

SCHEME RULES

NATIONALLY ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION SCHEME
FOR
OFTEC HEAT PUMP TECHNICIANS



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1. Introduction

Blue Flame Certification and OFTEC operate a Scheme where specific competence assessments can be undertaken. Successful completion of these assessments may lead to the award of a Certificate of Assessment by Blue Flame Certification Limited.

The rules of the Scheme are contained within this document.

These Scheme Rules apply to individuals applying for, undertaking and in receipt of assessment and certification of competence for Heat Pump work where the assessment of competence takes place at an Assessment Centre approved by Blue Flame Certification.

2. Scope

These rules cover the steps necessary for certification of an applicant by Blue Flame Certification against OFTEC Assessment criteria. "Applicant" means an individual applying for Certification within the scope of this Scheme. These Scheme Rules apply only to the assessment of competence and not to any training which may have been undertaken prior to the assessment.

3. Parameters

The Scheme will assess operative competence to carry out Heat Pump work safely. The Scheme does not assess competence of operatives in other areas of work, which are often undertaken within the range of work activity. Such work will be covered by the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act and other legislation. Employers, employees and the self-employed must recognise the responsibilities and duties they have under legislation that encompasses their scope of work.

4. Policy Statements

This Scheme of impartial assessment is open to any and all Applicants meeting the Scheme requirements regardless of colour, race, creed, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, religion, nationality, sexuality, political beliefs, disability, age or any other special needs. The Scheme shall be available to Applicants both with and without prior training.

It is the policy of Blue Flame Certification to take all reasonable steps to offer methods of assessment that caters for the needs of candidates with special needs. All applicants are invited to declare any special needs that they wish to be taken into consideration when applying. Each situation will be considered individually.

5. Scheme Criteria

Information about the criteria against which an Applicant will be assessed, and the legislative and normative references underpinning the assessment may be obtained from OFTEC whose details are available at the end of these Scheme Rules.

6. Applications

Applications must be made on an Application Form, which must be completed with all details before Certification can be processed. One recent photograph (Passport style size, black & white or colour) must be submitted with the Application Form.

At the time of first attendance at the Assessment Centre, the Assessor, Centre Manager or Administrative Assistant shall complete the following actions:

- Provide candidates with information regarding domestic arrangements for the Assessment Centre (such as catering etc.);
- Draw to the attention of candidates, the safety procedures for the centre (fire escape locations etc.);
- Verify the likeness of photographs, the candidate signature and the validity of any pre-requisite qualifications by signing the Application Form
- If the applicant is previously unknown to the centre the document type presented by the applicant as proof of identity and its identification number will be checked and recorded on the Application Form 096.

A number of documents are suggested as means of proof of identity:

- A current valid Passport
- A current valid Driving Licence (photo ID card type)
- A photo ID card issued by the UK Border Agency or;
- A valid Home Office issued work permit, Assessment accompanied by a current international passport
- Other Photo I/D issued by any other Governmental agency.

In exceptional cases, e.g. students or trainees, not in possession of any of the above identification, the following examples of suitable identification are acceptable:

- Birth certificate
- Travel pass, including a photograph
- Under 21 ID cards issued by local authority etc

The completion of the above requirements and signatory verification by the Assessment centre and candidate will constitute a Contractual agreement between candidate and centre to deliver the service as outlined within these Scheme Rules.

Charges for assessment are set by individual Assessment Centres who will provide information at Application. Candidates are required to comply with instructions given to them at Assessment Centres regarding conduct and safety.

Category 1, 2 and 3 Application Conditions

The Assessment centre should ensure that a competent member of staff evaluates all evidence presented by the candidate and makes a professional judgement on its content and suitability against the areas of assessment the candidate intends to undertake. AC's must evaluate this information and retain as a permanent record. Assessment Centres if they doubt the authenticity of the information presented by the applicant must decline access to OFTEC assessment.

Category 1

Applicants in this category are regarded as experienced heat pump technicians holding OFT accredited certificate(s) for the assessment(s) they wish to undertake; they will need to provide an original certificate as evidence to the Assessment Centre prior to taking OFTEC assessments. OFT21-504A and/or OFT21-504G applicants must also hold a current and valid:

- Water Regulations Certificate
- Unvented Hot Water Certificate

Applicants seeking an extension to scope from either OFT21-504A to OFT21-504G or vice-versa may do so after undertaking training at an OFTEC Approved Training Centre and are therefore Category 2.

Category 2

Applicants in this category must undertake heat pump training at an OFTEC Approved Training Centre prior to accessing the OFTEC assessments.

This training will be provided impartially by the Approved Training Centre.

Category 2 applicants shall hold a nationally recognised qualification and/or hold appropriate registration in a trade associated with heating and/or plumbing.

Applicants must provide evidence of relevant qualifications and / or registration to support entry.

Or

Must provide written evidence to the Assessment Centre confirming that the applicant has 'on the job' heating installation and/or maintenance experience (or for OFT21-504D applicants, heat pump system design work experience) for a period of not less than two years that would support their application for the range of assessments to be undertaken, and evidence of ongoing continual professional development.

The evidence shall be in writing from the employer detailing precisely the type, range and volume of work carried out.

OFT21-504A and/or OFT21-504G applicants must also hold a current and valid:

- Water Regulations Certificate
- Unvented Hot Water Certificate

Category 3

Applicants in this category are regarded as new to the heating industry, and do not hold any national qualifications in a related field nor have any relevant work experience.

Application conditions for this category require that the Category 3 applicant must Obtain experience with a competent person (CPS) and/or Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) installation business who are willing to provide an auditable 'on the job' training programme prior to the applicant taking the OFTEC assessment.

The training must be of a minimum of six months duration, and incorporate, as a minimum, five completed installations.

AND

Undertake at least one heat pump manufacturer's training course for installation and commissioning which is planned, managed and certificated as professional development (PD). Completion certificates must be provided for these courses.

AND

Undertake planned and managed heat pump training at an OFTEC Approved Training Centre prior to accessing the OFTEC assessments.

This training will be provided impartially by the Approved Training Centre.

OFT21-504A and/or OFT21-504G applicants must also hold a current and valid:

- Water Regulations certificate
- Unvented Hot Water certificate

The completion of these requirements and signatory verification by the Assessment centre and candidate will constitute a Contractual agreement between candidate and centre to deliver the service as outlined within these Scheme Rules.

Charges for assessment are set by individual Assessment Centres who will provide information at Application. Candidates are required to comply with instructions given to them at Assessment Centres regarding conduct and safety.

Theory Assessments (initial and re-assessments) The pass mark for the assessments is 100%. Candidates must achieve a mark of at least 65% for each paper on the first attempt and at least 80% for each paper on the second attempt (the second attempt comprising only of questions answered incorrectly on the first attempt). Then, if not achieving the required 100%, oral questioning may be undertaken at the discretion of the assessor. No further attempts will be permitted. Inability to achieve the 100% pass mark will be deemed to have not proven competence and shall require the candidate to re-take all theory assessment papers relevant to the failed OFT category not individual paper(s).

The Assessment Centre will indicate, to each candidate, the outcome of their assessment within 10 days of the completion of the assessment (normally on the day of the assessment itself) and will transmit the assessment paperwork to Blue Flame Certification within 20 working days. Blue Flame Certification will endeavour to provide successful candidates with Certificates of Competence within 20 working days of the receipt of correctly completed paperwork from Assessment Centres.

Although given in good faith, times quoted for the provision of the Services are intended as estimates only, and are not therefore to be treated as being of the essence of a Contract

Candidates who do not meet criteria, either theory and/or practical, will be advised that they have been referred and that this result will be transmitted to OFTEC.

Such candidates will be de-briefed by an Assessor at the centre who will advise of a suitable course of action to be undertaken. This may be that a further assessment is appropriate at some stage, or that suitable Training and/or practical experience may be necessary for the candidate to reach the desired level of competence.

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8. Suspension or Withdrawal of Certification

Blue Flame Certification reserves the right to suspend or withdraw Certification upon evidence of a breach of the Scheme Rules or failure to pay any agreed fees. Blue Flame Certification may detail corrective actions to rectify the breach with a time limit for implementation of normally three calendar months. If implementation of corrective actions have not been completed within this time period, withdrawal procedures will commence. Withdrawal of an individual's Certificate(s) may be made public via identification in a suitable industry publication e.g. Heating and Plumbing Monthly and details will be submitted to OFTEC.

Individuals have the right of appeal to Blue Flame Certification as described in point 10 below.

Whilst suspension of Certification is in force the certificated operative must cease carrying out any work as described within the Certificate of Competence.

Upon withdrawal of certification, howsoever determined, the individual shall immediately return appropriate certificates to Blue Flame Certification.

9. Complaints

Individuals may make a complaint concerning this Scheme to the Assessment Centre they attended, OFTEC, or to Blueflame Certification. Complaints will be investigated, reported and resolved following described procedures together with the results of any investigation, and will be communicated in writing to the complainant. The complainant has the right of Appeal against a decision reached by Blueflame Certification (see 10).

10. Appeals

Individuals have the right of appeal against any: the results of a complaint investigation; a decision not to issue a certificate; or a decision to withdraw a certificate.

All appeals must be submitted in writing to Blueflame Certification with a remittance of £200 which is refundable on successful appeal. Whilst under appeal, except in exceptional circumstances, individuals holding relevant and current Certification issued by Blueflame Certification shall continue to be recognised as certificated under the Scheme. Individuals have the right to be represented at an Appeal hearing, but must inform Blueflame Certification in writing of this intention. Representation may be by a legal representative, trade union or any other body official or a colleague.

The initial Appeal must be made within 30 days of a complaint decision. An Appeals panel will be convened within 30 days of receipt of the Appeal, consisting of the Scheme Manager and a member of the Governing Board nominated by the chair. The Appellant has a right of Appeal against the constitution. In such cases an alternative Panel will be proposed by Blueflame Certification. Following the outcome of the Appeal, the Appellant will be formally notified within 5 days after the hearing. The Appellant has the right of a further final Appeal by an independent arbiter who will be acceptable to both parties. The decision arrived at will be final. The total cost of an individuals appeal will be borne by the Appellant when the appeal, at any stage of proceedings, is not upheld by Blueflame Certification under these rules.

The cost of any appeals by an individual shall be borne by the Appellant when the appeal is not upheld by Blueflame Certification under these rules.

11. General Conditions

Certification is subject to these Scheme Rules. Blueflame Certification reserves the right to carry out verification as deemed necessary to confirm the continuing satisfactory performance. Certification does not discharge individual's responsibilities.

12. Certificates

Certificates of Competence issued will detail: the detail and scope of the certification, the full name of the individual, a unique certificate number, national insurance number, date of birth, issue and expiry date of each individual scope of assessment, the Certificate holders signature and a clear warning statement that the certificate is only valid when presented on original paper. Photocopies are not evidence of competence and should not be accepted as such. The Certificate remains the property of Blueflame Certification.

13. Confidentiality, Data Collection and Usage

It is a requirement of the Scheme that OFTEC be provided with candidate information and assessment results so that the Registration of the candidate can be updated to ensure continuous Registration or advice can be given on Registration options on initial or extension to scope Certification.

The process of data collection, usage, retention and disposal of such information ensures confidentiality is maintained meeting the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR: 2018)

14. Fees

Fees for Assessment, which includes Certificates issued to successful candidates, will be set by individual Assessment Centres and must be paid in full. Blueflame Certification reserves the right to charge for investigation of complaints when justified.

If certificated candidates require a duplicated Certificate, Blueflame Certification will levy a Fee.

If a duplicate Certificate is required due to error on the part of Blueflame Certification, one will be provided free of charge

If Certificated candidates do not receive a Certificate within 3 working months of completing assessment(s) a replacement will be supplied free of charge. After this period if a replacement certificate is required then a Fee for the replacement will be charged.

The cost of any appeals by an individual shall be borne by the Appellant when the appeal is not upheld by Blue Flame Certification under these rules.

15. OFTEC Registration

OFTEC maintain a register of Certificated Heat Pump Operatives, issue identity cards and Registration certificates. Note that Registration Certificates are separate from Certificates of Assessment and are not covered by these Scheme Rules. OFTEC Registration cannot proceed until:

- OFTEC have been informed by Blue Flame Certification that Certificates of Assessment have been issued
- OFTEC are in receipt of appropriate Registration Fees
- OFTEC is in receipt of completed Registration Forms and insurance details.
- Candidates may contact OFTEC directly for Information relating to OFTEC Registration and the issue of identification cards and Registration Certificates.

16. Contacts

OFTEC
OFTEC, Unit 25
Riduna Park,
Station Road,
Melton,
Suffolk,
IP12 1QT

Tel: 0845 658 5080

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Blue Flame Certification Ltd
1st & 2nd Floor
No 1 Endon Road
Norton Le Moors
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 8NA

Tel: 0845 194 9031

Registered Office:
6 Marsh Parade,
Newcastle under Lyme,
Staffordshire, ST5 1DU
Registered in England and Wales No 5182566

UKAS

2 Pine Trees
Chertsey Lane,
Staines-upon-Thames
TW18 3HR

Assessments Covered under this Scheme

OFT 21 – 504A	Installation, Commissioning and Servicing of Air Source Heat Pumps
OFT 21 – 504D	Design of Heat Pump Systems for Domestic Space and Water Heating
OFT 21 – 504G	Installation, Commissioning and Servicing of Ground Source Heat Pumps