



**SUBSIDENCE REPAIRS & UNDERPINNING / RETROFIT BASEMENTS / ENGINEERED FOUNDATIONS**

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## **CONTRACTOR ASSESSMENT SCHEME HANDBOOK**

For the evaluation of technical competence, health, safety, environment, quality and equality for the design and installation of ground engineering services as defined in this document.

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## INTRODUCTION

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### 1. AIM

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ASUC is a leading trade organisation that specialises in ground engineering services. The Contractor Assessment Scheme (CAS) is an independent product to deliver conformity assessment impartially to give confidence to industry stakeholders and other interested parties. The aim is to provide an audit system for industry stakeholders that specialise in ground engineering services, as defined in this document, which is open to all (any contractor) that carries out ground engineering services in the specified categories.

This will entitle Contractors to be described as technically competent for the design and installation of ground engineering services. A directory will be available to provide substantive information on technically competent certified Contractors to all interested parties.

### 2. OBJECTIVE

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To provide an audit system rigorous as necessary to ensure that competent certified Contractors attain and maintain a standard commensurate with best industry practice. The audit system will cater for all that operate in the sector and will be open to all that meet the prerequisite requirements as detailed in this document.

The audit system will be tailored to indicate measures taken, or to be taken within the strategy to ensure continuous improvement. This will be checked by periodic audits as detailed in section 6 of this document with a risk based approach.

### 3. CONTROL OF THE SCHEME

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The Scheme Owner (SO) is ASUC as a not for profit organisation and the scheme is administered by AGM (Association Group Management) as an independent secretariat, with an appointed Scheme Manager with the impartiality of a board of Governance (Scheme Board), that is a designated sub-committee of the ASUC Executive Committee. The sub-committee will, from time to time, review the objectives and constituents of the audit system and revise as necessary. The Executive Director with the consent of the Schemes Board will appoint appropriate independent Auditors. The appointed Auditors will on request attend meetings of the Scheme Board. All certified Contractors will be technically reviewed under a

surveillance regime for conformity assessment to the required technical, health, safety, environment, quality and equality standards as detailed in **Parts 1 and 2 Audit Overview.**

### 4. SCOPE OF THE SCHEME

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The Scheme will provide a framework under which certified Contractors will be deemed technically competent in the categories covering their particular expertise. For instance, those qualified as basement Contractors may not be qualified in the category of domestic underpinning. The audit system scope is defined by each of the three categories in Details of Audit System.

The audits will cover categories of the business for which qualification is desired and results will be issued together with confirmation when competency and compliance standards are attained.

### 5. INFORMATION PROVIDED

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The information provided to ASUC will be used by the Executive/Auditors/Relevant Third-Parties solely for the individual assessment of applicants and will not be divulged to others or used for any other purpose.

### 6. AUDIT

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The audit will take place over 1-2 days and will comprise of question sets which are defined in **PAS 91:2013+A1:2017 Construction prequalification questionnaires** as published by BSI, and as further defined by the Build UK/CECA **Common Assessment Standard version 1.2 – September 2020**. The audit scope will be based on:

- ❖ Desk Top Audit (DTA) using a blended audit style (remotely where practical)
- ❖ Site Based Audit (SBA) to confirm implementation of policy, procedures and capability.

It is important that the Principals or Directors are available for the initial stages of the audit. Where the company has regional offices, these may be visited by the auditor. He/she will also visit facilities such as Working Sites and Plant Yards.

Full reassessment audits will be carried out at intervals no greater than three years.

Certified Contractors will be assessed with a risk based approach that is founded on a Risk Rating Table as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Certified Contractors with low-medium risk will be audited at least every three years.

Certified Contractors that are deemed high risk will remain on annual surveillance until a clean track record is established.

Fees for full and partial audits will be set by the Executive sub-committee Schemes Board and are detailed in **Appendix 2**. The fee must be paid in advance and will be non refundable.

## **7. CRITERIA**

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The judgement of the Auditors is to be used within the audit process to mark the applicant as described in the 'detail of audits'. The Auditor's opinion will be final, mathematical errors and omissions accepted. This is subject to an appeals process as defined in this document.

## **8. MEASUREMENT**

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The audit questionnaires and checklist outcomes will be forwarded to certified Contractors individually and exclusively on completion of the audits. These may be used anonymously to provide Industry Benchmarks.

## **9. ASSESSMENT**

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### **9.1 Current ASUC Members Deemed to Satisfy (DtS) arrangements**

Existing ASUC members will be able to use their ASUC membership status as a Deemed to Satisfy (DtS) arrangement to apply for the scheme due to meeting the schemes prerequisites as detailed in section 9.2 New applicants.

In the interests of continuous improvement, the Association may use the audits to advise certified Contractors of the areas in which they are falling below the expected standard as defined within the audit criteria and scope.

Organisations will be given advice and the opportunity to implement appropriate or necessary improvements as defined within the audit documentation, criteria and scope.

At or before the end of the period, the certified Contractor will be re-audited on any areas of concern. This will be regarded as a partial audit.

Independent appointed Auditors will give a recommendation to all certified Contractors and the independent Schemes Board, will decide whether any sanctions should be implemented in cases where the certified Contractor does not take the opportunity to improve its performance.

### **9.2 New applicants**

New applicants will have to undertake and meet the required pre-audit checks before proceeding to audit. These include:

- ❖ Identity (including audit scope criteria categories)
- ❖ Financial (including insurance)
- ❖ Corporate and Professional Standing

## **10. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE**

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All complaints and appeals must be made in writing and addressed to the Association using the procedure as defined in **Appendix 3**.

## DETAIL OF AUDIT SYSTEM

As stated in Section 4 of the 'Audit System' audits will be carried out as follows:

Technical competence, health, safety, environment, quality and equality will be defined by the Audit System checklists.

The audits will cover all categories for which qualification is desired and results will be issued together with confirmation when competency standards are attained.

### Certified Contractor category A

Covers:

- a) Domestic Superstructure repairs
- b) Traditional and Piled domestic underpinning
- c) Open site piling and piled slab operations
- d) Structural works to single storey domestic basements Inc. waterproofing works value less than £300k

### Certified Contractor category B

Covers:

- e) Structural works to all multi storey basements and others with structural elements greater than £300k in value
- f) Structural works to all multi storey basements and others with structural element greater than £300k in value Inc. waterproofing works

### Certified Contractor category C

Covers:

- g) Engineered Foundation Solutions for residential, commercial and light industrial buildings

Notes:

- Job value shall be the value of the contract awarded excluding any VAT
- Company net worth shall be the figure shown on the latest set of company accounts

The Contractor Assessment Scheme is based on a foundation of annual surveillance(to promote a clean track record and a risk based approach) and Application Review. All certified Contractors that are invited to join the Contractor Assessment

Scheme will have full initial assessment so to demonstrate technical competence, health, safety, environment, quality and equality to meet the audit criteria.

On-going surveillance thereafter will be annually until a clean track record is established and a risk based approach can be considered. The maximum surveillance cycle will be 3-years.

Notes:

- The Contractor Assessment Scheme is based on core modules from PAS 91 and the Build UK Common Assessment Standard. The core modules are:

1. Identity (pre-audit)
2. Financial (pre-audit)
3. Corporate and Professional Standing (pre-audit)
4. Health and Safety
5. Environmental
6. Quality
7. Equality
8. \*Corporate Social Responsibility
9. \*Information Security and GDPR
10. \*Building Information Modelling (BIM).

- Whilst the audit system has based its criteria on the Common Assessment Standard (PAS 91) its core function and questions will be based on mandatory questions only. Additional (industry agreed) and advisory sections (and questions) will be **exempt\*** for the Contractor Assessment Scheme.
- ASUC Technical Guidance Notes (TGN) as listed below are recognised industry standards and form part of the evaluation process.
  - **TGN 01:** ASUC recommended minimum site investigation for typical domestic 1, 2 and 3 storey buildings
  - **TGN 02:** ASUC recommended minimum standards for underpinning typical domestic 1, 2 and 3 storey buildings Stage 1: Overview of the process

## **PART 1 AUDIT – OVERVIEW DESKTOP AUDIT (DTA)**

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The technical, health, safety and training questionnaire is based on the foundations of quality, environment, health and safety management systems that take into consideration the competency requirements required for the certified Contractor audit system categories.

### **1. IDENTITY (PRE-AUDIT CHECK) - DTS**

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This section enables the Scheme Manager to review legal entity and the size and complexity of the organisation applying for the scheme. This taking into consideration the type of organisation and potential certified Contractor categories.

### **2. FINANCIAL (PRE-AUDIT CHECK) - DTS**

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This section is mostly about confirming that the required accounts have been submitted to Companies House and the organisation has the financial stability in relation to the types of certified Contractor categories that will be undertaken. This section also includes:

1. Employers liability insurance
2. Public liability Insurance
3. Professional indemnity insurance (where consultancy input involved)
4. Product liability insurance (where products are to be supplied)

### **3. CORPORATE AND PROFESSIONAL STANDING (PRE-AUDIT CHECK) - DTS**

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This section requires a level of self-declaration in relation to criminal or civil court action, be it against the organisation or any of its Directors. This section will also include bankruptcy or insolvency and other related enforcement or remedial actions for other interested parties such as the Environment Agency or Office of Rail Regulation enforcement in the last 3-years. This section will also cover declarations for:

1. Participation in a criminal organisation
2. Corruption
3. Bribery
4. Fraud.

### **4. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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The auditor will use their industry knowledge to define the audit scope with specific focus on the roles and responsibilities so to ensure that the required capability is evident covering the certified Contractor categories and CDM Duty Holder roles as follows.

1. Principal Contractor
2. Contractor
3. Principal Designer
4. Designer.

The audit system scope will have a primary focus on training and information that is relevant to the industry specific requirements and individual qualifications such as NVQs and relevant CSCS/CPCS card schemes to prove competency requirements. Design capability will also be a primary focus, which ensuring that any works sub-contracted is evaluated,

and if designed in-house, that relevant qualifications are established. Temporary works will also be defined and capability confirmed through the audit process and include Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) capability.

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL**

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This section deals with the organisations attitude towards the environment and how its sets policy and arrangements for ensuring that the environmental management procedures are effective in reducing/preventing significant impacts on the environment.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. Environmental policy
2. Aspects and impacts risk register
3. Waste management
4. Carbon reduction.

## **6. QUALITY**

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This section deals with the organisations quality objectives and how it seeks continual improvement through process and procedure. This section will also look at quality related training and the impacts of sub-standard delivery.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. Quality policy
2. Risks and opportunities
3. Training
4. Performance review.

## **7. EQUALITY**

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This section requires the organisations to have an equal opportunities policy and meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, and therefore apply relevant and reasonable measures to promote equality and diversity within the organisation and meet contractual and legal obligations.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. Equality policy
2. Written statements
3. Communication
4. Trade Union representatives.

## **8. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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This section deals with the organisations corporate social responsibility and covers key legislation.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. Corporate social responsibility policy

2. Anti-slavery and human trafficking statement
3. Modern Slavery
4. Minimum wage criteria.

## **9. INFORMATION SECURITY AND GDPR**

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This section deals with the organisations protection of data and meeting the requirements of the required Regulations.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. Data protection policy.

## **10. BUILDING INFORMATION MODELLING (BIM)**

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This section will only apply to those organisations that work on projects with a BIM requirement.

### **PART 2 AUDIT – OVERVIEW SITE BASED AUDIT (SBA)**

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**The site based audit will be to verify the implementation of the polices and procedures submitted against the relevant standards. The core focus of this element is to satisfy the auditor that a Safe System of Work (SSOW) has been achieved, that technical delivery of the audit system criteria has been meet based on certified Contractors designated categories.**

#### **1. LIVE SITE INSPECTION (TECHNICAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY INCLUDING TRAINING)**

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The live site inspection is a fundamental procedure to ensure that all policies and procedures are being met through the required technical standards demonstrating the required level of competency, technical disciplines across audit system categories and including designer duties where appropriate. The live site inspection will also consist of a hazard perception walk around that will be risk rated to promote continual improvement and identify any high-risk areas for immediate or remedial action.

The auditor will typically check:

1. CSCS/CPCS scheme cards all operatives and site technicians
2. Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) that lead to a SSOW
3. Permits to work
4. Emergency procedures

#### **2. OFFICE REVIEW (IF PRACTICAL)**

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The office (premises) will be visited if so far as reasonably practical to do so, this is dependent on the location and accessibility in relation to the live site inspection. The office visit is to establish process and procedures to support the DTA that including the systematic checks of relevant software applications.

The auditor will check on the following core subjects:

1. General housekeeping
2. Fire risk assessment and emergency evacuation procedures
3. Health & Safety signs and posters
4. First aid arrangements.