

Be Fair Framework -Requirements for Licensed Providers

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Introduction

The following guidance has been developed to provide information on how to become a Licensed Provider of the CITB Be Fair Framework (referred to as 'the Framework') and the policies, procedures and resources required. It is essential that the assessment of the Framework modules, learning outcomes and assessment criteria are valid, reliable and transparent and maintain the integrity of the Framework.

This document should be made available to Providers and Assessors and should be read in conjunction with the 'Be Fair Provider Agreement' and the 'About the Be Fair Framework' document which are contained in the Provider Pack.

Becoming a Licensed Provider

Organisations interested in employing, engaging or becoming assessor/s for the Framework should visit the Be Fair website to download and complete the 'Be Fair Framework Provider Initial Application'.

Completed applications should be posted to the following address:

CITB Be Fair Team Customer Operations Bircham Newton Kings Lynn PE31 6RH

The information contained within the application will be checked and a validation visit to your premises will be arranged to check you have the appropriate policies, procedures and resources in place to provide assessment services for the Framework.

The Licensing application process includes the registration of up to six assessors (additional assessors will incur a fee as detailed in *Appendix 1 - Fee Structure*). It is a requirement of the Framework that all assessors must complete the e-learning modules for assessment. Providers must ensure that all potential assessors complete these modules at the licensing stage before they begin assessing construction companies against the Framework.

Licensing decisions made by CITB will be final.

Once everything is in place and payment of the Licensing fee has been made, you will be granted a licence to practice.

Please refer to the diagram at Appendix 4 - Licensed Provider Process

Assessment and Accreditation Process

Companies interested in gaining accreditation of the Be Fair Framework will be directed to the CITB website to download the freely available resources.

The resources include modular content based on five core elements:

- 1. Commitment
- 2. Policies and Procedures
- 3. Employment
- 4. Site Environment
- 5. Supply Chain

Having evaluated the freely available resources, companies will then be encouraged to seek accreditation through a Licensed Provider.

Providers who have received a Licence to offer assessment for the Be Fair Framework will be included on a list of Be Fair providers, which will be displayed on the CITB Be Fair website.

Assessment Methodology & Online Document Management

Assessors will need to provide their own secure cloud solution, or a suitable alternative storage solution as agreed by CITB, for the purposes of evidence gathering, tracking, recording and assessing documentation from Companies seeking accreditation. The main process for Providers involves the assessment of documentary evidence (contracts, agreements, policies, procedures etc.) submitted by Companies. This is collated using the chosen storage solution in readiness for the assessor to assess. This 'desktop' assessment of this evidence usually takes place within 3 to 6 months of a company's initial registration and in advance of assessment interviews.

An Assessment Report template will be made available to Providers. This template must be used for assessment reporting purposes in order that assessments are recorded in common with one another.

During the next stage, the majority of evidence is gathered through one-to-one interviews with staff in the workplace. The assessor interviews a reliable sample of staff ranging from managers to operatives, and where appropriate, sub-contractors.

As a behavioural standard looking to verify the practices evidenced by companies, it is necessary to have a consistent sample across all areas and levels of the business. Suggested sampling rates are given in the table below. The Framework recognises the fragmented and sometimes isolated ways that employees might be required to work in the construction industry and the suggested sample rate maximises the opportunity to demonstrate consistency and clarity of practices throughout the whole of the organisation.

Size (Up to)	Minimum Interviews	
10	3	
50	10	
250	25	
500	30	
1000	40	
2000	60	
2000+	80	

Suggested sampling table:

It is important that a sufficient number of staff from across the organisation are interviewed to adequately reflect the diversity of the organisation and to ensure fair and reliable judgements against the Framework criteria are made. Where face-to-face interviews are inconvenient, communication technology may be used where companies have large numbers of staff located across a number of locations.

Assessors need to determine the number and range of people involved in delivering the organisation's aims and objectives to select a sample that is truly representative of the organisation as a whole. The final decision on who should be interviewed is the responsibility of the assessor or where appropriate, the lead or managing assessor, in line with the agreed policy set out by the internal quality adviser.

Once the scope of the organisation has been identified, an interview sample needs to be defined. The assessor will select the sample of people to be interviewed, ensuring that it will reflect the diversity of the company and will provide a true reflection of how the organisation currently performs against the Framework. The sample should be representative of the company across all levels and functions. The assessor should work with the company in planning the interview process and the internal quality adviser should be consulted where there is any doubt. Internal quality sampling should ensure rigorous and credible judgements are made and supported by a sound and robust evidence base.

Assessors should plan what questions to ask to establish whether Fairness, Inclusion & Respect (FIR) policies, procedures and practices are understood and being implemented throughout the organisation. The interviews must be confidential to ensure no individual's comments are identifiable within the feedback. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and there is no 'homework' to be done by staff or contractors before the interviews; interviewees should be asked about their experiences of working within the business. A number of interviews with key senior employees at both office and site locations should also focus specifically on the 5 modules of the CITB Be Fair Accreditation Framework. The people selected for these interviews (some modules may require several people) should be those deemed most appropriate to answer questions directly about one or more specific module.

Module 1 – Commitment Module 2 – Policies and Procedures Module 3 – Employment Practices Module 4 – Site Environment Module 5 – Supply Chain

The assessor should include questions for these interviewees that relate to the module that they have some responsibility for, as well as the questions they would answer as a member of staff. Examples of additional questions are: - "How do you make staff aware of the support that is available? How do you encourage people to apply for internal roles? Show how you and your supply chain monitor and review sub-contract clauses, Have you considered the benefits of a maternity / paternity policy; what was the outcome?"

Evidence collected during interviews remains confidential. Where appropriate, other evidence is collected using valid methods, such as observation of working practices and on-site records. Site visits should be concluded with a verbal summary of the visit to highlight the company's key strengths against the Framework and key areas for improvement. A written feedback report should be prepared providing a formative assessment record for the company.

When the company has finished providing evidence and all agreed on-site assessments are completed, the assessor submits a formal assessment report, highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement along with any assessment criteria not met.

If all the assessment criteria of the Framework are not met, the Provider/Assessor must advise the registered company where they have not met the criteria and what they need to do to achieve the Framework. The Provider/Assessor must make the company aware of options for further assessment; what will be involved and how much this will cost.

If all the assessment criteria of the Framework are met, the assessor recommends Accreditation of the Be Fair Framework.

For organisations that meet the requirements of the Framework, accreditation lasts for 3 years.

Accreditation

CITB will award accreditation of the Framework to registered companies:

- a) Upon successful completion of all the relevant modules, and
- b) Upon recommendation from the Provider

Some large contractors may wish for their accreditation to be on a national basis – in such cases Assessors must ensure that they assess the whole business.

When working towards assessment on a national basis there may be the opportunity to cross match some of the sites selected for assessment, particularly where members of different Business Areas may be present (Plant, Facilities Management, Design, etc.)

Some of the above methodology may be able to be adapted depending wholly on how the business is managed – for example if the business holds all HR functions centrally, some of the HR-based module interviews may not be required to be covered at all locations however if HR is devolved to regions they would.

Essentially, whether regional or national in the approach to assessment, the methodology differs little as the key is to secure a minimum sample across the whole of the business.

Staff Resource

You (the Provider) are responsible and accountable for appointing, managing and retaining (in sufficient numbers), experienced and qualified staff to carry out assessment and internal quality assurance for the range of Framework modules you are licensed to deliver. Should there be insufficient staff resources to support any part of the Framework delivery, you will refrain from registering companies until appropriate staff resources are in place.

You must inform CITB of any difficulties in delivering the Framework so that alternative assessment arrangements can be put in place to ensure registered companies are not disadvantaged.

You must be able to demonstrate how you have made your decision to appoint your assessors and internal quality assurance staff and how you ensure they have the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively. It is expected this will be in the form of a matrix, demonstrating the experience and competence of staff against specific modules.

You must ensure your assessment and quality assurance teams are working to current legislation, guidance and good practice relating to equality, diversity, fairness, inclusion and respect. This will include the use of CITB e-learning modules for assessors and Internal Quality Assurance staff working with the Framework.

Providers will be expected to complete these e-learning modules and CITB staff will monitor this.

Internal Quality Assurance

You must have a well-defined process for the management of quality assurance of assessment and you must have a nominated person who will assume responsibility for the management of all operational activities relating to the licence.

You must ensure:

- you use risk management for the internal quality assurance of assessment practice
- you have a documented internal quality assurance strategy that assists the risk management of the assessors and demonstrates how you will guarantee safe and robust Framework assessment and recommendations for accreditation
- you have in place clear written internal quality assurance procedures to ensure the consistency of assessment decisions between all assessors
- you maintain thorough records of assessment and internal quality assurance activities and make these available for external quality assurance and audit
- you clearly separate assessment from any training or advisory services delivered to the same registered company by the same assessor, to avoid any conflicts of interest
- you evaluate the assessment practices of all assessors and adopt a robust process for the monitoring and standardisation of assessment judgements
- internal quality assurance is planned, documented and provides feedback and support to the assessor following all quality assurance activity
- you provide Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for the assessment and quality assurance teams
- you agree and implement any corrective actions within timescales identified during any validator visits
- any assessment decisions of new or unqualified/inexperienced assessors are countersigned by an experienced assessor to ensure integrity of the Framework

Providers must have thorough, reliable and transparent assessment processes in place. This includes assessment policies and procedures that are understood by assessors, internal quality advisors and registered companies working towards the Framework.

You must ensure:

- you have a documented and auditable assessment system, for assessment planning, assessment decisions, and review/feedback
- the assessment process is carried out by impartial assessors to avoid conflicts of interest
- evidence submitted by organisations is only assessed against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient to make sound assessment judgements
- accurate and verifiable assessment records are maintained on an accessible cloud storage solution, or a suitable alternative solution as agreed by CITB
- records relating to assessment and internal quality assurance are stored safely and securely

Assessors are responsible and accountable for:

- managing the assessment process, from planning through to recording assessment decisions against the Framework
- ensuring that all evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient to meet the Framework criteria
- maintaining accurate and verifiable assessment records
- judging when all the Framework criteria has been met by a company and recommending accreditation of the Framework
- records relating to assessment and internal quality assurance are stored safely and securely

Assessors

You must ensure that assessors:

- meet the requirements detailed in the Assessor Specification at Appendix 2
- have sufficient equality and diversity expertise so they have up to date experience, knowledge and understanding of the particular aspects of work they are assessing
- only assess to their acknowledged level of competence and within the Framework modules they have experience of
- understand the standards, assessment criteria, assessments and context of the modules they are assessing
- carry out assessments in a fair and transparent manner and without bias
- have knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity in relation to the construction industry. This must be of sufficient depth to be valid and reliable when judging a company's compliance and application of the Framework standards.

Assessors' experience, knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by a combination of; CV and record of Continuous Professional Development; References from employer or clients; Possession of a relevant vocational qualification; Possession of an Equality and Diversity qualification; Membership of a relevant professional institution; Competence-based interview

- are prepared to participate in training activities for their Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- hold, or are working towards, an Equality and Diversity qualification, where stipulated in the Assessor Specification. Any qualification should be listed either in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

You must ensure that inexperienced/new assessors have their assessment decisions checked by an occupationally competent and experienced assessor and records of these checks are retained.

External Quality Assurance

Regular monitoring will sample the records of assessment and internal quality assurance to ensure standards are maintained. The resources you have available will be checked to make sure they are sufficient and of the standard required.

As a licensed provider approved to deliver the Be Fair Framework you will receive external quality assurance visits from CITB. The frequency of these visits will be determined by risk assessment, but will normally be one visit per year. At the end of each visit the External Quality Adviser (EQA) will feedback their findings and if required provide further clarity. A written report will be completed and forwarded to you within 10 days of the visit.

At the end of the visit the EQA will recommend one of the following:

1. Licence maintained

This recommendation will be made when you have successfully supported a sufficient number of companies to achieve the Framework, and all licence conditions are in place. You may or may not receive an action plan.

2. Licence suspended

This recommendation will be made following an investigation into concerns about your assessment services and/or the Framework delivery and the integrity of the Framework is at risk. Examples include:

- inadequate assessment and/or internal quality assurance practices
- insufficient resources to deliver the Framework
- complaints from Companies being assessed

You will receive an action plan for improvement and it is likely that the EQA will make more frequent visits to monitor improvement and progress. Alternative support for registered companies may be arranged.

3. Licence withdrawn

The decision to withdraw your licence will be made following an investigation into serious concerns about your assessment services. Reasons for license withdrawal include:

- identified significant faults with your organisation's operations in relation to the Framework
- the integrity of the Framework, and/or the CITB Be Fair brand is at high risk
- malpractice as defined by CITB Quality Manager
- continued failure to meet agreed improvement actions

Please note: the above lists are not definitive

As part of the Framework approval, you are obliged to comply with any requests for access to premises, people and records for the purpose of quality assurance. Failure to comply will result in your licence being withheld until access is granted. External Quality Assurance monitoring will take into consideration any additional services you provide that impact on the Framework assessment, and these may affect the outcome of the monitoring visits.

Data Requirements

Any relevant information you collect from registered companies must be kept and made available for external quality assurance and audit; records must be kept secure and retained for a period of three years. You must allow for the independent authentication of accreditation claims.

You must set up and maintain reliable, auditable internal quality assurance systems for documenting and recording assessment decisions. This information could be used to substantiate any claims for accreditation or resolve any appeals during the three year period. This information must be made available to CITB and any external auditor.

You must keep records of internal quality assurance activity detailing:

• who quality assured what and when

- the sample selected
- the sampling strategy
- internal quality assurance standardisation meetings, along with any evidence of staff updating
- assessor competence, including copies of certificates, CVs and records of their CPD and their monitored progress towards required qualifications
- records of Recommendation for Accreditation
- records of appeals who appealed, about what, when, and the outcome
- records of complaints who complained, about what, when, and the outcome

Records of assessment detailing:

- assessment details including who assessed, what, where and when
- recorded assessment decisions
- recorded assessment feedback and action plans
- locations of supporting evidence

Records to support service improvement

Records of training/guidance provided to registered companies to support with the Framework

Records of advisory visits to registered companies both inside and outside of the scope of the licence agreement, to support with the Framework

Any requests/suggestions from registered companies, assessors or internal quality advisors for support materials not already available

Any difficulties/discrepancies/requests for clarification relating to modules, learning outcomes or assessment criteria

Appeals and Complaints Procedure

You must have appeals and complaints procedures for registered companies to appeal against assessment and internal quality assurance decisions. You must show how these are communicated to companies registered for the Framework and to all your staff involved in the delivery of the Framework. You must inform CITB of any appeals or complaints, permit a member of CITB staff to be involved in the appeal process and make all records of appeals or complaints available to the validator during monitoring visits.

Recommended Charges

As a licensed provider we recommend you provide your services to companies registering for the Framework in a cost effective manner. CITB has worked with the developer to produce a Framework that is clear and transparent, enabling registered companies to work through the modules with minimal support. The FIR quality standard is tailored to a range of construction companies that reflects their specific needs. This provides a cost-effective approach to assessment.

The company registration fee has been set at £500 + VAT to include administration & certification costs and this should be collected from all registered companies by the Provider and paid to CITB within 30 days.

The recommended pricing schedule in *Appendix 3* reflects an estimate of the **anticipated** amount of assessment, including initial assessment and guidance, which may be required by companies seeking accreditation of the Framework. Additional services such as advice or training may be necessary for some companies but **are not** included in the estimated costs and, if required, you will agree terms directly with the companies, making it clear that any additional services you provide are not within your licence agreement with CITB.

Provider Obligations

The Provider shall provide assessment and guidance on the Framework using due skill, care and diligence and in accordance at all times with the Framework Agreement & Guidance herein;

- 1. the Provider shall pay the fees to CITB in accordance with clause 6 and Schedule 2 of the Provider Agreement;
- 2. the Provider shall do all other things reasonably necessary to provide assessment and guidance on the Framework, including, but not limited to; responding to queries from and making appointments with Companies by telephone and email; undertaking visits to Companies at various locations including site visits and travel to a company's premises;
- 3. will, in all correspondence and other dealings relating directly or indirectly to the licensing or other transaction relating to the Framework, clearly indicate that it is acting as 'a Provider' and not as author or developer of the Framework;
- 4. will not incur any liability on behalf of CITB or in any way pledge or purport to pledge the CITBs credit or purport to make any contract binding upon the CITB;
- 5. will not alter, obscure, remove, conceal or otherwise interfere with any marking on the Framework Materials which refers to the CITB as author or developer of the Framework or otherwise refers to the CITBs copyright or other Intellectual Property Rights in the Framework;
- 6. will immediately bring to the attention of the CITB any improper or wrongful use of the CITBs Trade Marks, emblems, designs, models or other similar industrial, intellectual or commercial property rights which come to the notice of the Provider and will in the performance of its duties under this Agreement use every effort to safeguard the property rights and interests of the CITB and take all steps required by the CITB to defend such rights;
- will promptly bring to the attention of the CITB any information received by the Provider which is likely to be of interest, use or benefit to the CITB in relation to the marketing and / or support of the Framework;
- 8. will be responsible for ensuring its staff and Assessors fully understand and meet all requirements in full (including but not limited to the Assessor qualification requirements) set out in this Framework guidance;
- the Provider shall obtain the CITBs prior written consent in relation to the appointment of all Assessors which the Provider intends to use in the provision of guidance and/or assessment of the Framework;
- 10. allow the CITB's staff or agents reasonable access to attend company/delegate meetings undertaken by the Provider and its staff and Assessors to observe the quality and delivery of the Framework;

Malpractice

Malpractice is a deliberate or reckless act that compromises the assessment process, the integrity of the Framework or the validity of any claims of learning outcomes and/or accreditation. Furthermore, failure by a provider to investigate allegations of suspected malpractice also constitutes malpractice. You are required as a licensed provider to report all cases of alleged and proven malpractice that you identify in your organisation to CITB by emailing befairframework@citb.co.uk. All staff including assessors, quality assurance staff and administrators must have knowledge of your malpractice policy.

You must have in place a documented 'whistle blowing' policy that has been communicated to all your staff involved in the delivery of the Framework to enable them to safely report malpractice.

Upon receipt of any alleged malpractice complaints, CITB will suspend the licencing agreement and appoint an independent member of staff to carry out the investigation.

A report of the investigation will be sent to you; this will include any conclusions, evidence presented and recommendations of action required to resolve the matter.

In the event of any withdrawal of approval (voluntary or not) you must make all reasonable efforts to ensure companies registered on the Framework are not disadvantaged. You must make provisions for all paperwork to be transferred to CITB. You must ensure that registered companies have given permission for their details to be passed to a new provider, prior to the withdrawal.

Failure to co-operate with CITB at any stage of the investigation process will result in a suspension of the license.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances in relation to the delivery of the Framework, for example:

- where the advisory and the assessment functions are delivered by the same individual
- when an individual has a position of authority in one organisation which conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation
- when an individual has personal interests that conflict with his/her professional position
- where someone carries out assessment or internal quality assurance on behalf of the licensed provider, but who may have personal interests – paid or unpaid – in a company undergoing assessment

You must have clear procedures in place that encourage staff to disclose any conflicts of interest. In the event that conflicts are identified, appropriate documented actions must be taken to minimise any risk to the integrity of the assessment process and the Framework. Where the conflict cannot be avoided you will inform CITB prior to assessment and arrange for an independent assessor to sign off the assessment decisions.

Appendix 1 – Fee Structure

Detail	Fee
1. Fee for new providers to deliver the Framework	£750
The fee covers:	(VAT Exempt)
a. six individual assessors	
b. a minimum of one validation visit to your premises	
Payable on submission of application	
2. Fee for additional assessors	£325 (VAT Exempt)
The fee covers:	
a. assessor applications made outside of the original provider application or renewal process	
 b. up to 6 additional assessors per application including access to the e-learning modules 	
Subject to Assessors meeting the required criteria	
3. Annual renewal fee for existing providers	£750
The fee covers:	+VAT
a. external quality assurance and auditing services performed by CITB	
Subject to Providers continuing to meet the required criteria	
4. Company registration fee	£500
Fee payable by each company registering on the Be Fair Framework	+VAT
(to be paid by the Provider in accordance with the Provider Agreement)	

NOTES:

1. Items 1 and 2 are exempt from VAT due to the training element

Appendix 2 – Assessor Specification

It is expected that individual assessors will have a wide-ranging combination of skills, knowledge and experience. A customer's engagement with the Be Fair Framework is invariably shaped by the performance of the assessor and their overall capabilities.

Assessors must take pro-active ownership and responsibility for their own development. Whilst Providers are expected and required to manage this, the individual assessor must ensure they have the required capabilities, continuously develop their skills and maintain knowledge at an up-to-date level, taking proactive ownership of their professional development.

It will be a requirement for all assessors to complete CITB's e-learning modules for assessment.

Please see criteria below:

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
General Education	Education to GCSE/Standard Grade level (or equivalent)	'A' Level/Higher English (or equivalent)
Professional/Technical Qualifications, Training & Experience	Assessment Experience – the ability to use a range of assessment techniques within a company hierarchy to extract relevant information to match against the criteria Working knowledge of Microsoft Office packages & experience in Report production Recognised E&D Training – with content relating to: Understanding of Equality Act, Awareness of Public Sector duties, Positive Action, Classification of Discrimination, Protected Characteristics, awareness of the issues of E&D in the workplace, the role of the individual and the employer in relation to E&D responsibilities in the workplace and standards of behaviour expected	 Assessment Qualifications Assessment Experience in Equality and Diversity (E&D) Ability to present high quality reports, presentations and other information using IT applications Experience in an Equality & Diversity Role Construction Qualification or site experience relevant to the module(s) being assessed
Special Aptitudes, Skills & Behaviours	Self-motivated, highly developed communication and interpersonal skills	The ability to manage conflict and difficult situations
		quality system

BE FAIR FRAMEWORK - ASSESSOR SPECIFICATION

Appendix 3 – Recommended Pricing Schedule

The amount of assessment and guidance required by companies will vary dependent upon their size and occupational type. Therefore small sub-contractors should require much less support than large main contractors and this should be reflected in the assessment fees charged to each company.

It is estimated that the amount of time a small sub-contractor could require from a Provider for support, guidance and assessment would be approximately 1.5 to 2 days.

It is estimated that a main contractor going through the Framework could require 3 to 5 days support.

The following information is for guidance only:

Rates vary between Providers. Using rates ranging from £500 to £750 per day, costs are estimated as follows:

- 1.5 to 2 days support, guidance and assessment could be in the region of £750 to £1,500
- 3 to 5 days support, guidance and assessment could be in the region of £1,500 to £3,750

A large main contractor organisation going for accreditation on a regional or divisional basis is likely to incur greater costs as this would require additional site visits and interviews.





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Appendix 5 – Diagram – Getting Started on the Framework



Appendix 6 – Diagram – Awarding Accreditation



Version Control

Version	Date	What	Who
V2.0	11/01/2017		
V3.0	05/02/2017	Document Name Change and footer updated	CS
V3.1	06/02/2017	Price Structure Amended	CS