to determine if the original assessment was assessed correctly, fairly and in accordance with assessment standards.

3.1.3 In the event the candidate is not satisfied with the review of the assessment process, relevant personnel will communicate the process for an appeal of the assessment marks.

3.1.4 Communicate the adjusted outcomes, if any, to SOLAS Construction Services Unit Manager and to the SOLAS approved Quality Assurance Organisation (e.g. ETB/NCS)

4 Appeals: Review

An appeal may be requested by a candidate if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the assessment, the re-check process or the review process. An appeal application for an appeal must be received by the ATO no later than 10 working days from the issuing of the outcome of the assessment review process.

4.1 The ATO will facilitate an appeal in the following circumstances:-

- a) Candidate believes that assessment results were recorded inaccurately (recheck)
- b) Candidate believes that assessment was marked inappropriately (review)
- c) Candidate believes assessment requirements were not properly implemented
- d) Candidate believes assessment conditions did not comply with test specification. An appeal on these grounds will be considered if the Candidate has reported the situation to the assessor during or immediately after the assessment event. This will be documented in the SOLAS Assessment Report
- e) Candidate believes the assessment requirements did not adequately cover the Candidate's circumstances
- f) Candidate believes compassionate or medical circumstances existed which were not taken into account
- g) Candidate believes circumstances existed that may not have been covered by the assessment regulations
- h) Candidate believes that significant performance-related information was not considered by the assessor

- i) Candidate has new information becomes available that was not available to the original assessor
- j) Candidate believes there is evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the assessment, which might have affected its outcome

4.2 Relevant ATO assessment personnel will: -

- a) Consider the validity of the request
- b) Conduct the appeal process
- c) Communicate the outcome of the appeal in writing to the Candidate within 10 working days of the conclusion of the appeals process
- d) Document the process and retain documentation for the appropriate time
- e) Communicate adjusted outcomes if any, to the SOLAS Construction Services Unit and the SOLAS approved Quality Assurance Organisation (e.g. ETB/NCS)

Appendix 2

SOLAS CSCS and QSCS

Assessment Record Retention and Disposal

1. Assessment Records

Assessment Records are mechanisms for recording an assessment event that has taken place and which document the assessment outcomes for each candidate. ATOs are required to maintain a record of all CSCS and QSCS related assessments conducted on behalf of SOLAS. Records relating to fair and consistent assessment of candidates may be electronic or paper and consist of the following:

- a) Notification of assessment events
- b) Candidate requests for assessment support and copy of approval decision.
- c) Assessment instruments and briefs including drawings, instructions, etc., marking / scoring sheets, individual marking sheets, summary assessment sheets
- d) SOLAS Assessment Reports
- e) Course Summary Assessment Sheet and Results Approval Form
- f) Candidate requests for assessment rechecks and or reviews
- g) Outcome of the assessment recheck and review processes
- h) Internal verification on the conduct of assessment process reports
- i) Peer reviewer reports
- j) Checklist for submitting results to TSO
- k) Internal verification of assessment results report
- l) External authentication reports
- m) Minutes of Result Approval Panel meeting (to be retained indefinitely)
- n) Record of candidate notification of change to provisional result following RAP (to be retained indefinitely)
- o) Records of candidates appeal requests
- p) Outcomes of appeal process
- q) Record of assessment evidence disposal

2. Assessment Record Retention

The ATO is required to comply with the following requirements:

- a) Candidate assessment and training records are confidential
- b) Assessment records should be maintained in a safe and secure location with only authorised access to the data permitted
- c) Assessment records must be retained in a manner that facilitates easy retrieval of the record
- d) Assessment scripts are maintained for a period of 7½ years. If digital copies are made, the original hard copies can be disposed after a period of 12 months.
- e) Assessment results are maintained indefinitely through the SOLAS computer management systems
- f) Minutes of Results Approval Panel meeting are maintained indefinitely

3. Assessment Record Disposal

The ATO is required to maintain a register of records, which is to facilitate cataloguing the:

- a) Record title (e.g. assessment records, assessment evidence)
- b) Record reference (e.g. course code and F12 id number)
- c) Period record relates to (e.g. contract period or course duration period)
- d) Date scheduled for disposal
 - when (e.g. 7½ years after the date of record closure or 1 year if digital copies have been made)
 - how disposed (e.g. confidentially shredded)
 - authorisation for disposal (e.g. name of Manager that approved the destruction of the record)
- e) Date disposed (e.g. actual date of disposal)

Appendix 3

Individual Assessment Grading Classification

Individual CSCS and QSCS assessment grades are classified in the following categories in order to provide an accurate recording of the assessment outcomes. All SOLAS approved CSCS and QSCS ATOs are required to grade assessments in accordance with the Result Codes and Grading Classifications as outlined below:

Result Code	Assessment Grading Classification Descriptor
CREDIT	The candidate achieved the credit criteria required within the specification of the assessment instrument
PASS	The candidate achieved the pass criteria required within the specification of the assessment instrument
REFERRAL	The required standard is not achieved. Such effort will be counted as an attempt. A candidate is required to re-sit such assessments.
ABSENT	The candidate was absent from the scheduled assessment.
DEFERRAL	The candidate has been granted approval by the Collaborating Provider to defer an assessment event.
INCOMPLETE	The candidate has still to take an assessment as the Collaborating Provider could not offer an assessment event to the candidate or a situation developed where it was necessary for the Collaborating Provider to cancel the assessment event.
WITHHELD	There are outstanding issues preventing a definitive determination of results at the time of the assessment validation process, for example, an investigation into possible malpractice.
WITHDREW	The candidate is absent from the scheduled course assessment following withdrawal from the assessment.

Appendix 4

Candidates with Disabilities⁶

Candidates with disabilities are to be facilitated and supported by the ATO in accordance with the guidelines documented below. Ideally it would be extremely beneficial if a candidate with a disability could advise the ATO aware of their impairment and the need for reasonable accommodation at their earliest convenience. Any candidate with a disability seeking to avail of assessment supports will be required to complete or assist in the completion of the SOLAS Candidate Request for Assessment Support Form⁷ for processing, with supporting evidence (where required). This form must be completed as early as possible. This is to allow for the reasonable accommodation to be facilitated.

The use of assessment supports is to be recorded in the SOLAS Assessment Report on the day of the assessment and a copy of the SOLAS Candidate Request for Assessment Support Form is also to be maintained. SOLAS and ATOs will make every effort to advise potential candidates with disabilities of assessment supports and the necessity of such individuals to advise the ATO in a timely manner in order to allow the ATO to have the necessary supports in place on the day of the assessment.

Individualisation

As a general rule, an adaptation to the form of delivery, which makes learning possible, will also assist in making assessment possible. The candidate is usually the best authority on what form of delivery is the most effective and the same method(s) may then be possible during any assessment. However, it is important that the standard of the assessment is not diminished. Only the method(s) by which the candidate demonstrates his/her attainment of the standard can be adjusted.

⁶ The contents of this Appendix represents best practice in line with the Disability Act 2005 following Awarding Bodies: QQI, City and Guilds, Irish Computer Society

⁷ See form TSS-6c-F03/Learner Request for Assessment Support and Approval Form/V1.0

Readers⁸

A reader is a person provided to assist a disabled student by reading assessment questions aloud without suggesting the answer. A reader is a person who, on request, will read to the candidate:

- a. The entire or any part of the assessment;
- b. Any part of the candidate's answers (exactly, as they are 'spoken').

Readers are typically used by people with visual impairments, people who tire easily, people who have extreme muscle weakness and people with learning difficulties. Only one reader per candidate is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessor/invigilator.

Writers/Scribes⁹

A writer is a person who will, on request, write the answers exactly as given or dictated by a candidate. A writer may also act as a reader and is often used in similar circumstances to a reader. As in the case of a reader, only one writer per candidate is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

Overwriting

Overwriting involves rewriting a question on an assessment paper in such a way as to make it as explicit as possible. It is a technique primarily used with candidates who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have a learning difficulty. Overwriting should be **in pen** on the answer paper. This is done by assessment supervision personnel in situ. Where extensive modifications are necessary, a separate sheet of paper with the questions written in full should be attached by staple to the original answer paper. Technical terminology should not

^{8/10} A reader or writer/scribe should not normally be the candidate's own instructor/trainer but there may be circumstances where this is necessary. Only in exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the ATO, may a relative/somebody known to the candidate act as a writer/scribe. Exceptions are to be recorded in the SOLAS Assessment Report along with a record of the formal approval.

be overwritten. In case of doubt about technical terminology a subject matter expert can be consulted. **Care must be taken to retain the original emphasis of the question.**

Sign Language Interpreters¹⁰

Sign language Interpreters must be qualified to interpret sign or other similar types of language. Only one Sign Language Interpreter per candidate should be used. The assessment for candidates (usually those who are deaf or hard of hearing) should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. For extra transparency it may be necessary to video-tape the assessment for translation later. Similarly, some candidates may prefer to sign their answers directly to video. A signed response should be transcribed to print by someone proficient in sign language. Any words or phrases re-interpreted for the candidate should be underlined and noted in the question paper.

Computers

The use of computers by disabled candidates may be necessary as their primary means of communication, for example, for candidates with physical impairments for whom writing is difficult, for candidates with visual impairments/blindness and for candidates with learning disabilities, such as, dyslexia.

The definition of a 'computer' generally refers to hardware and/or software, which facilitate effective communication for people for whom this may not otherwise be possible. It may be standard equipment, for example, the use of word processing software by someone with motor difficulties, which impede handwriting or may be specially adapted, for example, speech synthesisers and text enlargement software/hardware for people with visual impairments.

¹⁰ Only in exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the relevant ATO, may a relative/somebody known to the candidate act as a sign language interpreter. Exceptions are to be recorded in the SOLAS Assessment Report along with a record of the formal approval.

Where voice activated software is used, the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. It is the responsibility of the assessment/training location to supply the appropriate hardware/software.

Audio Tapes

Audio-taped assessments and responses are useful in some cases, e.g. visual impairment, motor difficulties. The ATO is required to supply the assessment tape and a blank tape to candidates at the same time as other candidates. However, in order to minimise disruption to other candidates, the person should either use headphones or complete their assessment in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

Braille, braille-mate, braille 'n speak, braille 'n print, etc.

Braille is generally, though not extensively, used by candidates who are blind or visually impaired. It is generally advised that the Braille machine is attached and adapted to a printer which will produce a printed text. The responses of the candidates should not be printed until after the end of the assessment time, as the noise levels may be too high for other candidates. The ATO is required to supply the printer, braille paper and/or the computer print-out paper.

The use of CCTV (closed circuit television)

This is a technological aid that magnifies print. It is usually used for candidates with visual impairments. The candidate can read the assessment paper as well as his/her answers from a TV screen. The candidate uses the base under the screen to write and this is simultaneously magnified on the screen.

Enlarged print to A3 size

Some candidates, usually those with visual impairments, may simply require their assessment papers in enlarged print, i.e. A3 size paper.

Examination papers in colour

Some candidates, especially those who have dyslexia, may require their assessment paper in a colour other than black and white - for example, black on yellow, or black on grey. A gloss/highly sheen coated paper may also be unsuitable. The candidates themselves should be consulted.

Other technologies

The whole area of new technologies and access to information is rapidly changing. The opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their abilities are increasing with the advent of assistive devices like the 'true-type talking microphone' – a device which with practice can type onto a computer screen a person's spoken word. Such technologies are also becoming more accessible in terms of general availability and price.

Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks either inside or outside the assessment area should be allowed as is appropriate. A rest break can be flexible according to individual needs, e.g. 15 minutes every hour as opposed to one 30-minute period during a three-hour assessment. The time so used should not be deducted from the time allowed (where specified) to complete the assessment.

Split Sessions

Splitting the assessment into two or more sessions may be an appropriate alternative for some candidates.

Extra Time

In the case of assessments that are based on time, additional time of up to 25% is the usual rule of thumb.

Appendix 5

Glossary of Terms

Appeal is the process whereby a candidate can appeal an assessment result that they consider to be unfair.

Candidates are persons undertaking CSCS and QSCS assessments.

Assessment is the process whereby candidate performance in a range of areas is established to ensure that the knowledge/skill/competence is demonstrated to meet the requirements of the National Awards Standards for the award.

Assessment Attempt: A candidate entering the assessment location or venue is required to sign an attendance sheet (register). Any candidate who is registered and admitted to the assessment location or venue for the purpose of undertaking an assessment is deemed to have “attempted” an assessment.

Assessment Coordination ensures that assessments in SOLAS provided, organised or procured training are planned, coordinated and administered in accordance with the assessment procedures for the training programme.

Assessment Event is an occasion of formal testing, usually for summative purposes.

Assessment Evidence is created during the assessment event or as part of an assigned assessment task and includes assessment scripts, coursework, projects, portfolios, work competence schedule workbooks, logbooks, soft copy evidence etc. assessment evidence must be the work of the applicant.

Assessment Instruments are used to assess a candidate’s attainment of required standards of knowledge, skills and/or competence. Assessment instruments include implements such as theory, including online and practical assessments.

Assessment Materials are any material relating to the carrying out of an assessment, for example assessment instruments, assessment papers, drawings, supports and equipment, specifications and records.

Assessment Methods are mechanisms devised for assessment purposes, e.g. including online multiple-choice, short answer assessments, multiple choice questions, practical demonstrations and written answers.

Assessment Plans clearly identify when the assessment will occur and the type of assessment that will take place at each stage.

Assessment Programmes detail the various methods by which progress is recorded and attainment is measured, i.e. practical tests, multiple choice tests, short answer tests and coursework or profiles. An assessment programme also identifies the stage in the training programme when assessment takes place.

Assessment Records are mechanisms for recording that an assessment event has taken place and which document the assessment outcomes for each applicant. They include assessment marking sheets, summary assessment sheets, assessment attendance records, records of online and electronic assessment, marks and records of assessment decisions, documentation relating to non-conformances, results of appeals against assessment outcomes, certification records, internal verification and External Authentication Reports, coursework submission records, outcomes of deferral applications, extensions to deadline applications, and records of non-conformances and breaches of conduct.

Assessment Schedules specify the dates on which named assessments will be held in a specified training location.

Assessment Specifications are detailed statements of the items to be addressed through a specified assessment approach when designing any block of training

Assessment Supervision involves overseeing the implementation of an assessment and may also involve overseeing the conduct of assessments. Assessment Supervision requires the invigilation of the assessment process in the context of formal assessments and must ensure that the conduct and integrity of assessments comply with the awarding body and SOLAS requirements.

Authorised Persons are those who are permitted to access an assessment location, as appropriate, before during and after an assessment. Authorised persons include: candidates undertaking the assessment in question, personnel responsible for the conduct and supervision of assessments, other support personnel as necessary, for example, IT support staff, readers, writers, etc.

Awards are conferred, granted or given by an Awards Council and which records that a candidate has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.

Awarding Body/Awards Council is a national body that has the power to give an applicant a qualification (award).

Cheating is defined by SOLAS as:

- a) Obtaining an assessment paper ahead of its release
- b) Copying any assessment material without permission
- c) Having, using, or attempting to use any unauthorised material in an assessment, namely mobile phones, books, notes, electronic aids or other materials
- d) Giving or receiving help from another applicant or any other person, where such help is forbidden
- e) Plagiarism
- f) Impersonation

Competence is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

Conducting an Assessment involves assessing candidates' performance and related knowledge in a range of areas, to ensure that the knowledge/skills/competence demonstrated meet the requirements of the National Standards for the award. An assessment is usually conducted by the instructors/trainers of the programme.

External Authentication is the independent review of the assessment process for a particular training programme, carried out by examining a sample of assessments in terms of:

- a) The assessment process, to ensure adherence to National Assessment Procedures
- b) The technical content of the assessment and the consistency of assessment marking against the assessment specification and standards set out in the marking criteria

External Authentication Personnel conduct external authentication of the assessment process for a particular programme (see above)

Fair and Consistent Assessment involves the following:

- a) Planning and implementation of assessment arrangements that are appropriate to the standards set out in the in programme's learning outcomes

- b) Provision of adequate opportunities and resources for applicants to prepare for assessment
- c) Openness and transparency
- d) An unbiased, impartial and inclusive system that provides equity of opportunity
- e) Consistency in terms of assessment procedures, including marking and grading

Impersonation is the act pretending to be another person.

Internal Verification is the process by which the ATO reviews the assessment process and provisional assessment results on a sample basis and conducts peer review, to ensure adherence to National Award Standards.

Internal Verification Personnel conduct internal verification of the assessment process and internal verification of assessment results as per the SOLAS quality assurance and the requirements of the relevant Awarding Body. Internal verification personnel may also be responsible for assessment coordination. It is possible for internal verification personnel to conduct assessments, but they cannot verify their own assessment decisions or the process used in reaching them.

Knowledge is the cognitive representation of ideas, events or happenings.

National Award Standards are the benchmarks for all assessment activity conducted for the purposes of national recognition of the achievement of those standards through an award. The format of National Award Standards will also specify assessment requirements for an award.

Peer Review is the process whereby the assessor of a particular course and a subject matter expert review results to ensure assessments were marked in line with the relevant award standard and the assessment specification. Peer review is carried out on a sample basis.

Plagiarism is defined as copying the words of others, or using someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own. If an applicant uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must clearly state where they came from.

Programmes are learning processes designed and offered by a provider, based on predetermined National Awards Standards and leading to an award.

Reasonable Accommodations (Appendix 4) are concerned with enabling individuals with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and conditions to their non-disabled peers in accessing and participating in training and assessment. This may require a training provider to take reasonable account of applicants with disabilities' needs and requirements in the training environment. What

reasonable accommodation entails varies from applicant to applicant, depending on their individual needs and requirements.

Re-check of Assessment involves checking and ensuring that all parts of an assessment have been properly recorded and that there are no errors in the recording, collating or combining of marks which determined the result. This is the first stage of an appeals process.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a systematic recognition process to enable individuals to enter programmes and attain full awards based on prior learning experiences, regardless of how that learning was acquired.

Referrals: A Referral Assessment is a re-sit assessment that takes place after the delivery of the course.

Relevant Manager has overall responsibility for assessments run in a training location. The assessment manager provides support and guidance to all assessment personnel in the second provider environment and or the SOLAS approved providers of external authentication, results approval and certification applications

Reliability in an assessment is the confidence one can have in the fairness of the result. Outcomes of assessments should be as consistent as possible. Those conducting assessments should produce similar results when using the same assessment for similar groups of applicants. Measures should be used to reduce the variability in grading that may be due to those conducting assessments, the assessment instruments or the assessment methods.

Repeat is defined as an opportunity afforded to a candidate who fails to meet the required standard in an assessment to repeat an equivalent assessment. Only referred or pass grades can be awarded in repeat assessments.

Resit is defined as an opportunity afforded to a candidate who have to abandon an assessment, for example, due to sickness or an emergency evacuation, to re-sit an equivalent assessment. In such cases normal marking and grading policy applies.

Results Approval Panel is a panel convened by the SOLAS approved providers of external authentication, results approval and certification applications to formally review and approve assessment results.

Review of Assessment is the reconsideration in detail of all or part of the existing assessment material by internal assessment personnel and reconsideration of a full set of results. This is the second stage of an appeals process, subsequent to a recheck and prior to a possible final appeal.

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of applicant results and applicant evidence for the purposes of completing internal verification and external authentication of assessment.

Second Provider is a person or body external approved by SOLAS to deliver all or part of a SOLAS training programme.

Skill is the goal-directed performance of a task, underpinned by know-how of the procedural knowledge required.

Validity essentially means fitness for purpose. To be valid an assessment measures what it was intended to measure. There are different types of validity:

- a) **Face Validity:** Does the assessment meet stakeholder and candidate expectations? Is it the kind of assessment strategy you might expect to find in a particular programme?
- b) **Content Validity:** Is the assessment strategy, structure and methodology based on award standards, curriculum aims and learning outcomes?
- c) **Construct Validity:** Does the assessment method measure the intended specified learning outcomes or introduce and measure some other abilities which were not required in the specified learning outcome? For example, inappropriately high level of language in the question paper or demanding keyboard skills required to complete the test but not required by the specified learning outcomes in the award standard.