



The International Marine
Contractors Association

Guidance on Assessor Training



The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) is the international trade association representing offshore, marine and underwater engineering companies.

IMCA promotes improvements in quality, health, safety, environmental and technical standards through the publication of information notes, codes of practice and by other appropriate means.

Members are self-regulating through the adoption of IMCA guidelines as appropriate. They commit to act as responsible members by following relevant guidelines and being willing to be audited against compliance with them by their clients.

There are two core activities that relate to all members:

- ◆ Safety, Environment & Legislation
- ◆ Training, Certification & Personnel Competence

The Association is organised through four distinct divisions, each covering a specific area of members' interests: Diving, Marine, Offshore Survey, Remote Systems & ROV.

There are also four regional sections which facilitate work on issues affecting members in their local geographic area – Americas Deepwater, Asia-Pacific, Europe & Africa and Middle East & India.

IMCA C 007

The IMCA framework of guidance on competence assurance and assessment (*formerly described as the IMCA Competence Assurance & Assessment Scheme*) aims to assist the Association's contractor members in ensuring and demonstrating the competence of their safety-critical personnel.

Under the guidance, each company should have internal auditing arrangements in place to ensure that all assessors apply the criteria in a consistent and appropriate manner.

This document aims to provide a checklist of the topics to be considered for inclusion in an assessor training programme and the appropriate auditing arrangements for such programmes.

www.imca-int.com/competence

The information contained herein is given for guidance only and endeavours to reflect best industry practice. For the avoidance of doubt no legal liability shall attach to any guidance and/or recommendation and/or statement herein contained.

Guidance on Assessor Training

IMCA C 007 – December 2000

1	Background	1
2	Training for Assessors.....	2
2.1	Module 1 – Plan an Assessment	2
2.2	Module 2 – Conduct an Assessment.....	2
2.3	Module 3 – Make Assessment Decision and Give Feedback.....	3
3	Auditing of Training Courses	3

I Background

The IMCA Competence Assurance & Assessment Scheme, launched in January 1999, is designed to facilitate improved safety in the offshore industry by providing a framework for IMCA's marine contractor members to assess and demonstrate to others the competence of their safety-critical personnel.

A competent workforce is more productive, operating with reduced risk, shorter downtime and fewer injuries. At the same time, there is need for a rigorous assessment procedure to be in place against which the workforces skills, forethought and judgement can be measured.

As people receive training, broaden their skill base, gain experience or attain more knowledge their ability to demonstrate greater competence will be reviewed and assessed against specific criteria.

As part of the IMCA Competence Assurance & Assessment Scheme, each company should have internal auditing arrangements in place to ensure that all assessors apply the criteria in a consistent and appropriate manner.

The IMCA Competence Assurance & Assessment Scheme employs a range of criteria including academic and vocational qualifications, demonstrable experience, technical skills and appropriate training.

The IMCA Competence Assessment & Assurance Scheme requires that all safety-critical personnel demonstrate that they have the required competencies for their specific job function as set out in the scheme. This is usually done by work place assessors. To carry out assessments successfully both the person being assessed and the assessor need to be fully familiar with the assessment process.

The following points are normally considered to be good practice in conducting assessments:

- ◆ The assessor should provide a list showing both the elements of competence being assessed and the criteria against which they are to be assessed;
- ◆ The person being assessed should be able to demonstrate on a number of separate occasions that he/she can satisfactorily perform the task being assessed;
- ◆ The person being assessed should be observed demonstrating the attainment of the competence by the assessor;
- ◆ The assessor should gather and record evidence (e.g. noting date and time observing candidate performing task);
- ◆ The person being assessed should receive prompt, accurate and constructive feedback on any assessment conducted.

Assessors should be competent to carry out assessments of the personnel being assessed. The assessor should be a supervisor or manager with the necessary knowledge and experience to be able to judge competence being assessed, and should also have been provided with suitable training on assessment.

2 Training for Assessors

IMCA does not approve or formally recognise any particular assessor training course or programme. The type of training given to an assessor is for each IMCA member to determine. However set out below, in a modular form, are aspects which would normally be included in an assessor training programme. It is not intended to be used as a training document, rather it provides a checklist on topics the contractor should consider for inclusion in an assessor training programme which should be adapted for the workforce and the assessments to be undertaken. We have separated the aspects out under three different headings – individual companies should tailor their training programmes to meet their specific needs.

The modules covered are:

- ◆ Planning an assessment;
- ◆ Conducting the assessment;
- ◆ Making the decision and giving feedback.

2.1 Module 1 – Plan an Assessment

This module would cover the requirements for planning for assessment. The module should detail how to establish appropriate evidence needs, to select the appropriate assessment methods and for developing the assessment tools for the specific assessment being conducted.

The module should cover:

- ◆ Identification of appropriate criteria against which to judge performance;
- ◆ Identification of opportunities for the collection of evidence relevant to the competence to be assessed;
- ◆ Identification of sources of both direct and indirect evidence;
- ◆ Identification of sources of evidence which are cost-effective in terms of time and resources;
- ◆ Identification of sources of evidence to ensure fair and reliable assessment;
- ◆ Planning the assessment – competence to be assessed, when assessment will take place, how it will occur, assessment methods to be used, criteria for decision – to be discussed and agreed between the candidate, assessor and others who may be affected.

2.2 Module 2 – Conduct an Assessment

The purpose of this module is to train participants to conduct an assessment appropriate to the competence being assessed. The module should cover how to organise the assessment, the differences in assessing performance and assessing knowledge and appropriate methods of gathering and recording evidence.

Topics to be covered in this module:

- ◆ Evidence to be appropriate to demonstrate that the candidate can do the job properly;
- ◆ Whether the candidate needs to demonstrate competence in a variety of situations/number of occasions;
- ◆ The need to accurately assess the candidate against performance criteria;
- ◆ Assessment of performance – a mixture of methods such as observing performance, looking at outcomes or work recently completed;
- ◆ Assessment of knowledge should be treated separately from assessment of performance;
- ◆ The candidate should be encouraged to identify and present relevant evidence of performance from appropriate sources;
- ◆ Observing performance - the assessor should be as unobtrusive as practicable whilst observing the candidate;
- ◆ In collecting and judging knowledge, questions should be selected to provide sufficient evidence to infer competent performance;
- ◆ Questions should be clear and not lead the candidate;
- ◆ Any inconsistencies in available evidence should be clarified and resolved promptly;
- ◆ Legible and accurate records should be kept for recording all evidence.

2.3 Module 3 – Make Assessment Decision and Give Feedback

The purpose of this module is to train participants to be able to reach an assessment decision, to report on the assessment and provide feedback to the person being assessed.

Topics to be covered in this module:

- ◆ The assessment decision should be based on all relevant evidence available;
- ◆ Available evidence – is it reliable and valid, consistent and sufficient?
- ◆ Making the decision – competent, not yet competent, insufficient evidence to decide;
- ◆ Where evidence is insufficient for a positive decision to be made, further sources of evidence should be sought;
- ◆ How to give clear and constructive feedback following each assessment decision;
- ◆ Candidate should be supported and encouraged to seek clarification and advice;
- ◆ Clear and legible records should be kept of the assessment decision.

3 Auditing of Training Courses

Some countries have developed recognised assessor schemes (e.g. in the UK the National Vocational Qualification NVQ D32/D33 (assessor/verifier award)). However where such a scheme is not available, it is envisaged that a suitable audit trail for assessor training would probably be necessary. This could be achieved as part of the external auditing arrangements already in place in-house. Such auditing programmes are involved with, for example, the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) 9000 or the International Safety Management Code (ISM).