



SCHEME CHANGES UPDATE

Following extensive consultation across the construction industry, the **Construction Skills Certification Scheme** (CSCS) is introducing two significant changes to the Scheme.

- From 30th September 2013 CSCS will recognise a range of construction related academic qualifications as well as vocational qualifications.
- From July 2014 CSCS plans to introduce a Labourers' green card following a pilot exercise due to be completed by January 2014. Anyone applying for an entry level green card will be required to achieve a formal vocational level one qualification to demonstrate their knowledge of the key issues affecting safe working practices on UK construction sites. This will replace the existing Construction Site Operative green card.

Recognition of a Wider Range of Qualifications

From 30th September 2013, in addition to vocational qualifications, CSCS will also recognise the following construction related academic qualifications:-

- HNC and HND
- Degrees
- NEBOSH Construction Certificates and National Diplomas
- CIOB Certificates

Successful card applicants holding these academic qualifications will be issued with an AQP (Academically Qualified Person) card which will have a 5 year life and will currently be non-renewable, however this is under review. Holders of the new AQP card will be expected to work toward achieving a relevant vocational qualification or achieving membership of a recognised professional body (a full listing is available on the CSCS website.)

New Entry Level Labourers' Green Card

CSCS is planning to introduce the new Labourers' green card from July 2014 which will replace the existing Construction Site Operative green card. Applicants will be required to achieve a formal vocational level one qualification, the '*Health and Safety in a Construction Environment*' Award. Applications with employer recommendations only will not be accepted after this date.

This new formal qualification has been developed by members of CSCS's Card Management Committee who are drawn from across industry, and in conjunction with CITB. A key factor in developing the new qualification was balancing content with affordability. The qualification content has been set at a standard which demonstrates a labourer's knowledge and understanding of basic construction site safety issues without being prohibitive in terms of time and cost.

Cost of assessment and training will be dependent on a number of factors including the labourer's existing knowledge, experience and the amount of training they need. The new qualification can be delivered in a variety of ways including on the job training, computer based courses, workbook and classroom delivery. The new green card will be issued once the applicant has achieved the qualification and passed the standard touch screen Health, Safety and Environment test.

A pilot exercise is being undertaken during Autumn/Winter 2013, and the aim is to issue the new green card from July 2014 to successful applicants working in construction labouring occupations only. Green CSCS cards will no longer be issued to applicants working in other occupations.



Why the Need for Change?

These scheme developments have been triggered by research and industry consultation undertaken by CSCS. Findings revealed that the majority of principal contractors require employees, sub-contractors and casual construction workers to hold a CSCS card, however, many workers now view them, particularly the green card, purely as a passport to gain access to site. Green cards were intended for labouring occupations only, however, site workers were applying for them because they were the easiest to obtain with only an employer's recommendation needed on application and no proof of formal vocational qualification required. The research also revealed that many site workers did hold construction related academic qualifications and they will now be able to apply for the new AQP card outlined above.

A report commissioned jointly by CITB and the HSE undertaken by Pye Tait Consulting, 'Routes to Competence in the Construction Sector' (2011) recommended that all workers on construction sites should be formally qualified. This report found that misuse of the current green card diluted the effectiveness of the scheme and led to confusion over whether CSCS cards were purely a passport to gain access to site or a true measure of an individual's competence to carry out the job for which they are employed.

A key requirement for the future will be for principal contractors to carry out more rigorous on-site checks, using the smart technology embedded in the cards, to ensure workers hold the right card for the work they are carrying out as confirmation of the site worker's knowledge and skills.

By initiating these changes CSCS's aim is to encourage industry towards a workforce fully competent for the job for which they are employed, holding the right card for the work they undertake and for construction contractors and clients to maximise potential benefits a competent, smart-carded workforce can bring to their business.

Background to CSCS

CSCS is the industry owned, leading competency card scheme for construction. Over 1.8 million people in the UK hold CSCS cards covering hundreds of construction-related occupations and they are increasingly required as proof of occupational competence by construction clients, contractors and house builders. It was established to provide the construction industry with a means to verify that people wanting to work on construction sites have the necessary competence for the activity they would be undertaking.

CSCS is a not-for-profit organisation and limited by guarantee and therefore has no shareholders. Its board of directors are from:

- Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)
- Construction Clients Group (CCG)
- Construction Industry Council (CIC)
- Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
- GMB Union
- National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC)
- UK Contractors Group (UKCG)
- Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT)
- UNITE the Union
- Independent Chairman

In addition to the core scheme, CSCS works with 10 affiliated schemes to cover more than 800 construction related occupations. CSCS also works closely with CITB who carry out the scheme's application processing and call centre service.

If you have any questions, or require any further information about the scheme, please do not hesitate to contact Helen Atkinson at helenatkinson@cscs.gb.com