ecs
electrotechnical certification scheme

ECS is the personnel certification scheme of choice and a leading smart technology system for the electrotechnical sector across the UK supporting over 175,000 valid card holders at any one time.

Working alongside other organisations the ECS reached significant milestones and contributed to key industry developments that will be vital to the advancement of the electrotechnical industry.

GOVERNANCE

All requirements for cards are developed and agreed by industry. The ECS Steering Committee is an independent body, comprising ECA and SELECT as employer associations, Unite the Union on behalf of workers, IET as a professional institution, Electrical Safety First as the industry safety charity, SSAIB on behalf of specialist sectors, and the Health and Safety Executive – review and agree the relevant sector proposals meet the necessary standards.

CROSS-INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

ECS works alongside more than 100 organisations across electrical, fire and security, digital, network infrastructure, building controls, and the wider electrotechnical sector to collectively raise standards. Some examples are shown here.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

CSCS Smart Check: One app to check millions of qualifications

The new CSCS Smart Check app launched on 1st April 2022, representing a historical and progressive step forward in building quality and safety. For the first time, all 2.1 million cards displaying the CSCS logo can be verified using a single app.

This major milestone project was only possible because of the leadership of the CSCS Alliance, chaired by JIB CEO Jay Parmar, and the CSCS Smart Check Delivery Group, chaired by Andy Reakes, JIB Director of Growth & Development and Chair of CSCS Smart Check Implementation Group, to bring together the 38 partner schemes for this shared vision of a simple to use, free to access system for checking all scheme cards across the UK.

> "*CSCS Smart Check is the biggest change to site entry processes since the introduction of CSCS more than 20 years ago, so to see it already make an impact across the industry is welcomed by all involved.*"
>
> **Andy Reakes,**
> JIB Director of Growth & Development and Chair of CSCS Smart Check Implementation Group

New qualifications recognised within the ECS

ECS works with a number of awarding organisations, leading employers, training providers and other stakeholders through a series of Industry Groups which develop standards and help to raise the bar. These groups work collaboratively to develop proposals and to promote better standards of training, qualifications, assessment, and competence which can then be verified by ECS and updated on the records of card holders.

Examples of new qualifications recognised in 2022 include:

- Open Awards Level 3 Award in Copper Datacoms Cable Installation and Testing
- Open Awards Level 3 Award in Fibre Optics Installation and Testing
- ETA Awards Electric Vehicle Charging Point Installation and Maintenance
- City & Guilds 2921 Electric Vehicle Charging Installations

Awarding organisations interested in being recognised within the scheme should contact **feedback@ecscard.org.uk** to find out more

SKILLS AND COMPETENCE

2,000 organisations now registered with ECS Check – enhanced visibility on supply chain competence

ECS Check which is free to access, is a digital system that allows main contractors and clients to verify the ECS card of electrical personnel working on projects. Available both through an online portal on a browser and as an app for auditing personnel on the gate or for spot checks, the system has been a game changer in combining the existing ECS digital network, with over 175,000 individuals registered UK wide and global recognition, and the suite of ECS portal programs for use by clients and contractors.
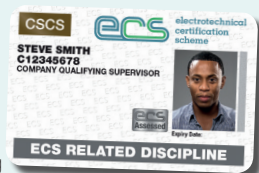
Using the recognised ECS card network to give real-time access has helped hundreds of companies demonstrate the competence of their workforce and supply chain in line with the Licence to Practise system for public contracts in Northern Ireland (Construction Procurement Toolkit, Annex C: Licence to Practise Initiative for Electrical Workers).

ECS CARDS

ECS now recognised for QS Applications

ECS has been referenced as part of the latest update to the Qualifications Guide for Qualified Supervisors with Electrotechnical Certification and Competent Persons Schemes, positioning the ECS gold card as a quick and simple method of evidencing the standards achieved by an Installation or Maintenance Electrician. This means your ECS Gold card can now be recognised as evidencing the qualification requirements for Qualifying Supervisor (QS) and Electrical Inspector status, further enhancing the value of your ECS card.

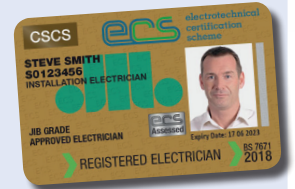> *Updated processes to allow ECS recognition for QS status is an important part of essential visibility of competence.*
>
> **Martyn Allen,**
> **Technical Director,**
> **Electrical Safety First**

This will provide an easy to reference system for recognition given the availability of ECS Check, CSCS Smart Check Apps and digital platforms for verifying ECS cards which all demonstrate the competency requirements which sit behind the Gold card. ECS systems can verify if an individual's qualifications are sufficient when qualification certificates are inaccessible or unavailable.

STANDARDS & SAFETY

ECS Registered Electrician status tops 40,000 gold card holders – more than two-thirds of qualified electricians

ECS Registered Electrician status was introduced in 2017 to raise the bar on new entrants obtaining their ECS gold card, and to recognise the need for undertaking of CPD.

This is expected to be further raised by the collaborative work of industry through Working Group 2: Installers, one of the 13 working groups established to consider competence following the disaster at Grenfell. Sector groups are now working on areas such as CPD, reassessment and ensuring that the competence of an individual can be verified through a digital card scheme such as ECS, a partner of CSCS, who collectively account for more than two-million workers in the built environment across all partners.

The number of ECS Registered Electricians is increasing every day as more experienced electricians sign up, as well as newly qualified electricians meeting this threshold as the new minimum standard, and now account for more than two-thirds of all qualified Electricians holding an ECS gold card.

STANDARDS & SAFETY

Building Safety Act comes into force

The Building Safety Act 2022 came into force in June 2022 as one of the main regulatory steps introduced to improve safety in the construction industry after the Grenfell disaster.

A new Building Safety Regulator – overseen by the Health & Safety Executive – will enforce a new, more stringent regulatory regime on the safety and performance of high-rise buildings in scope, in England.

As part of the Building Safety Regulator's role, an Industry Competence Committee will be formed to consider the outcomes of the 13 occupational groups established as part of the industry's response to Grenfell. Working Group 2 for Installers is one of these in which the JIB have been working to help raise the bar on occupational standards. WG2's objective is to develop a competence framework for those involved in the installation and maintenance of fire safety and other safety critical systems for higher-risk buildings. They produced these five recommendations:

- Accredited third party certification of the company
- Level 2 or 3 qualifications for individuals
- A card scheme such as CSCS Partner Schemes
- CPD refresher training and maintenance of individual skills
- Core knowledge of fire safety in buildings – training to be standardised and made mandatory

STANDARDS & SAFETY

Industry Group Updates to the ECS Electrical Safety Unit

The Construction Leadership Council introduced requirements in 2015 for CSCS partner schemes as part of the Government's Construction 2025 strategy. This includes a number of requirements that the ECS has to meet as a CSCS partner scheme including the need to have a qualification or assessment which meets minimum industry standards.

One of the changes for ECS as a result of this was the introduction of the ECS Electrical Safety Unit in 2018.

This Assessment was developed to provide a basic knowledge assessment for those dealing with electrotechnical systems and was brought in as a flexible and cost-effective way.

Concerned by a potential lack of clarity in the wording of some questions and lower than-expected pass rates, the JIB contacted Industry representatives to review the question banks and ensure the questions were correct, properly constructed, and clear for users.

The new question bank went live in late October 2022 and pass marks have improved with more positive feedback on the level and relevance of the questions. This process was to ensure the right level, scope and clarity of the questions. Thanks go to CEDIA, Institute of Sound, Communication and Visual Engineers

(ISCVE), Schneider Electric, Torpedo Factory Group, BGEN, J Brand Ltd, Navigator Productions and Learning Lounge for providing feedback and ongoing review for the question bank and support for the scheme.

> *As the body representing home technology professionals, CEDIA is pleased to have collaborated with the JIB on this important review. Together we have achieved a positive outcome that will help increase ECS card adoption in line with the Government's Construction Strategy to promote site safety and ensure that our members are suitably qualified and competent for the roles they are fulfilling on site.*

Matt Nimmons,
Managing Director, CEDIA EMEA,

ecs
electrotechnical
certification scheme
ELECTRICAL SAFETY UNIT

80% of applicants experience a smooth, trouble free process when applying for their ECS card

More than 1,000 checks of ECS cards per month since launch of CSCS Smart Check

38,279 CSCS Smart Check app downloads

56,789 Total cards scanned by CSCS Smart Check

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Remote Invigilation builds on success

More than 30,000 assessments were taken by Remote Invigilation in 2022. The online service allows delegates to take a formal ECS assessment without having to travel to a centre for an invigilator to monitor their behaviour in person while taking a test. The ECS assessment remote invigilation service provides a flexible and cost-effective way for delegates to be able to take assessments, and thousands of companies and individuals have already seen the benefit.

Remote Invigilation

> *The online system has proven to be a boon with both engineers and also the invigilators finding it easy and convenient.*

Shane Hallett
Safety and Environment Field Specialist,
Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric

More than 60,000 ECS applications are processed annually

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

> In this ever-changing sector, it gives the industry a lot of confidence that ECS regularly reviews the Fire, Emergency and Security Systems (FESS) requirements through the FESS Industry Group and is continually assessing the needs of the sector, working to improve the competence of the workforce and raising standards. From new apprentices into the industry to the time served experienced workers, ECS review encompasses them all.

Dr Tom Brookes CEng, Chair of Fire and Security Association

FSA
Fire & Security Association
A specialist group of the ECA

More than 30,000 assessments taken by Remote Invigilation in 2022