# BCS APPROVAL / ACCREDITATION PROCESS & REQUIREMENTS MANUAL

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# INTRODUCTION TO BCS

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT — that's us! We're the professional body for IT and it's our mission to make sure everyone's experience with technology is positive. Something we've been committed to since 1957.

Today we have over 70,000 members in 150 countries, and a huge community of business leaders, educators, practitioners and policymakers all committed to our mission — helping everyone in education, at home or at work, to develop the digital skills they need to

BCS is an Ofqual approved awarding organisation, an approved licensee of the Skills Funding Agency, and an ISTQB approved organisation. BCS Learning & Development Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

As a training provider, approval and/or accreditation is the best way to prove that you meet the necessary standards. BCS approval and accreditation are the benchmarks for quality in the tech industry. When you work with us, you
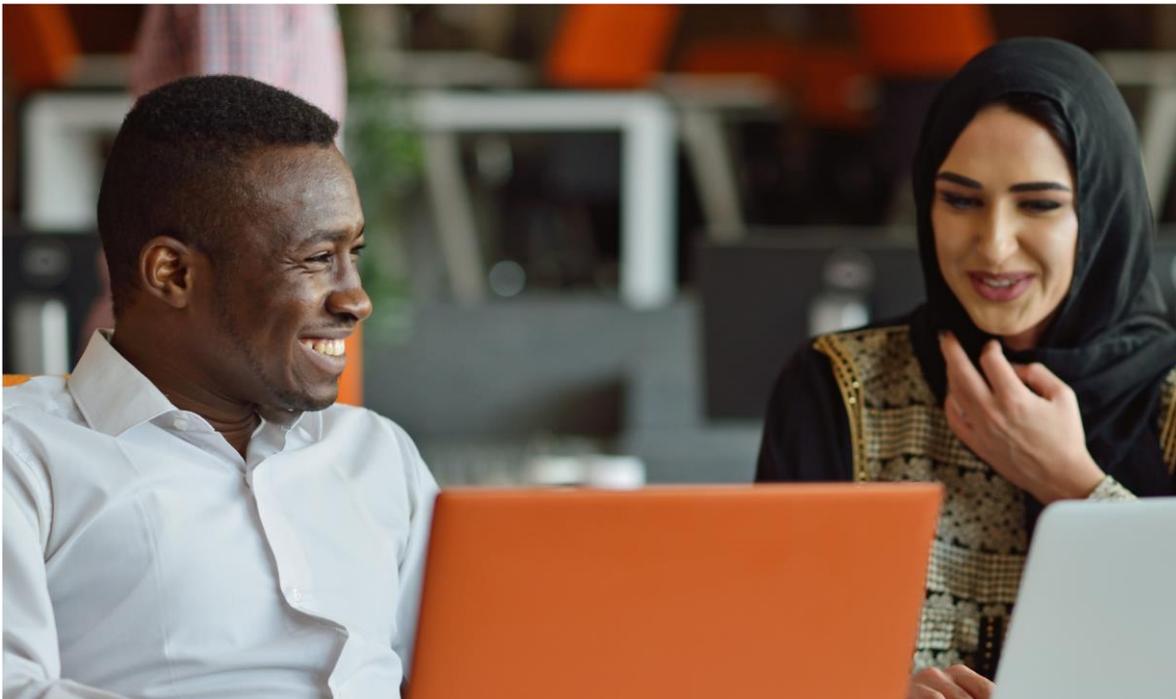


thrive. To do this, we identify skill gaps and risks in the industry and provide training, consultancy and assessment services so that everyone can be ready for their digital future.

join the mission to raise standards in the sector. This manual contains everything you need to achieve your approved or accredited status, so you can deliver BCS qualifications.

# APPROVAL VS ACCREDITATION — WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

If you're delivering Ofqual regulated qualifications you'll need approval. For any products that aren't Ofqual regulated you'll need accreditation.

# KEY OPERATING PRINCIPLES

**As a BCS approved/accredited organisation you must:**

- behave in a way that reflects the BCS values
- maintain a record of provider activity
- make sure your staff are trained and able to perform their role
- provide your staff with prevent duty as well as a prevent safeguarding lead
- keep BCS up to date with training locations and staff details
- where possible, ensure candidates are registered with BCS before they take their first assessment

- ensure assessments are taken under the required test conditions
- maintain the security and the confidentiality of assessment materials
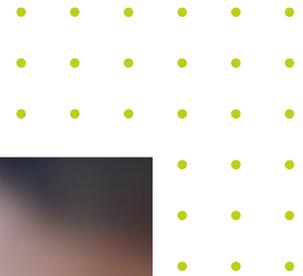


- have appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements in place
- keep to BCS policies and have associated provider-level policies including appeals and complaints, access to assessment, quality assurance and equal opportunities

# CONTACT DETAILS

To help you through the approval or accreditation process, we'll assign you an account manager and a specialised team who'll support you throughout your application.

**Your account manager will help you with…**

- new applications
- contracts
- new centre application invoicing, fees and your first order

**The channel partner quality team (CPQT) will help you with…**

- registering and training staff
- organisation and staff amendments
- completion of approval actions
- access to BCS systems

**If you need anything, you can email CPQT at:** cpqt@bcs.uk or call 01793 417560

# APPROVAL/ ACCREDITATION PROCESS AT A GLANCE

To start the approval/accreditation process you'll need to…

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Submit the online application form sent to you by your account manager | Supply a purchase order number for the application fee and pay the invoice | Digitally sign and return your contract to BCS via Legalesign |

Once completed the CPQT will…

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Review and process your application | Work with you if further information or a visit is needed | Add actions for you to complete via the online application form | Support you with completing your actions and answer any questions you have along the way |

Before we can move forward you'll need to…

| |
|---|
| Complete pre-approval/pre-accreditation actions for registering staff and staff training |

When everything is submitted and processed the CPQT will…

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Approve or accredit your centre | Provide your BCS systems access | Send you your BCS centre certificate |

# APPLYING FOR APPROVAL/ ACCREDITATION WITH BCS

The application begins by meeting with your account manager to discuss your requirements. For some BCS products, they'll send you a template for completing and returning a 'business case'. Once your business case is approved, they'll send you a link to the BCS Centre Community portal where you'll access the online application form (this will be sent from BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT **sfdc.noreply@bcs.uk).**

## Completing your application form
Take a look at the BCS centre application guide for step-by-step instructions on accessing and completing the online application form.

You'll need to identify which products you'll be delivering… this will determine whether you'll require approval or accreditation:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Education** | A full list of qualifications can be found here. | ICDL<br><br>ICDL Advanced<br><br>Essential Digital Skills<br><br>Smart Digital Award in E-Safety<br><br>EDSQ<br><br>Robotics<br><br>Thinking as a Coder |
| **Apprenticeships** | A full list of standards can be found here. | Level 3 and 4 knowledge modules<br><br>Knowledge units and knowledge tests<br><br>End point assessment |
| **HEQ** | Full details can be found here. | Certificate in IT<br>Diploma in IT<br>Professional Graduate Diploma in IT |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **DMP/HTQ** | A full list of certifications can be found here. | **Level 4**<br><br>**DMP is an approved HTQ**<br><br>Non apprentice:<br><br>•Digital core<br><br>•Specialism<br><br>•work-orientated project based (synoptic project)<br><br>Apprentice:<br><br>•Digitial core<br><br>•Specialism |
| **Professional Certification** | A full list of certifications can be found here. | **Our certification portfolio covers:**<br><br>•Agile<br><br>•AI<br><br>•Being an IT business partner<br><br>•Business analysis<br><br>•DevOps<br><br>•GDPR and DP<br><br>•Information security and CCP scheme<br><br>•Software testing<br><br>•Solution development and architecture<br><br>•User experience (UX)<br><br>Please note: there are additional accreditation requirements for Professional Level Business Analysis and ISTQB certifications. |
| **End point assessment only (EPA)** | | Knowledge units and knowledge tests<br>End point assessment |

If your organisation meets the requirements, you can apply to deliver all BCS qualifications and certifications. If you're initially applying for one product set, you can add another at any time during your approval/accreditation. For more information on adding an additional product, get in touch with your account manager.

## Providing a purchase order number and paying the invoice

As you'll have discussed with your account manager, you'll need to pay an application fee. This will cover your organisation approval/accreditation, plus the product area (education, apprenticeships, HEQ, HTQ/DMP and/or Professional Certifications) that you're applying to deliver. If you have any questions about the

fees, contact your account manager.

**+**

**Product type**

**=**

**Initial application fee**

**Organisation approval/ accreditation**
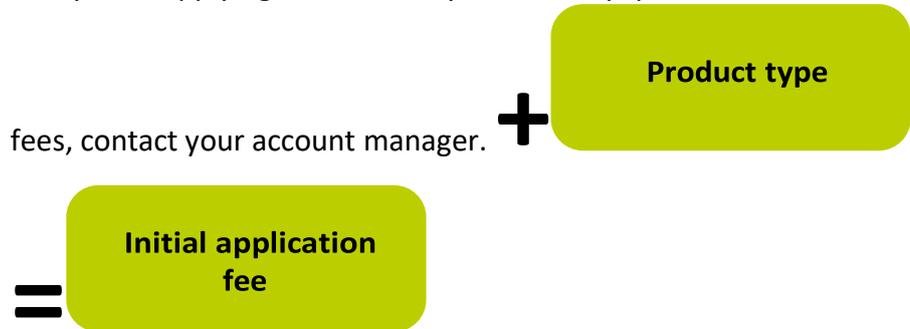
There's a full breakdown of **application and product fees** later in this manual.

## Signing your BCS contract

Your account manager will draw up and send your BCS contract outlining your responsibilities as an approved centre or accredited training provider offering BCS qualifications, certifications or standards, which you'll need to sign and return via Legalesign.

## Receiving your application pack

After you've submitted your online application, your account manager will send you your application pack which contains:

| DOCUMENT | PRODUCT YOU'RE APPLYING FOR | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Education | Apprenticeship | HEQ international | HEQ UK self-host | HTQ/DMP | Professional Certification | End point assessment only (EPA) |
| Initial application guide | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| BCS approval/ accreditation manual | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| IT user approved centre operational requirements manual | ✔ | | | | | | |
| Digital IT apprenticeship approved centre operational requirements manual | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ |
| HEQ operations manual – international | | | ✔ | | | | |
| HEQ UK selfhost operations manual | | | | ✔ | | | |
| DMP operations manual | | | | | ✔ | | |
| BCS professional certifications operations manual | | | | | | ✔ | |

# PRE-APPROVAL/ ACCREDITATION REVIEW

We're committed to maintaining a high standard of training, assessments, and certifications offered by BCS, the ICDL Foundation and ISTQB. As part of our application review process, we carefully evaluate the information and supporting documentation you provide to ensure that all requirements are met.

The CPQ team will conduct a thorough risk-based review of the information you've submitted. To do this, we have a comprehensive risk framework that assesses applications based on various factors including governance practices, compliance with regulations, reputation, product diversity and delivery

models. We'll also conduct a financial check of your organisation.

## Telephone call or visit

We may need to reach out for further information. This could be a remote meeting via telephone/video call or an onsite visit by a team member or a BCS auditor. It's just part of the validation process to ensure the information you've provided aligns with our BCS requirements. The CPQT will be on hand to provide guidance or assistance if you need it at any point.

## Pre-approval/pre-accreditation actions

There will be a number of further actions for you to complete as part of the review process, including registering and training your staff. CPQT will add these requirements to your application in your BCS Centre Community account.

## Required documents

As part of the application process, you'll need to provide us with some essential documentation demonstrating your policies and procedures. Below is a list of documents you may need to provide to us.

**Exemplar policies and procedures** are available on our website.

Each action will come with clear instructions on what needs to be done and how you can let us know once it's completed. The team is here to support you throughout this process and address any questions or concerns you may have along the way.

## For Professional Certifications applications

If you're applying for Professional Certifications accreditation and would like to deliver Professional Level Business Analysis and/or ISTQB Software Testing certifications, you'll need to submit your course materials and trainer applications, which may be subject to a fee. Further details on this process can be found in the application and product fees section of this document and in the course and trainer requirements manual.

| Document List | Description | Education | Apprenticeship | HEQ | HTQ/DMP | Prof Certs | EPA only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appeals procedure | Details how learners' appeals are managed within your organisation | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Assessment security | Details your commitment to ensure the security of assessment material before, during and after an examination | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ **HEQ UK - Self Host only** | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Awarding organisation certificate | If you're not approved/accredited with another awarding organisation, we may conduct an onsite visit as part of our pre-approval/accreditation checks | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Awarding organisation other | Dated letter, invoice or other official document from the awarding organisation | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Awarding organisation prior evaluations report | Not older than one year | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Complaints policy and procedure | Details how learner complaints are managed within your organisation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Employer and public liability insurance certificate | Proof of cover | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Equalities policy | Details your commitment to provide equal opportunities and how this is demonstrated through working practices | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identification checks procedure | Details your processes for checking learner identification (if applicable) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Malpractice and maladministration policy | Details how malpractice and/or maladministration is managed within your organisation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Quality assurance policy | Details your commitment to quality assurance and references processes that support this | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy | Details how learner requirements are met within your organisation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Safeguarding policy | Details your commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst a learner of your organisation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Conflict of interest policy | Details how you avoid, record and report instances of conflict of interest in your organisation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

# COURSE MATERIALS

For all qualifications you're delivering, you should have one complete set of course materials.

**Typical course materials include:**

- session plan and/or timetable, cross referenced to the syllabus
- slide deck
- candidate hand-outs, including exercises and answers

You can also use other course material such as glossaries, sample papers and answer keys written by your organisation, books, pocket guides, pre-reading recommendations, apps, study aids or revision material.

Your course material may be subject to a full review as part of your audit, which'll be requested by the auditor.

If you're delivering the Professional Level Business Analysis or the ISTQB Software Testing certifications, your course materials must be approved before your accreditation can be granted. These course materials will undergo a thorough review to ensure they meet the requirements of the syllabus. If any changes are needed, we'll provide a detailed report outlining the areas that require attention.

Depending on the nature of the changes, you may need to resubmit the modified material for either a partial review (for minor changes) or a full review (for significant changes). There is no fee for a partial review, but a full review may incur a charge.

As an approved/accredited provider you can license your course materials to other organisations who may then apply for BCS approval or accreditation. They will need to undergo the entire approval/accreditation process and you'll need to establish a formal agreement between you and the licensee.

For more details on the requirements for the courseware and certifications, take a look at the course and trainer requirements manual. These can also be used as a guide for developing your own courseware even if your materials don't require assessment.

# STAFF TRAINING

To ensure your staff are well-prepared to deliver BCS qualifications, they'll need to complete the necessary training. This ensures everyone understands and follows the BCS operational requirements specific to the qualifications, standards or certifications they'll be delivering. We provide an operational requirements manual for each qualification area to assist you in coaching your staff.

The CPQT will send you full details of the training you and your staff need to complete and it will also be added to your application, in the BCS Centre Community portal. The training can be conveniently completed online within your organisation and typically takes about an hour. It's designed to be efficient and accessible, allowing your staff to quickly grasp the necessary information.

If you prefer a more personalised training experience, we do offer one-to-one training sessions for some of our products. To find out more about tailored training for your organisation and the costs involved, drop us an email at **cpqt@bcs.uk.**

By completing this training, your staff will be well-equipped to confidently deliver BCS qualifications, ensuring a successful learning experience for your candidates.

# STAFF ROLES

All staff members involved in the management, administration or invigilation of BCS qualifications, standards and certifications must be registered with us and meet the minimum requirements outlined in the table below. You can register staff in one or more roles as long as they meet the quality assurance requirements and have completed the relevant training.

To ensure compliance, BCS will perform quality assurance checks and may request supporting evidence.

For Professional Certifications: please note that trainers delivering ISTQB certifications cannot invigilate these examinations. For **Business Analysis Professional** examinations, independent invigilators must be used (they cannot be directly employed by your organisation).

| Staff requirements | Details | Education | Apprenticeships | HEQ | HTQ self-host UK only | HTQ/DMP | Prof Certs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Centre manager | The centre manager is the main point of contact. If involved in the delivery of assessment, such as invigilating and/or marking, they must be registered for these roles separately | Max 1 | Max 1 | Max 1 | Max 1 | Max 1 | Max 1 |
| Second centre manager | Can assist or deputise for the centre manager.<br><br>Is required to have the same level of knowledge as the centre manager and carry out the same responsibilities. | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrator | Assists with administration tasks within your organisation such as purchasing registration credits, registering learners and record keeping. | Optional | Optional | Optional | Exams officer required | Optional | Optional |
| Invigilators | Required to oversee assessments, ensuring that they are completed under assessment conditions. | Min 2 | Min 2 | | Min 2 independent invigilators | Min 2 | Min 2 |
| Invigilators | Prof Certs: Business Analysis Professional Level exams | | | | | | Min 2 independent invigilators (cannot work for ATP) |
| Invigilators | Prof Certs: ISTQB | | | | | | Min 1 (cannot deliver ISTQB certifications) |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tutors/trainers | For all digital IT apprenticeship standards and BCS Professional Certifications | Min 2 per standard | | | | |
| Tutors/trainers | For Prof Certs portfolio & all ISTQB certs<br>At least:<br>•10 days' training experience<br>•3 years' practical/work experience | | | | | Min 1 per cert being delivered, who has passed the cert they're to teach |
| Tutors/trainers | Prof Certs:<br>Business Analysis Professional Level | | | | | Min 2 per certification, who has passed the cert they're to teach |
| Tutors/Trainers | HEQ — tutors are required to be qualified to degree level or above, or have 3 years' practical experience and 1 year's training experience | | Min 2 tutors | Min 2 tutors | | |
| Assessor | | Min 1 per standard | | | | |

# ACHIEVING YOUR BCS APPROVAL/ ACCREDITATION

Once we have all the necessary information from you and are able to approve/accredit your application, we'll be pleased to welcome you onboard!

You'll receive a digital welcome pack containing essential resources to support your journey. It'll include a confirmation letter specifying the dates of your approval/accreditation, as well as the BCS logos you can proudly display on your website

and marketing materials related to the qualifications you'll be delivering.

We'll also give you access to our user-friendly BCS systems. The CPQT will continue to assist you with the completion of any outstanding actions and your account manager will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your plans for delivery, ordering, registering learners, exam bookings, and any related systems that you'll have been given access to.

Accreditation for **Professional Level Business Analysis** and/or **ISTQB** certifications will only be granted once your course materials and tutors have been accredited. Our course and trainer requirements manual will provide you with all the necessary guidelines.

**Your BCS approval or accreditation status will be valid for one year, subject to your ongoing compliance with all BCS requirements and the successful completion of satisfactory audits. We'll contact you towards the end of your first year with details about your renewal.**

If your application is not successful, we'll work closely with you to identify any additional evidence needed to meet our approval/ accreditation requirements. Our goal is to help you succeed, so we'll provide guidance and clarification wherever needed.

If you're still unable to meet the requirements, you'll need to wait for a period of six months before reapplying. This waiting period allows for a fresh opportunity to refine your application and ensure all necessary elements are in place.

# APPLICATION AND PRODUCT FEES

The total cost associated with your application will vary depending on what you're applying for. Here's a breakdown of the application and product fees you can expect:

**All prices exclude VAT.**

| Organisation approval or accreditation | Fee |
|---|---|
| Organisation approval or accreditation | £500 |
| Organisation approval schools only | £265 |
| End point assessment only accreditation (EPA) | £0 |
| Product type | Fee |
| Education | £350 |
| Apprenticeships | £350 |

| | |
|---|---|
| HEQ | £350 |
| HTQ/DMP | £350 |
| **Professional Certifications**<br><br>If you're applying for ISTQB or Professional Level Business Analysis, accreditation is granted once your course materials have been accredited:<br><br>• Professional Level Business Analysis or ISTQB per certification courseware application<br><br>• ISTQB tutor application: per tutor and per certification | £350<br><br><br>*£750 per certification fee<br><br><br>£40<br><br><br>*If courseware is rejected, resubmission will be required, and a £750 fee chargeable |
| **EPA only accreditation** | £0 |

**Expanding your approval/accreditation with additional certifications**

The initial application charge will be applied regardless of the number of standards/certifications you apply for within the product type. But after the initial application, you can request to add more BCS standards/certifications to your existing approval/accreditation without any additional charges. Just make sure the products you're adding are part of your approved/accredited product portfolio. We'll update your contract accordingly to reflect any changes.

**Professional or additional certifications:**

When it comes to Professional Level Business Analysis or ISTQB Professional Certifications, each new or additional certification will require a courseware accreditation fee per certification and a tutor application fee per tutor, per certification. These fees ensure the quality and integrity of the certification delivery.

Keep in mind that the application fee doesn't guarantee approval/accreditation. However, if your application is not initially successful, don't worry! We'll work closely with you to gather any additional evidence needed to help you gain approval/accreditation. Meeting all BCS requirements and standards is essential before approval/accreditation can be granted.

In the event that your application is unsuccessful, there is a minimum waiting period of six months before you can reapply. Upon reapplication, the full application fee will need to be paid again.

# RENEWAL FEES

To keep your organisation's approval/accreditation up to date, we have a simple renewal process in place. The annual renewal fee for non-school organisations is £500 while for schools/ education centres it's £265.

**For education providers:** there may be additional charges based on the number of approved satellite sites registered. For details on our satellite site fees, you can find our current price list in the Approved Centre Forum > News Information & Support > Document Library > Price List.

**Satellite sites can include:**

- an adult learning centre if your organisation is a college
- another academy if you're part of a multi-academies trust
- a hospital site if your organisation is an NHS Centre
- a training site if you're a private training organisation

**For Prof Certs providers:** if you're delivering ISTQB Software Testing Certifications, there is an additional annual renewal fee of £260 per courseware accreditation. Please see the course and trainer requirements manual for more details.

When it's time to renew your BCS approval/accreditation, we'll reach out to you with a reminder one or two months in advance. We'll kindly request a purchase number or reference to process your invoice.

Please ensure renewal fees are paid within the specified terms outlined on the invoice or contract, so that your renewal process is seamless for you and your organisation. Failure to make timely payments may result in restrictive measures, including suspension of services.

Lastly, please be aware that we do not offer refunds on renewal fees if you choose to withdraw or close your renewal application part way through the re-accreditation period.

# THIRD PARTY RELATIONSHIPS

Make sure you let us know if you enter into any of the following third party relationships. Keep in mind it's your responsibility to ensure these organisations abide by BCS requirements. This includes compliance with advertising in line with our brand guidelines.

**Affiliates**

If an organisation doesn't want to apply for accreditation, they have the option to deliver BCS Professional Certifications as an affiliate of your accredited centre. For this to happen, there must be a formal agreement between your centre and your affiliate. Your affiliate must ensure they only provide training using the approved course materials and trainers registered with BCS through your accredited

centre. All exams should be scheduled and booked through your centre on behalf of your affiliate.

**Brokers and resellers** A broker or reseller is a third-party organisation who enters into a formal agreement with your accredited centre to advertise, sell or schedule courses on your behalf.

**Training companies (education only)** You have the option to enlist the help of a third-party training company to deliver BCS qualifications and certifications. For instance, a school can hire a training company to teach the content of a BCS qualification or certification.

It's important to note that third-party training companies cannot participate in any aspect of a live assessment.

# MAINTAINING YOUR APPROVAL/ ACCREDITATION

As an approved/accredited organisation we'll periodically audit your operations to make sure our requirements are being met and we both remain compliant with our regulators.

Audits can take the form of a planned visit from one of our auditors or a telephone/video call conducted by an auditor or a member of the CPQT. Our approach will be risk based and will take into account your organisational structure, output and history.

We reserve the right to conduct unannounced audit visits and may reach out to your learners for their feedback. Learners under the age of 18 won't be contacted without prior consent.

## During the audit we'll review:

- management and controls, staff management and quality assurance procedures
- data held by BCS about your organisation, sites and staff
- adherence to BCS policies and procedures
- current and future qualifications and/or certifications being delivered
- training and assessment process and practices
- appropriate record keeping and information security
- performance reviews per qualification/certification and trainer/tutor
- course quality (including review of courseware and learning materials)

Once the audit is complete, your main contact and/or centre manager will receive a report detailing the outcome and findings. This will include any necessary actions to maintain your approval/accreditation.

Please note that if you fail to meet the requirements outlined in the operational requirements manual and/or your contract, BCS may suspend or withdraw your approval/accreditation either completely or for specific products.

# ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Being an approved/accredited organisation comes with the benefit of being able to use the BCS logo.

It's important to note that the BCS logo can only be used by approved/accredited centres. We take this matter seriously and will take appropriate measures to enforce it. If you enter a relationship with affiliates or brokers, it's your responsibility to make sure they do not use the BCS logo.

To maintain your approval/accreditation, it's crucial to adhere to the intellectual property (IP) requirements outlined in the BCS brand guidelines. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the withdrawal of



your approval/accreditation.

It's essential that you only advertise the courses you're capable of delivering at any given time. In other words, the number of advertisements for a particular course on a specific date should not exceed the number of approved trainers available for that course.

We'll monitor your website and your affiliates and brokers to ensure compliance with the relevant IP and advertising requirements.

For further information please contact:

BCS
The Chartered Institute for IT
3 Newbridge Square Swindon
SN1 1BY

T +44 (0)1793 417 417

www.bcs.org

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The
Chartered
Institute
for IT

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