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## **BINDT COVID-19 – Guidance and FAQs for PCN holders**

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### **Proposed Eyesight Guidance – Covid-19**

The Institute has received a number of requests seeking further guidance for those vision certificates that are about to expire and cannot be renewed due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and the closure of many local opticians who would have provided vision acuity and colour perception testing.

As we are all aware, the current requirements listed within the International Standard for the Personal Certification of NDT Personnel – ISO 9712:2012 require the candidate to provide documentary evidence of satisfactory vision in accordance with the following requirements:

1. The candidate shall have near vision acuity to permit the reading of a minimum of Times Roman N4.5 or equivalent letters (having a height of 1.6 mm) at not less than 30 cm with one or both eyes, either corrected or uncorrected;
2. The candidate shall have colour vision sufficient for the candidate to distinguish and differentiate contrast between colours and shades of grey used in the NDT method concerned, as specified by the employer.

The standard goes further and states that the certification body may consider replacing the requirements in 1) above by compliance with an appropriate alternative and that, subsequent to certification, the tests of near vision acuity shall be carried out annually and verified by the employer.

For clarification, NDT inspections should not be performed on an employer's product where vision testing certification has expired; it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure the employee has suitable vision for the purposes of carrying out their roles appropriate for the NDT inspection method in use. In order to facilitate continued vision testing certification for employers during this unprecedented lockdown period, PCN would like to draw your attention to the following information and documents which may be of use within an employer's quality system to provide a means of ensuring the continued vision acuity for employees.



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.

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PCN guidance documents PSL44 [www.bindt.org/downloads/PSL44.pdf](http://www.bindt.org/downloads/PSL44.pdf) and PSL44A <https://www.bindt.org/admin/Downloads/PSL44A.pdf> , which may be of assistance, in particular the following statement contained within PSL 44:

*“BINDT accepts that a nominated official\* of an Authorised Qualifying Body, a PCN Level 3 certificate holder or other medical professional, having documented proof of satisfactory training in the administration of the test, and is medically recognised as competent to conduct such tests for candidates and holders of PCN certification.*

*\*nominated officials must provide proof of appropriate training upon request by BINDT”.*

Where you, the employer, have appointed a nominated official within your organisation to carry out vision testing then this clause may answer your question with regard to local opticians being currently closed.

Also included attached is the training pack currently in use by the United Kingdom National Aerospace NDT Board (UK NANDT B); please see NAndtb25.ppt, which provides training guidelines for the administration of the Tumbling E eyesight test that is accepted by BINDT as providing evidence of near vision acuity and we believe a suitable alternative to 1) above.

- The training pack for administration of the tumbling E vision acuity test can be found and downloaded from the following webpage:  
<https://www.bindt.org/NANDTB/UK-NANDTB-Documents/>
- Where authorised to do so by the employer and as documented in your quality system, a Tumbling E test may be generated at the following webpage: <http://www.eminspection.co.uk/visiontests/>

For the purposes of confirming colour vision perception, then the documents PSL44 and PSL44A provide details of where Ishihara colour pallets may be obtained. All candidates and holders of PCN certification will be required to have had colour perception assessed by the Ishihara 24 plate test. For VT and CRT the candidate is usually required to undergo both the Ishihara and Grey scale tests, however for Film RT and Film RI the grey scale may be sufficient without the need for the Ishihara plate test; this shall be confirmed by the employer. The test is required every five years.

In the event that a colour perception deficiency, indicated by misreading any of the first 17 plates, is detected during the Ishihara test, a further 'trade test' is to be carried out by the employer to ascertain whether the detected colour perception deficiency affects the individual's ability to perform the NDT for which he/she is certificated. This trade test is to be documented and the record of the test made available to BINDT upon request.

Where authorised within your quality system, colour perception vision tests may also be obtained online; these may be suitable and sufficient to meet your company's written requirements. Where not suitable then:

*“Laminated hand-held vision test charts are available from a number of suppliers, including the Institute of Optometry”:* <http://www.ioosales.co.uk/html/practice/eye06B.html>

It is hoped that the information provided will allow you, the employer, to confirm your employees' vision acuity by making use of the information contained herein for near vision acuity.

## FAQs following publication of the temporary extension policy

**NOTE: PCN holders and candidates are encouraged to speak with their AQB for further information on examination/training bookings.**

Question	Answer
Q1.	In respect to the training and examinations, has BINDT put a plan in place for inspectors that have finished their training but cannot currently sit examination?
	<p>If the candidate is in receipt of a training certificate, they can arrange to sit the examination as soon as possible once the AQBs re-open.</p> <p>The candidate should contact their training provider as refresher training may be required. Please note that there may be a high demand for examinations at this time. AQBs will be giving priority to those who have a cancelled booking and essential workers.</p>
Q2.	I have just checked and there has been no extension to my PCN Level certificate.
	<p>The extensions are automatic, there is no physical paper extension, i.e. we will not be reissuing current certification.</p> <p>We are still accepting renewal applications for those PCN holders that are eligible for renewal/recertification via the paperwork option.</p>
Q3.	My certificate is due to expire within the 6-month extension period and is eligible for renewal by paperwork, but I'm struggling to get signatures. Can I still submit my renewal documentation after the extension period?
	<p>Level 1, 2 and 3 renewal applications and Level 3 recertification applications are still being processed, however, due to limited staff working remotely, the applications may take longer than usual to process. We strongly encourage any PCN holder that can revalidate using the paperwork method to do so as soon as possible to prevent further delay or gaps in certification, even if it is covered by the extension.</p> <p><b>The 6-week rule is currently not applied and BINDT is currently allowing renewals to be submitted for certificates that expire during the extension period.</b></p> <p><b>Example 1:</b> Certificate expires 1 July 2020, renewal application submitted during the extension period on/before 30 September 2020, then the certificate will run on from the original expiry date.</p> <p><b>Example 2:</b> Certificate expires 1 September 2020, renewal application submitted after 30 September 2020, then the certificate will have a gap and run from the date the application is deemed complete.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> incomplete evidence/information will result in a further delay in revalidation.</p>
Q4.	I had a booking with an AQB to sit my recertification exam but it was cancelled due to the lockdown. Will the AQB honour my original booking and fit me in as soon as possible?
	<p>The AQBs will be prioritising cancelled bookings and essential workers. You should contact your AQB to discuss availability.</p> <p>If your recertification exam cannot be arranged before the extension end date (30 September 2020), the AQB shall have to confirm this with PCN and no penalty shall be enforced.</p>

Q5.	My certificate is due to expire within the 6-month extension period. I would like the option to sit my recertification exam after 30 September 2020. Is this covered by the temporary policy?	The PCN holder shall apply to PCN via the PSL28 application as usual for a deferral and will be granted up to a full 12 months after expiry. The deferral does not extend the validity of the certificate.
Q6.	I was due to undertake a supplementary exam, which has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions. This means I will now be beyond the 6-month requirement for supplementary exams. It is estimated I will next be able to sit the exam at the end of May/beginning of June. Would it be possible to get an extension/exemption to the 6-month requirement due to these extenuating circumstances? My certification is not due to expire until after the 30 September extension date.	<p>In this instance we will waive the 6-month rule. Under this waiver, the PCN holder may sit the supplementary exam as long as it is taken before the expiry.</p> <p>In the event the supplementary exam is failed and the certificate expires before the retest takes place, then the PCN holder shall be required to revalidate their original certificate before attempting the supplementary retest.</p>
Q7.	I have a deferral letter from PCN that states the latest date I can sit my recertification exam is 1 May 2020. What will happen to my deferral status if the AQB's are closed and I cannot sit my exam?	<p>PCN holders with a current deferral in place that expires during the extension period may also be covered by the temporary extension.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> If a PCN holder is in receipt of a deferral/late letter with a latest date for recertification exam of 6 June 2020, this latest date may be covered by the extension policy as long as no recertification exam has already been attempted and failed and criteria set within the extension policy is followed.</p>

...Document will be continually updated.