

CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE QUALIFICATION OF WELDERS AND WELDING OPERATORS

Foreword

This certification scheme for personnel provides for the examination and certification of individuals seeking to demonstrate their knowledge and competence as a welder or welding operator.

This certification scheme is managed by Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd, which operates a quality management system in accordance with BS EN ISO /IEC 17024:2012. The scheme is designed to compliment the requirements of the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder or his/her employer.

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd understands and values the importance of independence and impartiality when carrying out its certification activities in accordance with its BS EN ISO /IEC 17024:2012 quality managements system.

Scope

This certification scheme is for personnel seeking to demonstrate their knowledge and competence as a welder or welding operator. The extent of the knowledge and competence requirements will be dependent on the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder or the manufacturer.

Typical welder and welding operator testing and certification standards include:

BS EN ISO 9606 -1	Qualification testing of welders. Fusion welding. Steels
BS EN ISO 9606-2	Qualification testing of welders. Fusion welding. Aluminium and its alloys
BS 4872	Specification for approval testing of welders when procedure approval is not required. Steel.
ASME	Boiler and pressure vessel code. Section IX. Welding and brazing qualifications.
AWS D1.1	Structural welding code - steel
BSEN ISO 17660-1	Welding of reinforcing steel. Non-load bearing welded joints.
BSEN ISO 17660-2	Welding of reinforcing steel. Non-load bearing welded joints.
BS EN ISO 14732	Welding personnel – Qualification testing of welding operators and weld setters for mechanized and automatic welding of metallic materials.

This list is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Other appropriate standards may be used in conjunction with this certification scheme for the certification as a welder or welding operator, and therefore this certification scheme is also not exhaustive in the information it contains.

The particular requirements for qualification testing are given in the appropriate standards, such as those provided as examples above.

Responsibilities

It is the manufacturer's, or welder or welding operator's if self-employed, responsibility to inform Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd of the appropriate testing standard, which is applicable to their type of work.

Further responsibility lies with the manufacturer, or welder or welding operator's if self-employed, to ensure that the recognition and acceptance of qualification certificates issued by Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd are appropriate for their requirements. For example, some standards or specifications state that the examiner and/or examining body must be acceptable to the contracting parties, and/or hold particular accreditations.

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd acts as the examining body and certifying body. It therefore has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the qualification tests, the appropriate testing, and certification are performed and are correct, in accordance to the chosen testing standard and its own internal procedures.

Pertinent information from document SWTS-REC-QMS-012-E to be publicly available without request.

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A committee consisting of members who fairly represent the stakeholders of the welding profession was established to review this scheme. No one committee member has predominating control or interest.

The committee also has the authority to ensure that this scheme is administered fairly, impartially, and without bias or prejudice. This also includes deciding on the outcome of any complaints or appeals that have not been satisfactorily resolved between Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd, and a candidate.

Prerequisites

The welder or welding operator (and their employer if not self-employed) must satisfy themselves that the individual is deemed to have the required competency, knowledge, and physical ability prior to commencing with any test.

All tests taken at Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd shall be performed in accordance with a qualified welding procedure specification (WPS), or if one is not available, then a preliminary WPS. The supply or production of a pWPS for use during the welder certification test lies solely with the welder, or their employer.

If the welder or welding operators' capabilities are in doubt, then training or practice time should be considered prior to taking any tests.

Please note, that if training or practice time is required then this can be taken at any provider of the welder's or welding operator's choice (or his/her employer if not self-employed). Any training or practice offered at Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd is not a prerequisite. Furthermore, any training or practice offered at Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd will not have a bearing on the result of any welder or welding operator tests and does not imply as such.

Required competence

The required competence will be dependent on the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder, welding operator, or the manufacturer.

In addition to the actual process of welding, personnel are also expected to be competent and knowledgeable in following verbal and written instructions, their own health and safety and others around them, setting up of equipment, and in the use of ancillary equipment such as grinders.

Where job knowledge is to be tested (mandatory for welding operators) the welder or welding operator is also expected to have the required knowledge regarding health and safety, welding consumables, parent materials, welding equipment, welder certification, and welding imperfections. The required job knowledge will be dependent on the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder, welding operator, or the manufacturer, the welding process, and the type of parent material.

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd's welding inspectors will discuss the requirements of the applicable test standard, prior to commencement of the test.

Abilities

The required ability (aside from the welding itself) will be dependent on the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder, welding operator, or the manufacturer. Factors to be considered may include quality of vision, and fitness i.e. the ability to weld in varying positions.

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd's welding inspectors will discuss the requirements of the applicable test standard, prior to commencement of the test.

Criteria for initial certification

All welders or welding operators must provide photographic identification at the time of the examination, unless they are already known by the examiner from a previous test.

The criteria for initial certification will be dependent on the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test, as chosen by the welder, welding operator, or the manufacturer.

The chosen assessment method(s) and acceptance criteria (pass or fail) are also established by the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test chosen by the welder, welding operator, or the manufacturer.

Pass or fail decisions are made solely against the acceptance criteria established by the specific standard of welder or welding operator qualification test selected by the welder or his/her employer, and not on the opinion of the examiner or any other Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd employee.

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd's welding inspectors will discuss the requirements of the applicable test standard, prior to commencement of the test.

Criteria for suspending or withdrawing certification

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd will suspend or withdraw any certificates from its register as a result of any of the following:

- Any unpaid fees.
- If any proven evidence is found that cheating occurred during the original test.
- If any attempts are made to duplicate and then edit any certificates.

For any of the above, Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd will also refuse to confirm certification status upon enquires from any other interested parties.

Employers or the certified person themselves have the following responsibilities:

- Not to continue to use the certificate past its expiry date.
- Not to continue to use the certificate if it has been suspended or withdrawn.
- Not to use the certificate if prolonged absence from the profession (due to illness, change of employment, or leave) has occurred. Generally, this is in excess of 6 months.
- Not to continue to use the certificate if capabilities such as vision and fitness have become impaired.

Application process

Upon application, Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd will perform a tender review to ascertain the requirements of certification. On completion and agreement of the tender review, a work instruction sheet (the application form) shall be sent to the applicant's manufacturer (or welder or welding operator if self-employed).

The work instruction sheet shall direct the applicant to the location of the particulars of this certification scheme on the company's website. Fees or a quotation shall have been sent separately prior to this work instruction sheet, or will accompany it at the time.

The work instruction sheet shall be completed and returned as the application form. It shall contain:

- Each applicants' name, date of birth, place of birth, and chosen method of identification (initials or welder i.d).
- Identification of the chosen test standard.

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- Signed agreement to abide by this certification scheme's rules.
- Special instructions.
- Agreement on the test date and time.

When it is not possible for the welder(s) to sign the work instruction sheet due to being unavailable at the time of completion of the form, then the signatures will be captured on the E2 and/or E4 at the time that of witnessing.

Code of conduct

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd expects the following from its welder or welding operator candidates:

- Aggression or threatening behaviour towards an examiner will not be tolerated. Anyone displaying this type of attitude will have his/her test terminated. Any fees paid will not be refunded.
- Any attempts to cheat during a test or to mislead the examiner will not be tolerated. This also includes the removal of confidential test material for the purposes of copying or sharing with others. If anyone is found to be cheating, then his/her test will be terminated, and any fees paid will not be refunded.
- Candidates are expected to be mindful of their own health and safety and others around them, and obey any instructions relating to health and safety given by the examiner.

Complaints or appeals

Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd have a comprehensive complaints and appeals procedure.

Should you have a complaint about the level of service received, or wish to appeal against any certification result, then please contact the Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd office either in person, by telephone, letter, or email.

Upon receipt of the complaint or appeal, the Operations or HSEQ Manager shall begin the complaints and appeals process, and we will make contact with you immediately after completing our initial investigation.

The complainant or appellant shall be kept informed on the progress of the complaint or appeal, and the outcome upon the completion of our full investigation.

Furthermore, if you are unsatisfied with Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd's handling of your complaint or appeal, then you are able to request an independent decision from the scheme committee. Details of your complaint or appeal should be sent to scheme-committee@outlook.com. Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd do not have access to this email account. All decisions made by the scheme committee will be respected by Structural and Weld Testing Services Ltd, and are considered to be final.

Please be assured that any investigations performed by the company or the committee, will not result in any loss of impartiality or discriminatory actions towards its customers.