

CSCS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Introduction to CSCS

What is CSCS?

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) is the organisation that owns the CSCS logo awarded to recognised card schemes within the UK construction industry, and it is also the owner and operator of the CSCS card scheme. The majority of contractors and clients require construction workers to hold a card carrying the CSCS logo before they are able to work on site.

CSCS is owned by Build UK, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association, the Federation of Master Builders, UNITE the Union and GMB Union and is made up of two separate businesses:

- 1) [CSCS Limited](#) is the owner and licensor of the CSCS logo and is responsible for ensuring that all card schemes that are a member of the CSCS Alliance comply with the [CLC recommendation on industry card schemes](#) and any other conditions of licence.
- 2) [CSCS Cards Limited](#) is the owner and operator of the CSCS card scheme, which is a member of the CSCS Alliance. CSCS Cards Limited, which has a range of [card types](#) covering [core construction occupations](#), has issued over 50% of the total number of cards carrying the CSCS logo currently in circulation.

What is the CSCS Alliance?

Card schemes that comply with the [CLC recommendation on industry card schemes](#) can apply to CSCS Limited to carry the CSCS logo and become a member of the [CSCS Alliance](#). To ensure consistency, card schemes that are a member of the CSCS Alliance must agree to conditions of licence.

Across all CSCS Alliance members, there are currently over two million cards carrying the CSCS logo. CSCS Cards Limited is the largest member with the other CSCS Alliance members covering specialist occupations.

What is the purpose of a card carrying the CSCS logo?

For a construction worker, holding a card carrying the CSCS logo provides assurance that they have achieved the appropriate qualifications and any additional specified training required for their occupation.

For clients and contractors, requiring construction workers to hold a card carrying the CSCS logo before they are allowed on site is part of ensuring competence and removes the administrative burden of checking qualification and training certificates. It also reduces the risk of card fraud.

Obtaining a Card

How does an individual obtain a card carrying the CSCS logo?

In order to obtain a card carrying the CSCS logo from one of the CSCS Alliance members, individuals need to:

- Achieve, or be in the process of achieving, the relevant nationally-recognised qualification, and any additional specified training that is required (there are a small number of exceptions to this including the Provisional card issued by CSCS Cards Limited); and
- Achieve a separate health and safety element that meets the current standard within the required timeframe (this is usually the relevant [Health, Safety and Environment \(HS&E\) Test](#)).

Applicants should always apply directly to the relevant [CSCS Alliance member](#), rather than through a third-party organisation, to ensure they obtain the right card and pay the correct fee.

How much do cards carrying the CSCS logo cost?

Each CSCS Alliance member sets the costs of their cards independently.

Cards provided by CSCS Cards Limited cost £36, except for the free Apprentice card.

Can international workers obtain a card carrying the CSCS logo?

International workers who work on UK construction sites and hold international qualifications can apply to [ECCTIS](#) to check whether the qualification maps to a UK equivalent. If it does, the worker will be able to apply for a card carrying the CSCS logo from [specified CSCS Alliance members](#).

Where international workers are ineligible for a card carrying the CSCS, access to site should be pre-agreed by the Principal Contractor, and a separate risk assessment and additional supervision for their activity may be required.

Access to Site

Does everyone attending a construction site need to hold a card carrying the CSCS logo?

Cards carrying the CSCS logo are required only by those undertaking recognised construction occupations. Cards are **not** issued for [non-construction occupations](#), those visiting sites or those undertaking informal work experience.

Individuals not undertaking a construction occupation may still be required to provide evidence that they can carry out their task safely, and a separate risk assessment and additional supervision may be required. It is the responsibility of the Principal Contractor to ensure that these individuals are inducted and appropriately escorted so that they can carry out their work on site safely.

Does holding a card carrying the CSCS logo guarantee entry to site?

Holding a card carrying the CSCS logo does not guarantee anyone the right of entry to a site. Construction workers need to hold the right card for their occupation to work on site, and the Principal Contractor ultimately has responsibility for who is able to access a site.

[CSCS Smart Check](#) should be used by clients and contractors to verify that individuals hold the right card for the occupation they are undertaking.

Standards

Who sets the qualification and training standards for cards carrying the CSCS logo?

Neither of CSCS's two businesses are involved in the development of standards and qualifications or the delivery of training.

In line with the [CLC recommendation on industry card schemes](#), each recognised construction occupation has a Sector Skills Body (SSB) and Sector Representative Organisation (SRO) that agree the standards and content of qualifications and training required for each card carrying the CSCS logo.

What is the health and safety element required to obtain a card carrying the CSCS logo?

The [Health, Safety and Environment \(HS&E\) Test](#), which is owned and operated by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), is required to obtain the majority of cards from CSCS Cards Limited and a number of other CSCS Alliance members. There are three types of the HS&E Test – Operatives, Specialists, and Managers and Professionals – depending on the occupation and level of card.

The [Health and Safety Certification](#) course, which is managed by the Construction Industry Council (CIC), is accepted by some CSCS Alliance members, including CSCS Cards Limited for certain cards.

CSCS Alliance members that require or accept an alternative health and safety element are wholly responsible for the content.

There is a separate cost for the health and safety element and neither of the CSCS businesses receive income from this.

CSCS and Competence

What is competence?

As required under the new [Building Safety Regime](#), all individuals undertaking a recognised construction occupation must be competent, which means having the appropriate Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Behaviours (SKEB) for their occupation. Clients and contractors are responsible for ensuring that individuals carrying out work on their behalf are competent.

Does holding a card carrying the CSCS logo provide evidence of competence?

Where a construction worker holds the right card for their occupation, it provides assurance that they have achieved the recognised qualification, and any additional specified training required for that occupation, which demonstrates the Skills and Knowledge elements of competence.

Will there be any changes to CSCS in response to the enhanced requirement for competence?

All recognised construction occupations will be expected to have a 'Route to Competence' to obtain and renew a card. Once agreed by the Sector Skills Body (SSB) and Sector Representative Organisation (SRO) for an occupation, cards carrying the CSCS logo will only be issued when the agreed qualifications, training, and health and safety element have been evidenced.