

# SQAS Accreditation Manual

(Safety and Quality Assessment System)

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## Attachment :

1. Application Form for SQAS Assessor Accreditation (new candidates)
2. Continued Professional Development (CPD) Form

## **1. Introduction :**

### **1.1 Purpose**

SQAS is a system to evaluate the quality, safety, security and environmental performance of Logistics Service Providers and Chemical Distributors in a uniform manner by single standardised assessments carried out by independent assessors using a standard questionnaire.

The SQAS Accreditation manual contains the qualification requirements for accreditation as Cefic SQAS Assessor for all SQAS modules. Only a high and consistent quality of the assessors will ensure that all parties involved are recognizing the system as reliable and trustworthy, and that the results of the assessments will drive continuous improvement. This manual describes the pre-qualification requirements, the training and accreditation process and the performance monitoring approach in more detail in the next chapters. Here follows a summary of the main elements.

### **1.2 Accreditation**

First, a general accreditation as SQAS Assessor is obtained on the basis of the pre-qualification requirements, basic training, a written examination and an interview. However, to be entitled to perform assessments, assessors must obtain “Accreditation Titles” for each of the modules of interest, and they must first qualify for them by meeting the additional specific modular training and examination requirements. The assessors can obtain accreditation titles currently for :

- SQAS Transport Service
- SQAS Cleaning
- SQAS Rail Carrier
- SQAS RTC Workshop
- SQAS Packaged Warehouse
- SQAS Distributor / ESAD

### **1.3. Continued Professional Development (CPD)**

Assessors must ensure to stay abreast of technical and legislative developments and changes in the regulations, relevant to the subjects covered in SQAS and applicable to the country where the assessment takes place. For that purpose, assessors shall engage in the required regular training, self-study, self-monitor their professional development and provide a periodical status/progress report to Cefic, when applying for accreditation extension.

### **1.4. Performance Monitoring Approach**

The qualification of each accredited assessor will be reviewed by the Technical & Accreditation Committee on a yearly basis and each assessor’s performance will be monitored continuously to ensure not only a high standard of individual work but also to ensure a consistent approach amongst the assessors. Performance feedback may be obtained from Chemical Company observers, present during the assessments. The performance criteria and the appraisal process are also described below.

## **2. Accreditation**

### **2.1. Objectives**

The objectives of the SQAS Accreditation are :

- to ensure a uniform high quality of the assessors;
- to ensure a uniform interpretation of the assessment questionnaires and associated guidelines by all assessors, independent of their background or country;
- to provide training in the adequate use of the electronic SQAS Database;
- to provide an understanding of the relationship of Chemical Companies with the Logistics Industry and with the Chemical Distributor Industry;
- to provide insight in the activities, organizational structure and infrastructure of such typical partner companies (Logistics Companies and Chemical Distributors);
- to create a common standard of assessment amongst assessors as to the legislative requirements and the industry standards, relating to the safety, health, environment, security and quality aspects of these partner industries.

### **2.2. Pre-qualification requirements**

Applicants for accreditation as SQAS Assessor will require the following knowledge and experience:

- be registered as quality lead auditor i.e.:
  - have a valid qualification with an accredited certification body; or
  - be registered with a recognised auditor registration organisation (e.g. IRCA)
- have performed during the last 3 years at least five ISO 9001 (vs 2000) or ISO 14001 audits, or SQAS (equivalent) Assessments at Chemical Producers, Chemical Distributors or at companies providing logistic services to the chemical industry;
- be certified as DGSA (Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor), documented by a valid certificate;
- be fully independent from the assessed Logistics or Distributor companies (no financial, commercial or advisory links with the assessed company);
- have good working knowledge of the English language.

The above qualifications are documented by the applicant in the Application Form (attachment-1) and are supported by certificates, where applicable.

### **2.3. General Accreditation as SQAS Assessor**

#### **2.3.1. Training Course**

All applicants for accreditation as SQAS Assessors will be required to attend a training course. Only applicants who fulfil all pre-qualification requirements are admitted. The two days training course will be conducted in English.

The basic accreditation training will address primarily

- the general features of the SQAS system;
- the assessment process and principles (preparation, fieldwork, evidence seeking, conformance with guidelines, administration, reporting);

- the topics which are relevant to all modules, such as risk assessment, security, safety at work, subcontracting, etc.;
- the CORE questionnaire of the logistics modules and the Di questionnaire of SQAS Distributor/ESAD;

### **2.3.2 Examination**

After attending the General Training course, applicants must participate in a written examination to demonstrate their ability of conducting an SQAS assessment. In the event that an applicant fails the examination at the first attempt, he/she may re-sit the examination once.

The examination is conducted as follows :

- The examination is in English and will be a ‘closed book’ examination;
- The questions are chosen from a selection of questions approved by the SQAS Technical & Accreditation Committee;
- The examination will be marked without knowing the name of the applicant;
- The applicant passes the examination if a minimum score of 70% is obtained.

### **2.3.3. Interview**

All applicants are interviewed in English by a panel consisting of members of the Technical & Accreditation Committee. The purpose of the interview is to validate the applicants’ technical knowledge, experience and ability to carry out SQAS assessments. The applicant passes the interview when the average score awarded by the examiners panel is 70% or higher.

## **2.4. Accreditation titles for SQAS modules**

After having obtained the general SQAS Accreditation, applicants can obtain an Accreditation Title for each module in which they want to conduct assessments. The Technical & Accreditation (T&A) Committee defines the training and examination requirements for each module and organizes regular examination opportunities. This training is based on self-study and e-learning of the subjects and documents posted on the SQAS website. When required, for example upon a significant revision of a module, a specific “in-class” training course may be organized, dedicated to that module.

### **2.4.1. General requirements related to the SQAS modules**

Generally, the requirements for being listed as accredited assessor for a module are :

- To study the associated documents (system guideline, questionnaire and specific guidelines);
- To study the defined literature and documents relevant to the industry or activity, covered by the module, as defined by the T&A Committee and posted on the website;
- To perform a successful examination on above subjects. Unless otherwise specified, the examination will be an e-exam, downloaded from the website and submitted to Cefic within requested due-date.

When assessors undertake assessments abroad, it is also essential

- To sufficiently master the language of the assessed company, when assessments are conducted in a language different than the assessor’s native tongue;
- To be knowledgeable of the local regulations to ensure that key documents and procedures (e.g. operating permit) can be correctly interpreted.

### **2.4.2. SQAS Transport Service**

In addition to above general requirements, applicants for SQAS Transport Service need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD) :

- Knowledge of national and international regulations related to road transport operations.
- When appropriate for the supply chain, knowledge of national and international regulations covering intermodal operations (e.g. IMDG, RID, ADN, etc).

#### **2.4.3. SQAS Tank Cleaning**

In addition to above general requirements, applicants for SQAS Cleaning need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD) :

- Knowledge of national regulations related to cleaning operations, environment, permitting and water treatment.

#### **2.4.5. SQAS Rail (Carrier) and SQAS RTC Workshop**

In addition to above general requirements, applicants for SQAS Rail and SQAS RTC Workshop need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD) :

- Knowledge of national and international regulations related to Rail Operations.

#### **2.4.6. SQAS Packaged Warehouse**

In addition to above general requirements, applicants for SQAS Packaged Warehouse need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD) :

- Knowledge of national regulations related to warehousing operations and permitting.

#### **2.4.7. SQAS Distributor / ESAD**

##### **2.4.7.1. General :**

In addition to above general requirements, applicants for SQAS Distributor/ESAD need to demonstrate through their Continued Professional Development (CPD) :

- Knowledge of national and international regulations related to Distributor operations, warehousing operations permitting and Product Safety.

##### **2.4.7.2. Section F (Food, Cosmetic and/or Pharma) of SQAS Distributor/ESAD**

For the assessment of the section F (Food, Cosmetic and/or Pharma) of SQAS Distributor/ESAD, additional requirements on the assessor's background and experience are required. The assessor should preferably,

- be a pharmacist, chemist or chemical engineer (or equivalent), and
- have at least 2 years of practical experience with current GMP practice, and
- be independent from the distributing and manufacturing industry.

A person is considered to "have experience with current GMP" when he/she:

- is a Qualified Person according to Directive 2001/83/EC, or
- worked at one of the following categories of companies, who was either GMP certified or operated according to GMP, in the functions mentioned below :
  - a drug product manufacturer in Manufacturing, QA or QC, or
  - a manufacturer of active pharmaceutical ingredients (Manufacturing, QA, QC), or
  - a manufacturer of pharmaceutical excipients (Manufacturing, QA, QC), or
  - a distributor of active pharmaceutical ingredients or excipients (with experience in repackaging, blending and/or QA, QC).

Alternatively, a candidate assessor may qualify for the F-section through a specific Cefic/FECC (\*1) training/examination, which will be periodically organized at a facility, where the basics for above skills can be obtained during a two day seminar, through detailed case study of the materials and practical exposure to GMP related activities.

(\*1) FECC = [The European Association of Chemical Distributors](#)

## **2.5. Granting the Accreditation**

The Technical & Accreditation Committee assesses the results of the applicant and recommends to the SQAS Executive Committee that an applicant should be accredited as an SQAS assessor if the candidate has :

- demonstrated that he/she has the requisite knowledge and experience;
- attended the General SQAS training course;
- passed successfully the written examination and the interview;
- obtained successfully an Accreditation Title for one or more specific modules.

The applicant will receive a Cefic Certificate, which is valid for 3 years.

## **3. Performance Monitoring and Appraisal**

### **3.1. Performance Criteria**

#### **3.1.1. General**

- To maintain a high quality, an assessor must carry out at least five complete SQAS assessments per year (all modules together).
- A complete SQAS Assessment at an operational site will take minimum of two full working days. If combined with other ISO accreditation work, additional time must be scheduled, but it is recognized that the SQAS Assessment could serve as basis for the ISO Accreditation work. A full assessment must be conducted for every SQAS Assessable Unit, as defined in the guidelines.
- Efficient communication between the assessor and Cefic is important. The assessor must be accessible by e-mail and phone. If e-mail cannot be attended promptly, the assessor should nominate a stand-in.
- It is recommended that assessors perform no more than 2 subsequent assessments at the same site.

#### **3.1.2. Scoring of Questions**

- All SQAS work must be performed in strict adherence to the guidelines and instructions provided to the assessor during the training course, and by the guidance given in the periodical newsletters and other instructions.
- Specific attention shall be given to the scoring :  
A “YES” answer shall only be given if full compliance is demonstrated by objective evidence. For example on questions regarding “procedures”, a “YES” answer may be provided only if the procedure is in place, and, it is understood by the concerned people, and there is clear evidence that the procedure is being fully implemented and kept up to date.  
In case of partial compliance, a “NO” answer must be provided, and it is desirable to give credit for the partial achievement by adding a comment.

#### **3.1.3. Administration**

- The assessor shall register the electronic pre-notification of the assessment and support the assessed company in recording the electronic authorization/agreement, at least one week prior to commencing the assessment.
- The assessor must ensure that the assessment report is promptly posted on the internet website, within a week after the end of an assessment, and that the details about the assessed company and about the assessment are correctly recorded. Preferably 3 contact persons of the assessed company, with their correct e-mail addresses should be entered in a way the system can confirm the access security code to these individuals.

### **3.2. Performance Monitoring and Appraisal Process**

The qualifications of each SQAS assessor will be reviewed every year by the Technical & Accreditation Committee, based on :

- a review of recent assessments,
- the feedback from the observers,
- through interviewing the assessor (if required).

When concerns are noted, a written appraisal form with the observed concerns will be presented to the assessor, to which he/she must respond and take corrective actions.

### **3.3. De-accreditation**

The qualification may be withdrawn where the performance of the assessor does not meet the required standards defined by the T&A Committee. Depending on the discrepancy, this may entail in the deletion of one or more Accreditation Title(s) or in revoking the basic SQAS Accreditation.

When continued or repeated deviations from the required performance criteria are being observed, the assessor may be called to an interview with the T&A Committee to discuss the appraisal. The assessor has the opportunity to defend his/her case. The assessor will be formally informed about the definite appraisal by the T&A Committee.

## **4. Accreditation Extension**

### **4.1. Re-fresher Accreditation Training**

Regular refresher training will be held to ensure continual high quality of the assessors and to facilitate the general accreditation extension process. It is the aim that all assessors re-visit Cefic once every 3 years.

The re-fresher training will cover :

- A general update on the status and progress of all modules;
- Selected topics chosen from all modules, where assessors experienced difficulties or where Chemical Companies noticed inconsistencies;
- An exchange of learning. The sessions will allow sufficient time for debate amongst assessors and with the industry specialists.

### **4.2. Continued Professional Development (CPD)**

At the occasion of the three-yearly re-fresher training for extension, assessors must provide their progress report on “Continued Professional Development” documenting and demonstrating their current status/progress and the main achievements regarding their professional development (training, self-study topics, etc), using the format provided in Attachment-2.

More particularly, to keep the SQAS Accreditation current and valid for the next 3 year cycle, the SQAS Assessor :

- shall maintain and renew when due, the ISO Lead Auditor qualification and the DGSA certificate;
- and ensure that he/she is up-to-date on the changing regulations regarding the carriage and handling of dangerous goods. (a.o. the 2 yearly cycle of ADR/RID changes).

### **4.3. Granting the Accreditation extension**

The accreditation will be extended for a further 3 years if the assessor successfully completes the written exam “closed book” at the end of the training session, and upon delivery of the CPD form to Cefic confirming above requirements.

## **5. Appeal Procedure**

In the event that an applicant, applying for accreditation as a SQAS Assessor, considers that a decision made by the Technical & Accreditation Committee is unreasonable, the following procedure should be followed:

- The applicant should write to the chairman of the SQAS Executive Committee indicating in detail the reasons why he/she believes that the decision taken by the Technical & Accreditation Committee is unreasonable or not in accordance with the SQAS Accreditation Manual, and that the applicant wishes to appeal.
- The Chairman will collect the relevant information that may be helpful in reviewing the case and convene the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will consist of five members, including the Chairman, none being member of the Technical & Accreditation Committee.
- The Technical & Accreditation Committee will provide the Appeal Panel with the necessary background information on the decision.
- The applicant shall be entitled to be heard by the Appeal Panel.
- If the majority of the Appeal Panel decides that the original decision should be changed or the applicant given another opportunity to succeed, the applicant will be informed in writing accordingly. Otherwise the original decision will be upheld and the applicant informed in writing accordingly.

## **6. Technical & Accreditation Committee**

The Technical & Accreditation Committee consists of 10 to 15 members. They represent the chemical industry, the various transport/logistics sectors covered in the SQAS logistics modules, and the Chemical Distributors. The Cefic SQAS Manager acts as permanent chairman.

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Please complete this form (type written or capital letters) and return it by mail to Concetta Napoli [cna@cefic.be](mailto:cna@cefic.be) – Cefic – Avenue E. Van Nieuwenhuyse 4, B- 1160 Brussels.

**APPLICATION FORM  
FOR SQAS ASSESSOR ACCREDITATION**

**Name (surname/family name) :**

**First name :**

**Nationality :**

**Date of birth :**

**Email address :**

**Tel. nr :**

**Two basic pre-qualification requirements**

Requirement	Date Obtained / Renewed	Course / Institute	Certificate attached
1) Lead Auditor			
2) DGSA			

**ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Qualification	Place of Education	From	To

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**  
Give details, in chronological order of your previous and present employment.

Name of employer	Period of employment		Position Held	Responsibilities
	From	To		

**List of ISO 9001, ISO 14001 or SQAS equivalent audits at Chemical Producers, Chemical Distributors or at Logistics Service Providers to the chemical industry, you have carried out during the previous 3 years**

	<b>Company</b>	<b>Type of audit</b>	<b>Date of audit</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			

**List of other training courses / seminars concerning national / international transport regulations, product safety, other regulations relevant to transportation and distribution of chemicals, you attended during the previous 3 years**

<b>Course / Seminar</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Certificate attached</b>

**Place :**

**Date :**

**Signature :**

Please complete this form (type written or capital letters) and return it by mail to Concetta Napoli [cna@cefic.be](mailto:cna@cefic.be) – Cefic – Avenue E. Van Nieuwenhuysse 4, B- 1160 Brussels.

**Continued Professional Development (CPD)**

Assessor Name :

Period covered :

**MAINTAIN BASIC SQAS REQUIREMENTS**

Requirement	Date Obtained / Renewed	Course / Institute	Certificate attached
Lead Auditor			
DGSA			

**OTHER TRAINING / COURSES ATTENDED  
relative to your Accreditation Titles**

	SQAS Module	Course	Institute / Location
1			
2			
3			

**OTHER SELF-STUDY / LEARNING INITIATIVES  
relative to your Accreditation Titles**

	SQAS Module	Self-study topic / learning initiative	Source
1			
2			
3			

Date :

Signature :