

# Certified Cyber Professional – Candidate Application Guidance

The Certified Cyber Professional certification is a competency-based assessment of the applicant’s knowledge and experience within the cyber industry provided in support of their application. Please read this guidance thoroughly before you complete your application.

It is important that the information provided is complete and accurately represents your professional qualifications, capability and experience. You will be assessed simultaneously for all roles/levels applied. Please note that this scheme is available only to applicants who have a valid registered address in the United Kingdom.

## Registration

To begin your application, please visit our [APMG IA website](#) and click the ‘Begin Registration’ button.

**Step 1:** Complete your personal details.

**Step 2:** Select role(s) and level(s) you wish to be assessed at.

Select the role(s) you wish to apply for and the level at which you will be assessed at in each role. If applying for multiple roles, please indicate PRIMARY role; this should be the highest-level role.

*We recommend applying for a maximum of three roles per application*

Please be advised that you will **NOT** be able to upgrade a level or add any additional roles later in the application.

### Application Fees\*

	At application	Additional role	Re-validation**	Upgrade
<i>Practitioner</i>	£400.00	£200.00	150.00	£300.00
<i>Senior Practitioner</i>	£600.00	£300.00	150.00	£300.00
<i>Lead Practitioner</i>	£700.00	£300.00	150.00	N/A

\*Please note that all fees are excluding VAT

\*\*Please note that the re-validation fee is £150.00 in total for all roles applied, unless the candidate is upgrading level(s) or adding additional role(s).

The fee for additional roles is applicable if these roles are applied for at the same time. The initial fee will be charged for one role (primary) and all/each subsequent role(s) will be charged at the additional rate above.

All fees are subject to change. For the most current fee information, please visit <https://www.apmg-ia.com/about.aspx>

**Step 3:** Make a payment.

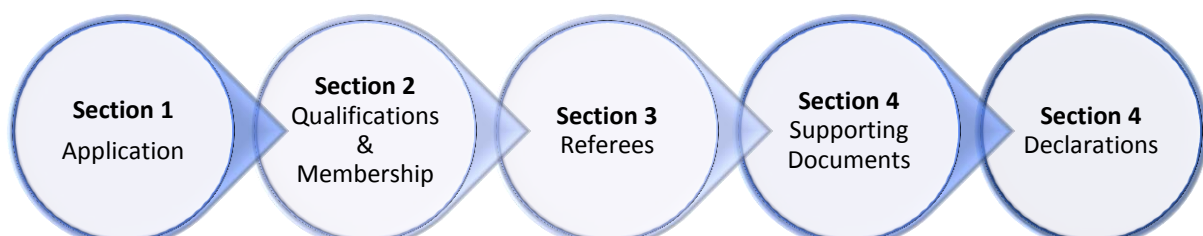
You will be taken to a secure payment platform via NetBanx. An automated notification confirming your payment will be sent after the payment has been processed. The VAT receipt will be sent within the following 3 weeks.

If you do not wish to pay online, please contact APMG customer service team [Customerservice@apmggroup.co.uk](mailto:Customerservice@apmggroup.co.uk) or call on 01494 452450 and quote your IA candidate number and role(s)/level(s) that you are applying for.

**Step 4:** Activate your account

You will receive an email confirming your registration that will contain your IA candidate number, your username and the account activation link. Click on the activation link to create your account PIN and Password.

## Application Form



## Section 1: Application

Please verify your contact details are correct in your application.

If you are applying for **Security & Information Risk Advisor (SIRA) and/or the Information Assurance (IA) Auditor** role(s), you will be asked to select the core skills against which you will be assessed.

**Note for SIRA** role applicants: the (NCSC) CESH Certification Framework identifies eight core skills for this role and candidates must select either B1 or B2 as one of their core skills:

- **Practitioner:** min 4 skills required
- **Senior Practitioner:** min 5 skills required
- **Lead Practitioner:** min 6 skills required

**Note for IA Auditor** role applicants: the (NCSC) CESH Certification Framework identifies six core skills for this role and all candidates must meet skill G1 (Audit and Review) and three of the remaining five core skills.

## Section 2: Qualifications and Membership

Detail all relevant qualifications held and upload a copy of your certificate. Where a certificate is not provided, please provide a justification (e.g. lost or destroyed).

List the professional bodies of which you are a member, including the joining date, expiry date (where applicable) and your membership number (if known). Please upload a copy of your membership certificate where possible.

Please note that APMG reserves the right to contact the relevant body to verify any qualification and membership listed.

## Section 3: Referees

You must provide details minimum of two referees (peer, manager, client, etc.) that can validate your experience detailed in your evidence form and together cover all role(s) that you have applied for.

Your referees will be sent login details to complete an online Personal Evaluation form (following the acceptance of the application) via our secure website; please ensure that your referees are aware of this. The evaluation should take 15-20 minutes to complete.

- If your referee does not have internet access or is having difficulties completing the form online, please contact APMG Registrations at [registrations@apmg-ia.com](mailto:registrations@apmg-ia.com) to arrange for the details to be provided offline.

APMG may contact one or more of your nominated referees, so please ensure that they are aware of the process. Please be aware that it is the candidate's responsibility to follow up with the referees to make sure that they have completed the Personal Evaluation form.

**You will also be required to complete a Personal Evaluation form, so the 'script' must not be shared between the candidate and their referees. Failing to comply may compromise your application.**

Please note that all nominated referees must complete the Personal Evaluation form before your application can be progressed to the interview stage. You can track the completion progress of the forms via the 'My Status' page.

## Section 4: Supporting Documents

Applicants are required to upload the following documentation:

- Scanned copy of photo ID (driving licence or passport)
  - If you do not wish to upload a scanned image you can post a copy of your photo ID to APMG which will be destroyed after verification.
- A current Curriculum Vitae (CV).
  - CV must comprehensively cover at least the past five years of your career.

- CV should include:
  - Profile
  - List of key skills
  - Key achievements
  - Work history (with dates)
  - Qualifications & professional memberships
- Signed and scanned copy of the IAPP Agreement (available to download at the APMG IA website: <https://www.apmg-ia.com/about.aspx>)
- Other documents as applicable.

## Section 5: Declaration and Checklist

Applicants must ensure that they have read the relevant guidance and are familiar with APMGs Code of Ethics, the appropriate boxes are checked, and the relevant supporting documents are uploaded.

You can choose to have your name published on the Successful Candidate Register if you are granted certification following assessment. The Successful Candidate Register will only display your name, the role(s) and level(s) certified in, your IA candidate number and the certification expiry date.

Please note that APMG is required to share details of all certifications with NCSC as appropriate.

The 'Submit' option will be made available after all the fields have been adequately populated.

**Once the application is submitted you will not be able to make changes to your information, unless the application is returned to the applicant by APMG, so please make sure that you have provided all the information accurately and uploaded a copy of the Evidence Form (see below).**

## Evidence Form

The Evidence Form must be completed to demonstrate experience and to give the details of the skills and competences required in the role(s) for which you are applying. The evidence you supply must support all the role(s) for which you are applying. Responses should be relevant, clear and concise, and detail work done within the last 18 months (no more than 5 years). We recommend that you indicate on the form which skill level you are aiming for.

Applicants should allocate a minimum of 3-4 hours to complete the form. Experience shows that those who take the time to complete this form with good evidence are more likely to be successful in their certifications. The (NCSC) CESG Certification Guidance document refers to the 'STAR' method for presenting your evidence: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

If you apply for more than one role be aware your evidence must support all roles. This may mean having to provide more than two pieces of evidence for any one competence. Some evidence for any given competence will support all roles whilst it may be necessary to tailor other evidence to the specific role(s). An example evidence form is available in the **Resources** section for reference.

## All Applicants:

It is expected that all information supplied in support of this application will not need to have a security classification and can be submitted via the online application system. Sensitive information will need to be submitted by some other means since the transfer to the online system is not accredited to accept highly sensitive material. If the information is sensitive it may be sent by post to APMG and this should be noted on the evidence form, but not on the envelope. In an exceptional case where evidence is of a higher classification, this may entail a face-to-face interview (at all levels) and will delay the assessment process. If the information is sensitive an assessor with appropriate clearance will contact you directly.

In your evidence, you will be required to give two examples to demonstrate your competence for all of the IISP skills detailed in the (NCSC) CESG Certification Framework in addition to the core skills for each role applied. You should be able to show that you have demonstrated **all the core skills** and at least 75% of the remainder of the IISP skills at the required levels. For further details on the requirements expected from applicants, please read the NCSC document 'Guidance to CESG Certification for Cyber Security/IA Professionals'. You should also look at the APMG document "Soft Skills Guidance for Applicants", particularly if you are applying at Senior or Lead level.



These documents are only available to registered candidates via the **Resources** section of the APMG site.

The IISP skill levels are defined as follows, and these definitions will be used to assess your competency in the required skills:

#### Level 1: (Awareness)

Understands the skill and its application. Has acquired and can demonstrate basic knowledge associated with the skill. Understands how the skill should be applied but may have no practical experience of its application.

#### Level 2: (Basic Application)

Understands the skill and applies it to basic tasks under some supervision. Has acquired the basic knowledge associated with the skill, for example has acquired an academic or professional qualification in the skill. Understands how the skills should be applied. Has experience of applying the skill to a variety of basic tasks. Determines when problems should be escalated to a higher level. Contributes ideas in the application of the skill. Demonstrates awareness of recent developments in the skill.

#### Level 3: (Skillful Application)

Understands the skill and applies it to complex tasks with no supervision. Has acquired a deep understanding of the knowledge associated with the skill. Understands how the skill should be applied. Has experience of applying the skill to a variety of complex tasks. Demonstrates significant personal responsibility or autonomy, with little need for escalation. Contributes ideas in the application of the skill. Demonstrates awareness of recent developments in the skill. Contributes ideas for technical development and new areas for application of the skill.

#### Level 4: (Expert)

An authority who leads the development of the skill. Is an acknowledged expert by peers in the skill. Has experience of applying the skill in circumstances without precedence. Proposes, conducts, and/or leads innovative work to enhance the skill.

You can find examples of how each skill may be demonstrated at each level in Annex G of the (NCSC) CESG Certification Framework document. For information on the SFIA skills, please visit the SFIA website: <http://www.sfia-online.org/>

You may hold a qualification which demonstrates some of the skills relevant to the role for which you are applying. Please see the document Information Assurance – Roles and Existing Qualifications for further information on which skills are covered by which qualifications. Any relevant qualifications held will be taken into account during the assessment process.

## First Check

When you have submitted your evidence form, CV and related documentation an assessor will take a first look to provide immediate feedback on the evidence you have provided. If all is in order you will be given access to the next stage of the submission process. If there are any areas which the assessor feels lack sufficient evidence, or if there are other issues with the submission, you will be contacted and advised on what you need to do before proceeding. This initial assessment will normally take no more than five working days to complete.

## Technical Evaluation

All applicants will be required to complete a short online Technical Evaluation related to the PRIMARY role and level for which you have applied. The results of this evaluation will be sent with your application for the assessor(s) to review.

The Technical Evaluation will consist of a questionnaire in a multiple response format, 15 minutes in duration. For each question, applicants are required to indicate their confidence level (between 0% to 100%) in the answer they have given for each question.

- At Practitioner level there will be 12 technical/competence questions related to the applicant's PRIMARY role.
- At Senior and Lead Practitioner levels, in addition to the technical questions the questionnaire will include questions on business awareness and people skills. These additional questions will be in the free text format (500-character limit).

There is no Pass or Fail in the evaluation and no certificate is awarded for the Technical Evaluation – the answers and confidence factor will be used by the assessor as a basis for questioning during the assessment interview. Please note that if you exit the evaluation at any time the clock will continue to count down the available time. If you run out of time you will not be able to go back into the evaluation.

**Experience shows that applicants sometimes fail to manage their time appropriately for the technical evaluation. Whilst this does not result in a fail, it may lead the assessors to question the ability of the applicant in this respect which is very much part of the overall competence assessment.**

## Personal Evaluation

All applicants will be required to complete a short online Personal Evaluation form. The form will also be issued to each referee to complete. The Personal Evaluation form assesses the applicant's personal competence (based on Autonomy, Influence, Complexity and Business Skills). The free-text boxes allow each respondent to provide evidence against the set criteria for each of the four competence areas. Ideally two pieces of evidence should be provided for each role applied.

All responses will be collated and made available to the assessor(s) to review in preparation for the assessment interview.

It is expected that the Personal Evaluation form will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete but it is not time limited. You may save and exit the Personal Evaluation at any time and come back to complete it, if necessary.

## IAPP Agreement

All applicants are required to demonstrate that they have read, understood and will abide by the terms and conditions of the scheme. All applicants are, therefore, required to sign the IAPP Agreement before an application will be processed. This document can be downloaded from the **Resources** area and either scanned and uploaded to the 'Supporting Documents' area or posted back to APMG. Please ensure that you upload the signed pages 1, 3 and 13 as a minimum.

## Assessment Process

Once your application has been completed following the submission of all the Personal and Technical Evaluations, you will be able to select your preferred interview date. You will need to navigate to the **Interview** section of your application where you will be presented with the available dates and times for your assessment interview. Interview

slots are available throughout the day, evenings and weekends. If you cancel a scheduled assessment interview within 5 working days of the assessment date, an administration charge will apply, equal to 10% of the application fee.

All assessments will be conducted by APMG approved assessors who hold appropriate security clearance and have relevant knowledge and experience to assess designated roles and levels. They have all been assessed at an appropriate level in the role in order to be allowed to assess in that role.

All assessment interviews will be conducted via teleconference call, and, as our technical assessors work in IA environments, it is expected that you will be able to talk at an unclassified level with them without the need to disclose sensitive details of your work. During your interview you will be required to demonstrate your skills and competence by talking through your experiences, contributions and achievements.

In exceptional circumstances, we will be able to conduct an assessment interview face-to-face. Our assessors may be able to come to your workplace or interviews can be held at a mutually agreeable location. Please note that requesting a face-to-face interview will delay your assessment and is regarded very much as an exceptional requirement.

**In order to maintain security, any summary notes taken during the interview will be securely destroyed as appropriate. If that cannot be achieved, then a note will be made to say “sensitive” evidence was adequately provided verbally.**

### Practitioner Applicants

A technical assessor will review all the information submitted, including the results of the Personal and Technical Evaluations. The assessor will contact one or more of your referees to validate the evidence you have provided.

You will be invited for an in-depth interview with one or more assessors. Your involvement in and contribution to the assignments you provided in your Evidence Form will form part of the assessment questioning. The interview will typically last about 60 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes per extra role for which you have applied.

### Senior Practitioner Applicants

Two or more assessors will review all information submitted, including the results of the Personal and Technical Evaluations. The assessors will contact one or more of your referees to validate the evidence you have provided.

You will be invited for an in-depth interview with two or more assessors. Your involvement in and contribution to the assignments you provided in your Evidence Form will form part of the assessment questioning. The interview will typically last at least 60 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes per extra role for which you have applied.

### Lead Practitioner Applications

Two or more assessors will review the information submitted, including the results of the Personal and Technical Evaluations. They will contact one or more of your referees to validate the evidence you have provided.

The applicant will be required to deliver a 10-15 min presentation that is relevant to your PRIMARY role applied. It is expected that the applicant will use some form of visual aid in the presentation and to provide a soft copy of the presentation to the assessors prior to the interview. This can be uploaded via your application.

The interview will typically last 60 - 90 minutes in total. Your involvement in and contribution to the assignments you provided in your Evidence Form will form part of the assessment questioning, as well as the presentation you have given. The subject of the presentation is entirely your choice, but the intention is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate to the assessors your competences in the SFIA skills in particular.

### Post Assessment

After the interview the assessor will inform you of their recommendation as to whether you should be granted certification for each role at the level applied. For protectively marked information given in the face-to-face interview and presentation, the assessor will just make summary notes and state that evidence was provided and that the

standard was met. The assessor will submit their final report to APMG within 5 working days of the assessment interview.

The assessor's report will then be considered and certified by APMG, and you will be notified of the result within a further 5 working days. If you are successful you will receive an e-certificate which can be shown to others by the sharing of a web-link. The e-certificate will be issued to you within 10 working days of receiving confirmation of the certification award.

### Change of Level

If an assessor's recommendation is that the applicant does not meet the requirements of the level for which they have applied, but does meet the requirements at a lower level, then they can recommend certification for the lower level. Assessors will not make a recommendation for a higher level of certification to be awarded than the level for which you applied. The assessor can suggest that an applicant applies in the future at a higher level.

In the case of the Security and Information Risk Advisor (SIRA) and IA Auditor roles, the selection of core skills can be amended as a result of the interview if the assessor(s) believe(s) that insufficient evidence has been provided in one core skill but adequate evidence has been provided in another one.

### Rejected Applications

If an applicant provides false or incorrect information, the application process will be terminated. The applicant will be informed in writing as to why their application has been rejected. APMG will also inform NCSC of the terminated application.

### Failed Applications

If you are unsuccessful in achieving certification with APMG, a 50% reduction to the application fee is payable if you reapply within six months of the date of your first application. There is no minimum period that applicants must wait before being permitted to re-apply.

If an applicant chooses to dispute the certification decision, then they may do so by following APMG's appeals process, details of which can be found at <https://www.apmg-ia.com/appeals.aspx>.

### The Re-Validation Process

At 18 months into the three-year certification period, all certified individuals will be required to re-validate their certification. This is to ensure that you are maintaining your IA knowledge and professional development. We require you to be able to convince our assessors that you have maintained your knowledge in the areas relating to the certification you have achieved.

The process for re-validating your certification is detailed in the Candidate Re-validation Guidance available to download at the APMG IA website: <https://www.apmg-ia.com/about.aspx>. This also provides applicants with an opportunity to upgrade their existing level in one or more roles, as well as add any additional roles.

Please ensure that you maintain your contact details within the APMG website. Email reminders will be issued in advance of the re-validation becoming due (90 days before the re-validation due date). A fee is payable for the re-validation.

**Please be advised that failing to re-validate your certification will result in your certification withdrawal.**

### The Re-Certification Process

Three years after the initial certification was awarded, all individuals are required to re-certify in their chosen roles. This is again to ensure continuing competence and professional knowledge in the chosen roles. The assessors need to be convinced that you have maintained your professional expertise and are still competent to hold the certifications.

The process for re-certifying your certification is detailed in the Candidate Re-certification Guidance available to download at the APMG IA website: <https://www.apmg-ia.com/about.aspx>. This also provides applicants with an

opportunity to upgrade their existing level in one or more roles, as well as add any additional roles. The re-certification cost is the same as for a new application.

