

Common Assessment Standard Communications Toolkit

Communications Objectives

The Common Assessment Standard, developed by Build UK, is designed to improve efficiency and reduce cost in the construction pre-qualification (PQ) process.

The benefits of the Common Assessment Standard are clear, but to achieve its full potential there needs to be near-universal use of it. As such, the communications must achieve the critical objectives of establishing **awareness, understanding and trust**.

Everyone involved in the system – clients, contractors, supply chain companies, trade associations, Recognised Assessment Bodies and other stakeholders – has a role to play, and this toolkit provides the information they will need.

Overview

The [Common Assessment Standard](#) comprises an industry-agreed question set and corresponding assessment standards. There are two levels of certification – desktop and site-based – and companies apply to one of the [Recognised Assessment Bodies](#) for the level that is most appropriate for their business.

A **visual identity** has been developed for the Common Assessment Standard, and the appropriate version of the logo can be used by companies that are certified against the standard by a Recognised Assessment Body. Strict guidelines are in place regarding the use of the logo.



To facilitate the roll out of the Common Assessment Standard, a [data sharing solution](#) is in place, enabling contractors and clients to obtain key PQ data from any Recognised Assessment Body. This means that companies need to be certified by only one Recognised Assessment Body.

A **growing number of organisations** across the public and private sectors are now specifying that their supply chains are certified to the Common Assessment Standard and an up to date list can be found on the [Build UK website](#).

The development of the Common Assessment Standard is overseen by a **Cross Industry Body** consisting of experts from organisations across the sector, including public and private sector clients, contractors and trade associations.

Get Involved

Information on the Common Assessment Standard is at www.BuildUK.org/pre-qualification

Keep up to date with the latest news by following @BuildUK on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and using the hashtag **#CommonAssessmentStandard**

All media enquiries should be sent to Build UK at Communications@BuildUK.org

Key Messages

- In a sector with high inflation and wafer-thin margins, **companies need to improve efficiency**.
 - Many of the current inefficiencies arise from poor collaboration across the value creation process, from clients to the many micro-businesses operating in construction.
 - The PQ system is traditionally complex and repetitive and a major barrier to improved productivity, with around 180,000 specialist contractors producing over two million pieces of paper every year for 5,000 contractors at a cost of up to £1 billion.
- The Government's **Construction Sector Deal** specifically supported a standardised PQ process, adopted across public and private sectors.
 - The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) endorses the Common Assessment Standard and is encouraging its adoption throughout public and private sector procurement.
 - The [independent review](#) of public sector construction frameworks undertaken by Professor David Mosey recommends the use of the Common Assessment Standard to '*reduce procurement costs by consistent and proportionate assessment of [suppliers'] economic and financial standing*'.
 - [PPN 03/24](#) states that central Government departments and wider public sector bodies should use the Common Assessment Standard to pre-qualify suppliers for works contracts.
- **Standardising PQ systems** has great potential to improve efficiencies and thereby boost productivity of the sector as a whole.
 - Companies provide only one set of information annually and have a choice of which of the Recognised Assessment Bodies to use.
 - Cost savings for the supply chain will arise from having only one certification instead of several.
- Companies are certified against the **Common Assessment Standard** by one of the Recognised Assessment Bodies.
 - A growing list of contractors and clients are specifying that their supply chains are certified to the Common Assessment Standard.
 - Companies are continuing to transition over time, with many obtaining the Common Assessment Standard when one of their existing certifications comes up for renewal. Already, over 18,500 suppliers have the Common Assessment Standard.
- A landmark **data sharing solution** is in place.
 - Contractors and clients can access verified key PQ data for their supply chains with their preferred Recognised Assessment Body and will not need to set up an arrangement with every Recognised Assessment Body.
- The Common Assessment Standard **reflects the latest industry requirements**.
 - The Common Assessment Standard provides a consistent, fit-for-purpose assurance of quality in the supply chain.
 - The questions are based on existing good practice and are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect the latest legislation and industry requirements.

Supporting the Common Assessment Standard

Everyone has a role to play in making the Common Assessment Standard a success.

- **Contractors** – should start specifying the Common Assessment Standard as soon as they can, and communicate to their supply chains that they are transitioning to the Common Assessment Standard and what they need to do – see [template letter](#) below
- **Supply chain companies** – should achieve and maintain certification to the Common Assessment Standard with a Recognised Assessment Body
- **Clients** – should adopt the Common Assessment Standard for any direct procurement and recommend their tier one contractors use it for assessing their supply chains
- **Trade Associations** – should promote the Common Assessment Standard as a way of reducing duplication and cost – see [advert](#) for use in publications
- **Government** – should promote the use of the Common Assessment Standard by central Government departments and wider public sector bodies in accordance with [PPN 03/24](#)
- **Recognised Assessment Bodies** – should promote the Common Assessment Standard to their clients and suppliers.

Current Recognised Assessment Bodies

A list of Recognised Assessment Bodies and their products aligned to the Common Assessment Standard can be found on the [Build UK website](#).

Tweet Sheet

#Prequalification used to be complex and repetitive and cost #construction up to £1bn a year, but the #CommonAssessmentStandard is reducing costs and simplifying the process www.BuildUK.org/pre-qualification

.@BuildUK has developed an industry-wide system for #prequalification. The #CommonAssessment Standard is simpler and will boost productivity of the sector #TransformingConstruction

The #CommonAssessmentStandard has been developed by industry for industry, and is supported by Government and @ConstructionCLC - www.BuildUK.org/pre-qualification

A growing list of organisations are specifying the #CommonAssessmentStandard for their supply chains. Make sure your certification is up to date with one of the Recognised Assessment Bodies - www.builduk.org/RecognisedAssessmentBodies

FAQs

Will all Build UK members be adopting the Common Assessment Standard?

- We have support from across our membership and the wider industry, as well as Government and the Construction Leadership Council, to roll out the industry-wide system
- A [growing list](#) of Build UK Contractor and Client members have already adopted the Common Assessment Standard for their PQ requirements and others are working towards it
- Our Trade Association members are also starting to accept the Common Assessment Standard as part of their membership audit process, further reducing duplication across the industry
- Whilst Build UK cannot mandate use of the Common Assessment Standard, we believe that the efficiencies realised by its implementation will provide a good incentive for the whole supply chain to roll it out in time

What does it cost to obtain the Common Assessment Standard?

- Each Recognised Assessment Body has its own fee structure and the supply chain has a choice of which one to use
- The cost of assessment may be slightly higher under the Common Assessment Standard, but companies will see an overall cost saving because they will incur that cost only once per year
- Details of what it costs to obtain the Common Assessment Standard are available from each of the [Recognised Assessment Bodies](#)

Is the Common Assessment Standard achievable for SMEs and micro-businesses?

- Yes, and having a single standard which reduces duplication will be of huge benefit to smaller companies
- The assessment standards for certain questions have been revised for use with companies that employ less than 10 people **and** have a turnover below £1.8 million or balance sheet total less than £1.8 million
- The Common Assessment Standard is based on existing PQQs so will be familiar and reflect what companies already have to do to win work
- SMEs often report that an external assessment of their business helps them keep up to date and improve

Do companies have to obtain two levels of certification – both the desktop and the site-based?

- No, companies can choose either the desktop **or** the site-based level of certification based on what is most appropriate for their business. This will depend on a range of factors including trade, size and the requirements of the main contractors/clients that they work for

How does the Common Assessment Standard relate to Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP)?

- The Common Assessment Standard is aligned to SSIP. If a company already holds an SSIP certificate, then it will be exempt from having to answer the majority of questions within the health and safety section of the desktop audit for the Common Assessment Standard

How will you ensure that the Common Assessment Standard continues to meet the needs of the industry in the future?

- A Common Assessment Standard Review Group oversees the process of maintaining the Common Assessment Standard so that it remains fit for purpose, relevant and up to date, and version 3.2 was published on 1 July 2023

How does the data sharing solution work?

- Recognised Assessment Bodies [share verified data](#) in relation to 29 key questions in the Common Assessment Standard
- The information is updated in 'real time', and it will be shown where a company's certification has lapsed if they have not updated 'time critical' information such as insurances. No original documentation is shared
- Data is shared only if the company has achieved the Common Assessment Standard and provided written consent, ensuring GDPR compliance
- Contractors and clients are able to access the data with their preferred assessment body, regardless of whether that assessment body carried out the original audit, meaning they do not need an arrangement with every Recognised Assessment Body to access their supply chain's data

My client is unaware of the Common Assessment Standard; what can I do?

- You can refer your client to the [Build UK website](#) which provides an overview of the Common Assessment Standard, a link to the question set, and details of which organisations are using it
- If they have any further questions, they can contact pre-qualification@BuildUK.org

Template Letter From Contractors to Supply Chain

Dear Supply Chain Member

Introducing the Common Assessment Standard

We are delighted to be part of rolling out the industry-wide pre-qualification (PQ) system. PQ has been a major barrier to improved productivity in the construction sector for a long time, and Build UK has worked with a wide range of clients, contractors and supply chain companies to develop the **Common Assessment Standard**, an agreed set of questions and assessment standards, which will mean a more efficient PQ process for us all.

As a member of Build UK, we will be adopting the Common Assessment Standard and **requiring all our construction-related sub-contractors and suppliers to be certified to the standard.**

There are two levels to the Common Assessment Standard: desktop and site-based. We will require the **desktop level/site-based level** for **all suppliers/certain [high-risk] trades as follows: [insert list here].**

There are a number of [Recognised Assessment Bodies](#) that are able to certify companies against the Common Assessment Standard and you can get it from any one of them. An up to date list of Recognised Assessment Bodies can be found at www.builduk.org/RecognisedAssessmentBodies. **Whilst we will continue to use [Recognised Assessment Body] to provide PQ data for our internal supply chain management system, we will also now be able to accept the Common Assessment Standard from the other Recognised Assessment Bodies via the data sharing solution.**

Many of you will still hold a current pre-qualification which will continue to be recognised by us until it expires or you obtain the appropriate Common Assessment Standard certification. There is a cost to obtain the Common Assessment Standard, which will be dependent on the level of certification and size of your organisation.

If you already hold the appropriate Common Assessment Standard certification, then no further action is required.

This is now a mandatory process for all current and new supply chain partners.

Further information on the Common Assessment Standard can be found at www.BuildUK.org/pre-qualification.

Thank you for your continued support, and **If you have any concerns or questions, please contact [insert name and/or email address]/the members of our team with whom you regularly work.**

Yours sincerely