



common assessment standard

A Complete Guide

We've taken the complexity out of compliance and put together everything you need to know about the highest recognised accreditation in construction and related industries.

Find out what the Common Assessment Standard is, why so many organisations are adopting it into their prequalification requirements, and how you can use this level of accreditation to expand your business opportunities.



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An Introduction to the Common Assessment Standard

Developed in 2019 by BuildUK and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), the Common Assessment Standard has quickly become the industry standard for risk management accreditation in construction and related sectors.

For contractors, it offers a way to demonstrate compliance and prequalify for supply chain opportunities without needing multiple certifications from several different assessment bodies. The Common Assessment Standard is recognised nationwide. Once you've achieved accreditation with one assessment body, you can easily register with any other body to access member benefits — you won't need to complete the assessment again.

For clients, the Common Assessment Standard offers a reliable way to ensure the competence and compliance of contractors. By working with contractors that hold this level of accreditation, you can ensure the safety, sustainability and efficiency of your supply chain operations. You can also streamline your procurement process by adopting the Common Assessment Standard into your prequalification system.

If you're still getting to grips with what the Common Assessment Standard is, how it can benefit your business and how you can gain this level of accreditation, you'll find everything you need to know in this guide.

What Is the Common Assessment Standard?

The Common Assessment Standard is a risk management accreditation you can achieve by completing a set of general prequalification questions. The question set builds on the [PAS91](#) prequalification questionnaire, covering 12 key areas of risk management.

It's the most comprehensive level of accreditation, requiring you to demonstrate your competence and compliance in a number of different areas, from health and safety to financial performance, information security, environmental protection and modern slavery. You'll need to answer all questions relevant to your business and include supporting documentation to evidence your answers. You'll also need to update your answers to the questions set annually to maintain accreditation.

However, despite covering all aspects of risk management, the Common Assessment Standard is achievable for businesses of all sizes. Your answers to each question and the supporting documentation you provide can be proportionate to the size of your business.



Why Complete the Common Assessment Standard?

With several different options available when it comes to risk management accreditation, why choose the Common Assessment Standard?

Ensure Compliance and Effectively Mitigate a Wide Range of Risks

With several modules covering different areas of risk management, the Common Assessment Standard requires you to consider a wide range of risks relating to everything from health and safety to the environment, your financial performance, anti-corruption practices and professional standing.

Set Your Business Apart from the Competition

A recognised standard in construction and related sectors, Common Assessment Standard certification can help you set your business apart from your competitors.

With this level of accreditation, you'll have demonstrated your commitment to risk management best practices. You'll also have the certification to show clients you're capable of completing projects responsibly and to the highest standard.



Prequalify for More Supply Chain Opportunities and Expand Your Business Growth Opportunities

The Common Assessment Standard can help you meet the prequalification requirements for supply chain opportunities with organisations that share your commitment to risk management.

Some leading organisations with exciting supply chain opportunities and long-term partnership possibilities may even require you to hold Common Assessment Standard certification.

But whether this level of accreditation is required or not, you can increase your chances of winning tenders by holding certification.

When you complete the Common Assessment Standard through CHAS, you'll also automatically prequalify for exclusive opportunities with thousands of CHAS clients. With more opportunities at your fingertips, you can grow your business and build an impressive portfolio.

Reduce the Time and Effort You Spend Demonstrating Your Compliance to Clients

The Common Assessment Standard was introduced to standardise the prequalification process for contractors, reducing the time and costs usually associated with gaining accreditation and prequalifying for opportunities.

That's why all three of the recognised assessment bodies that offer the Common Assessment Standard have entered into a data-sharing agreement. The agreement ensures that once you've completed the assessment with one assessment body, your prequalification data can be accessed via any of the other recognised assessment bodies.

You won't need to repeat the assessment through different schemes to satisfy different clients; your certification will be recognised by clients all over the UK — regardless of which organisation you completed your assessment with.

Help Raise Industry Benchmarks for Risk Management

The Common Assessment Standard was designed to raise the benchmark for risk management in the high-risk construction sectors. By completing the assessment and working with other accredited contractors, you can help to improve standards in the industry and keep incidents to a minimum.

Safeguard Your Reputation and Show the World You're Committed to Responsible Practices

Once you hold valid Common Assessment Standard certification, you can share your accreditation status with clients, investors and even members of the public to show you're committed to operating responsibly and sustainably.

This level of certification can help you increase trust for your business and safeguard your reputation if your corporate and professional standing is ever in question.

Why Organisations Are Adopting This New Industry Standard into Their Prequalification Systems

As well as offering significant benefits for contractors, the Common Assessment Standard is helping clients improve their supply chain sustainability and maintain compliance at every stage.



By working with contractors that hold Common Assessment Standard Certification, organisations can make sure their supply chain partners share their commitment to risk management best practices. They can ensure these partners have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to ensure operations are completed safely, sustainably and compliantly.

This is why many organisations are adopting this level of accreditation into their prequalification requirements. More clients are starting to require the desktop Common Assessment Standard certification as a minimum.

Completing the Common Assessment Standard: What to Expect

Common Assessment Standard accreditation is achievable for businesses of all sizes, but it helps to know what to expect from the assessment and how you can prepare.

The question set is designed to be simple to answer, with clear guidance for every question. You just need to provide supporting documentation to evidence your answers and compliance across the 12 areas of risk management.

The 12 Areas of Risk Management Covered In the Assessment

The question set covers 12 areas of risk management; it includes and builds on the topics covered in the PAS91 questionnaire. By covering all aspects of risk management, the Common Assessment Standard can reduce risk across the whole supply chain.

You can learn more about the areas covered by the assessment below:

- **Identity** — You'll need to provide general information about your company to verify that you're legally able to operate within the UK. This information includes your company's name, contact details, registration, company size and address.

- **Financial** — The Assessment will check you've taken the necessary steps to reduce financial risks, so you will need to answer a few questions about your company's financial information and provide any required supporting documentation.
- **Corporate and Professional Standing** — The Common Assessment Standard will look into your corporate and professional standing with questions relating to criminal activity, corruption, terrorism and human trafficking.
- **Health and Safety** — A huge amount of importance rests on health and safety during the Common Assessment Standard. You will need to demonstrate your company has taken steps to protect workers, site visitors and the public from harm.
- **Environmental** — The Common Assessment Standard includes a set of environmental questions that ask about whether your company has taken the necessary steps to reduce the environmental impact of projects and meet environmental management standards.
- **Quality** — Quality assurance can prevent problems from arising and reduce the risks involved in projects, so the Common Assessment Standard will require confirmation that your company meets quality management standards.
- **Equality** — The Assessment will ask you to confirm your company promotes [equality and diversity in the workplace](#) and that all people are treated fairly.
- **[Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#)** — The Common Assessment Standard considers how your company impacts society, so you will need to answer a few questions about your CSR policy.
- **Information Security and GDPR** — You will need to demonstrate your company is protecting personal data in line with the GDPR.
- **Building Information Modelling** — Questions about Building Information Modelling explore how your company develops, manages and controls design information, if applicable.
- **[Anti-Bribery and Corruption](#)** — The Common Assessment Standard will check you have implemented procedures to prevent persons within or associated with your organisation from receiving bribes or bribing others.
- **[Modern Slavery](#)** — You will need to confirm your organisation has taken steps to assess and manage modern slavery and human trafficking risks.

What Supporting Documents Will You Need?

Many of the questions in the Common Assessment Standard require you to provide supporting documents alongside your answers.

The documents you'll need will depend on your business, but they're likely to include:

- Your risk management policies
- Your anti-slavery and human trafficking statement
- Your corporate social responsibility policy
- Your environmental management policy
- Any insurance certificates you hold, such as Contractors All Risk, Employer's Liability, Product Liability, Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance certificates
- ISO certifications, such as ISO 27001, 14001, or 9001 (or equivalents)
- Trade-specific licences/accreditations
- SSIP Scheme Certificate — the Common Assessment Standard is designed to minimise duplication, so if you hold a valid SSIP certificate, you won't have to complete questions that you answered previously.

Any supporting documentation you provide will need to be valid and up-to-date. Certificates should be valid and risk management policies should have been recently reviewed and, if necessary, revised to ensure that they are relevant to your workplace. Risk management policies will also need to be effective and rigorous.

Choosing Between a Desktop and on-Site Assessment

There are two ways to complete the Common Assessment Standard: a desktop or a site-based assessment.

Both will require you to demonstrate your competence and compliance in the same areas. The only difference is that the site-based assessment will involve your assessor visiting your business premises.

You can choose to complete either type of assessment. The most appropriate for your business will depend on the size of your business, your type of trade, and your clients' requirements.

Both types of certification can help you prequalify for supply chain opportunities and demonstrate your commitment to the highest risk management standards. However, some clients will require you to hold site-based Common Assessment Standard certification, particularly if you're applying for a high-risk tender.

Signing Up for a Common Assessment Standard Accreditation Scheme with a Recognised Assessment Body

To gain access to the assessment, you'll need to sign up for a Common Assessment Standard accreditation scheme with one of the three recognised assessment bodies. The recognised assessment schemes are:

- CHAS Premier or CHAS Premier Assured
- ConstructionLine Gold or ConstructionLine Platinum
- Achilles BuildingConfidence CAS Desktop Assessment or Achilles BuildingConfidence CAS Site Assessment



No matter which accreditation scheme or assessment body you choose to complete the Common Assessment Standard through, your certification will be recognised by clients nationwide.

All recognised assessment bodies have entered into a data-sharing agreement. Clients will be able to access your accreditation data through any of the assessment bodies, regardless of which organisation you completed your assessment with.

For example, if you complete the Common Assessment Standard through CHAS and you have a client that is a ConstructionLine member, they'll be able to find your accreditation information through ConstructionLine.

The data-sharing agreement means your accreditation will be visible to clients across all schemes.

So when choosing which assessment body to complete the assessment with, consider which organisation offers the most cost-effective accreditation package with the best member benefits, support and convenience.

At CHAS, we have an award-winning team that is here to support you throughout your assessment. We also offer a number of [member benefits](#) that can help you effectively mitigate risks and pass the Common Assessment Standard. We were also the first recognised assessment body to offer the Common Assessment Standard and we've simplified the way you complete your assessment online.

How to Complete the Common Assessment Standard

Once you've signed up for your chosen accreditation scheme with a recognised assessment body, you'll be able to access the Common Assessment Standard through your member portal.

If you've signed up for CHAS Premier or CHAS Premier Assured, you'll be able to start your assessment from the [My CHAS](#) member portal. The questions set will be presented in an easy-to-read format; you'll just need to add your answers and upload any supporting documentation. If you're completing the desktop assessment, you simply need to submit your answers and one of our assessors will review your assessment remotely.

If you opted for the site-based assessment, you'll need to arrange for a CHAS assessor to visit your business premises to check the validity and effectiveness of your risk management policies and provided information.

Whichever assessment you complete, you'll receive a decision within 10 working days about whether or not you've passed the Common Assessment Standard. If you've passed, you'll receive a CHAS Common Assessment Standard certificate. Your accreditation data will also be added to the CHAS database so that you can share the details with the two



other recognised assessment bodies. Your CHAS business profile will also be updated with your new accreditation and displayed to thousands of CHAS clients.

While the Common Assessment Standard involves a comprehensive question-set that can sound daunting, it's designed to be as straightforward as possible and is achievable for all businesses. If your initial submission needs more detail or evidence, our experienced and helpful assessors will be in contact with details of what is required.

How to Make the Most of the Common Assessment Standard

The Common Assessment Standard can have significant benefits for your business, helping you grow and ensure safe, sustainable operations. But there are a few things you can do to really make the most of this level of accreditation. Here's how you can use the Common Assessment Standard to grow your business and improve your risk management.

Take Advantage of the Benefits Included in Your Accreditation Scheme

When you sign up for a Common Assessment Standard accreditation scheme, you'll also gain access to exclusive member benefits.

When you complete the assessment through CHAS, as a CHAS Premier member, you'll have access to discounted risk management training courses and eRAMS, trade discounts, and Fuelcard services. You'll also have access to Business Shield Support — unlimited, expert telephone advice on health and safety, environmental issues, HR and employment law. As well as telephone support, Business Shield Support gives you access to hundreds of step-by-step guides, model policies, sample forms and letters that can help you mitigate risks.

Other member benefits include a free TradePoint card that gives you 10% off almost everything in B&Q, Fuelcard services and discounted membership to Checkatrade.com.

The benefits and resources you'll gain access to as a CHAS member can help you improve your risk management processes and prepare for the Common Assessment Standard.

Advertise Your Accreditation Status

Once accredited against the Common Assessment Standard, feel free to advertise your accreditation status! You can display your certificate in your workplace, mention that you've achieved the highest recognised risk management accreditation on your website and use your certification to support investor pitches.

Your Common Assessment Standard certification can demonstrate your commitment to risk management best practices and give clients, contractors, investors and even members of the public peace of mind that you operate responsibly.

Apply for Exclusive Supply Chain Opportunities Once Accredited

With Common Assessment Standard certification, you'll meet the prequalification requirements of more clients and with more opportunities at your fingertips, you'll have the chance to grow your business.

We recommend making the most of exclusive supply chain opportunities with leading organisations that require you to have completed the Common Assessment Standard. For example, organisations like Multiplex, Skanska, Balfour Beatty, Costain and other market leaders will require you to have this level of accreditation. Contractors working on [HS2](#) also need to be certified against the Common Assessment Standard. And often, tenders with strict prequalification requirements will be big-ticket and/or long-term opportunities that can help your business grow.

Take the Opportunity to Carry Out an in-Depth Review of Your Risk Management Annually

The Common Assessment Standard involves an annual audit that can encourage you to regularly review your risk management policies and procedures. We suggest using the annual audit to make sure your risk management strategy is as effective as it can be — not just to make sure you're complying with important legislation.

Adopt the Common Assessment Standard into Your Prequalification System

If you work with contractors, why not adopt the Common Assessment Standard into your procurement process to form the basis of your prequalification system?

By requiring your supply chain partners to hold this level of accreditation, you can ensure risk management best practices are upheld across your supply chain. You can work exclusively with contractors with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to help you maintain compliance and ensure operations are completed safely and sustainably.

You can sign up for a [free CHAS Client membership](#) to gain access to our database of thousands of accredited contractors. And with our contractor matching service, you can find the best supply chain partners for your projects.

A Common Assessment Standard Checklist

Are you ready to complete the Common Assessment Standard? Before you start the assessment, there are a few steps you need to take to prepare.

That's where our checklist comes in. Make sure you've completed each of these steps before completing the assessment.

- **Have you chosen a recognised assessment body?**

Remember, once you're accredited with one assessment body, all clients and assessment schemes will recognise your accreditation. So when choosing an assessment scheme, consider the best value for money, benefits and customer support included in your accreditation package.

- **Have you signed up for the right accreditation package?**

Once you've chosen the assessment body you want to complete the Common Assessment Standard with, you need to sign up for the accreditation package that gives you access to the Common Assessment Standard. At CHAS, this is the [CHAS Premier package](#).

- **Do you know which level of certification you want/need to achieve?**

The next decision you'll need to make is whether to choose the desktop or site-based assessment. You might want to complete the desktop assessment for convenience and to gain accreditation quickly. However, the full site-based assessment can help you meet the prequalification requirements for more supply chain opportunities. Some organisations may require you to hold site-based certification if you're going to be completing high-risk tasks.

- **Do you have your company information to hand?**

The first section of the Common Assessment Standard will ask you for details about your company, such as your company registration number, your unique tax reference (UTR) and your VAT registration number.

- **Do you have up-to-date risk management policies and procedures in place?**

To pass the Common Assessment Standard, you'll need to evidence your answers with supporting documentation that's both effective and up-to-date. So before starting the assessment, make sure your risk management policies have been reviewed and — if necessary — revised recently.

If your workplace or workforce has changed since you last drafted your policies,



these will need to be updated for them to be relevant. Similarly, if a year has passed since you last reviewed your policies, they'll need to be updated.

- **Have you checked the effectiveness of your risk management policies lately?**

As well as keeping your policies up-to-date and relevant to your workforce, tasks and worksite, check that your policies are helping you effectively mitigate risks and keep incidents to a minimum. Check your accident logs for any patterns and incidents that could have been avoided to get an idea of whether or not your policies and procedures are effective.

- **Make sure your staff and contractors are aware of your risk management policies**

With your staff and contractors aware of your risk management policies and procedures, you can make sure you maintain compliance across your operations and avoid incidents that could prevent you from becoming accredited.

- **Complete the Common Assessment Standard once you've prepared your supporting documents**

Once you have all of the information you need and have prepared your supporting documents, complete the Common Assessment Standard through your chosen assessment scheme. If you have signed up for CHAS Premier, you can access the Common Assessment Standard through the [My CHAS](#) portal.

Ready to achieve the Common Assessment Standard?

With prices from £539, and a multi-award winning service, CHAS is your number one choice to achieve the Common Assessment Standard, to join over 32,000 other contractors and begin your journey to a safer, more compliant world of working for all head to my.chas.co.uk/register or call 0345 521 9222.





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