

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Common Assessment Standard?

- The [Common Assessment Standard](#), developed by Build UK, is the industry-recognised standard for the pre-qualification of suppliers in the construction sector. It comprises a question set and corresponding assessment standards for two levels of certification: desktop and site-based.

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 (CLC), 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](#).

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.

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.

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 does the data sharing solution work?

- The [data sharing solution](#) enables contractors and clients to obtain key PQ data from any Recognised Assessment Body, regardless of which one carried out the original audit. This means that they do not need an arrangement with every Recognised Assessment Body to access their supply chain's data and companies need to be certified by only one Recognised Assessment Body.
- 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.

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, comprised of representatives from across Build UK members and the wider industry, including Government and BSI, 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.

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.