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PCN DOCUMENT QS4

APPLICATION, ASSESSMENT AND REGISTRATION FEES

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ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- QS1 ISO 9001: 2008 (INTERPRETATION FOR NDT): GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISATIONS SEEKING BINDT QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION FOR THE PROVISION OF NON-DESTRUCTIVE TESTING SERVICES
- QS2 PROCEDURE FOR PCN ASSESSMENT AND REGISTRATION
- QS3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND CHECKLIST (confidential to assessors)

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REFERENCES

1. BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management Systems requirements
2. EN 473: 2008 Non-destructive testing- Qualification and certification of NDT personnel- General principles.
3. PSL/35: Charges for PCN certification services.



The British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing is an accredited certification body offering personnel and quality management systems assessment and certification against criteria set out in international and European standards through the PCN Certification Scheme.



1. INTRODUCTION

This document represents a part of a comprehensive package which sets out the PCN requirements for assessment and registration of organisations seeking certification as complying with the provisions of BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 (reference 1) as interpreted in PCN document QS1 for providers of non-destructive evaluation services.

2. APPLICATION FEES

The application fee is given in PCN document PSL/35 and is non-refundable. It covers the initial review of the application, and a pre-assessment visit and report by a PCN appointed lead assessor.

When PCN receives your completed application, we will send you contract including a full quotation for assessment. If you wish to go ahead, receipt by us of the signed contract will initiate the assessment process. All material supplied by you, and observed by PCN appointed assessors during the assessment process, will be regarded as STRICTLY commercial-in-confidence.

PCN will then appoint a registered lead assessor to visit your premises on a mutually agreeable date, during which your quality system and technical and administration facilities will be reviewed. At this time, the PCN assessor will form an initial opinion as to the extent that the proposed quality system and organisation meet PCN requirements, and will advise on your readiness for initial assessment.

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT FEES

Our assessment fees are based on a fixed day rate which is given in PCN document PSL/35. Every company is unique in the services it provides, and in the manner in which it operates. The actual costs of assessment will therefore vary from company to company according to the scope of certification sought and the size and complexity of the company. This document will help you understand the way that assessment fees are calculated and enable you to estimate the likely cost of gaining company certification and registration.

4. REGISTERED COMPANIES' FEES

Companies already holding PCN certification are charged at the same assessor day rate, again given in PCN document PSL/35. This also applies to annual surveillance, extension to certificated scope and two yearly re-assessment. It should be noted that existing registration will not preclude PCN from assessing any or all of those parts of the organisation which interface with the NDE department, or which may have an effect upon the compliance of the NDE department with the BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 standard.

5. OTHER EXPENSES

Your quotation may include time needed for travelling, especially if site visits are required. All fees are quoted exclusive of travel costs and expenses, which are charged at actual cost. Fees and expenses are subject to VAT.

In the event that follow-up assessment is required to determine satisfactory clearance of non-compliances raised earlier, an additional sum, again calculated at the appropriate day rate, will be payable. Your initial assessment quotation and contract will not include any allowance for follow-up assessments.

A cancellation fee will be incurred if scheduled visits are cancelled or postponed by the client. Conditions for these fees are detailed in the contract.

6. PAYMENT OF FEES

The PCN fee structure is as simple as possible. The application fee is payable upon submission of the application and, upon completion of the assessment, the client is invoiced for the quoted assessment fees (and no more) together with expenses incurred (at cost). The certificate of registration is issued upon payment of this invoice. Surveillance, extension to scope, follow-up assessments, and two yearly re-assessments are invoiced immediately following such visits.

Other than the application fee, invoices are not submitted until after the work has been done and will only be charged at the rates agreed in the contract.

7. CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE

An organisation may apply for PCN certification to cover the whole or part of its NDE activities, providing it has available suitable equipment and facilities. A clear statement of the scope of the certification requested must be made on the application form.

The following certification is available:

Certification of NDE Laboratory Services

The organisation provides an NDE service at a permanent test house or laboratory.

Certification of NDE Site Services

The organisation provides a permanent or extended (in excess of one calendar month) site NDE service.

Certification for NDE Level 3 Services

The organisation offers the services of level 3 personnel certificated in accordance with a recognised standard (e.g. reference 2). Level 3 services can include any or all of the following:

- assuming full responsibility for a NDE facility and staff;
- establishing and/or validating NDE instructions or procedures;
- interpreting codes, standards, specifications and procedures and designating particular NDE methods, techniques and procedures to be used;
- validation of NDE procedures and techniques associated with in-service inspection of plant and machinery;
- training, examining or supervision of NDE personnel.

The organisation's registration certificate will indicate for which industry sectors and NDT methods such level 3 services are available.

8. CALCULATING THE COST OF ASSESSMENT

Two factors affect the likely cost of assessment and certification:

- Size of the organisation (the size of the company is reflected in the number of employees, except where shift work is involved - and this is taken into account).
- Scope of certification sought (if site work is involved, PCN will visit one or more site locations during its assessment).

The figures in table 1 are the minimum times which will be necessary for an assessment of organisations of the size given in the table. However, these times are for guidance only, and a more accurate estimation of time required on assessment will be reflected in the quotation and contract prepared by PCN. This will accurately reflect the assessment needs of your company. This should, however, be broadly within the bands indicated in the table, where the scope of certification sought has been taken into account.

Table 1 Number of employees	Assessor man/days			
	Lab	Site	Both	Level 3
1 - 20	3	3	4	1
21 - 100	3	4	5	n/a
101 - 500	4	5	7	n/a

In general, it will be necessary to visit the company headquarters or laboratory (as well as at least one site, where applicable) during the assessment. Again, this will be determined during the initial application phase, and the quotation will reflect the visits required.

Time on assessment for annual surveillance will, in general, be only 50% to 75% of that required for full initial assessment or two year re-assessment. The annual surveillance will only come into effect if it is deemed that the audited systems aren't to the required standard

9. THE BENEFITS OF QMS CERTIFICATION

Gaining Quality Management System (QMS) certification is not easy, but the rewards can be great. A good QMS can reduce costs incurred through rework, supplier control, staff turnover and lack of effective procedures. A good QMS will improve communication and motivation within your company.

Certification of your QMS inspires the confidence of your clients and makes them feel secure in dealing with you. This is especially the case where they themselves operate in accordance with the criteria of the international standard.

You will also find that your products and services are more widely and readily accepted without audit by Regulatory Bodies and Quality Assurance Authorities, and your company will be included on published lists of approved tenderers and suppliers.

However, it can be daunting when setting out to design and implement a quality system, especially if you have to start with a blank sheet of paper, and it is not unreasonable to question the value of such an exercise. If you would like to discuss the cost of PCN certification of Quality Management Systems, assessments, registration, or any other aspect of PCN activities, we would be pleased to invite you to visit our offices in Northampton.