BCS

PROFESSIONAL

CERTIFICATIONS

OPERATIONS

MANUAL V2

CONTENTS

INTRODUCING BCS

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT — that's us! We're the professional body for the people who work in tech. Together we're on a mission, set by Royal Charter, to build a safe, bright digital future for everyone in society. It's something we've been committed to since 1957.

We work with key partners and our global membership community to improve IT education and break down barriers, to develop digital capability across industry and support tech talent in all its forms.

By understanding emerging opportunities, and identifying skill gaps and risks, we deliver training, consultancy and assessment services that equip tomorrow's digital professionals, today.

In fact, we're the leading global awarding body for IT, tech and digital qualifications — an international framework of excellence enabling people to develop their digital confidence and capabilities at every level.

We can't do it without you! As a BCS-accredited training provider, you have a frontline role in raising standards of competence and conduct across the digital landscape. We're incredibly proud of our partnership and what we achieve when we work together.

BCS Learning & Development Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. We're an Ofqual approved awarding organisation, an approved licensee of the Skills Funding Agency, and an ISTQB approved organisation.
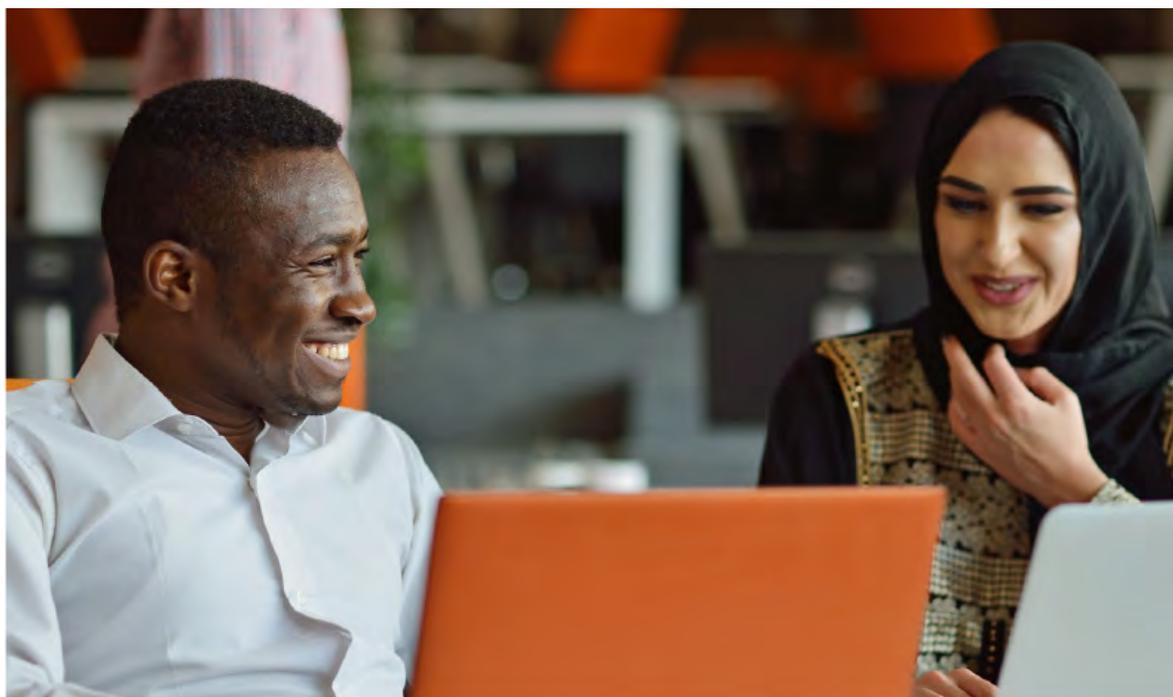
WHO'S THIS MANUAL FOR?

This operations manual is for accredited training providers (ATPs) who deliver BCS Professional Certifications. It sets out all the requirements and processes for managing, administering and assessing the qualifications in the BCS portfolio.

All registered staff involved in the delivery of BCS Professional Certifications should read this manual in full before they make a start.

They'll also need to read the syllabus for the qualification they're delivering as this will cover any course-specific requirements. All our syllabuses are available at bcs.org/deliver-and-teach-qualifications

It's the responsibility of the ATP manager to make sure their team follows the required processes correctly. If we update any information in this manual, we'll let the ATP manager know.

Non-compliance with any of the BCS requirements risks impacting candidates' performance and results. It can also lead to BCS applying sanctions to your ATP.
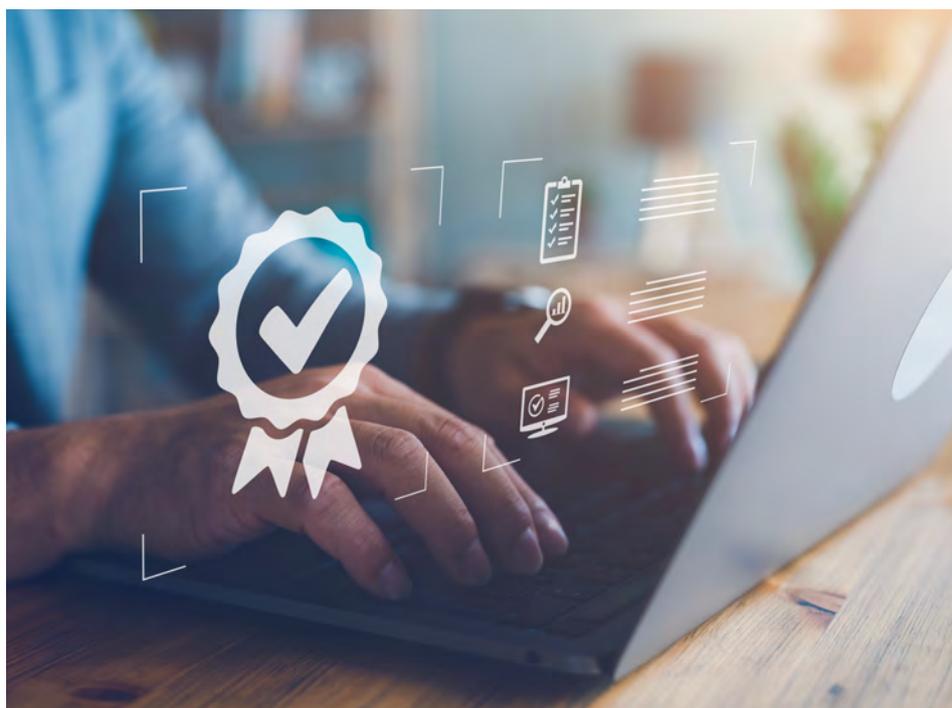
GETTING IN TOUCH

We're on hand to support you at every step in your BCS Professional Certification delivery — here are the contact details you need...

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

- becoming accredited/reaccredited
- registering and training staff
- completing audits and audit actions
- using trademarks and logos
- managing requirement breaches

We're open 9am–5pm, Mon to Fri
Email **cpqt@bcs.uk** or call **01793 417 560**

The service delivery team will help you with:

- delivering live and mock/sample exams
- exam bookings
- managing reasonable adjustments
- providing certification

We're open 9.15am–5.15pm, Mon to Fri
Email **eprofessional@bcs.uk** or call **01793 417 425***

*For oral exams, call 01793 417 716

Resources
All the supporting documents and user guides referenced in this manual are available to download from our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

Don't have access to the Sharepoint site? Send a message to our channel partner quality team and we'll set you up.

ATP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BCS accreditation is a recognised benchmark in IT training and education. Your status as a BCS accredited training provider (ATP) reflects your commitment to delivering high quality learning and assessment and to having skilled staff and robust procedures in place.

Health and safety requirements

Your organisation must meet all current health and safety legislation requirements. Registered staff need to ensure the environment meets these requirements before they begin any training or assessment activity.

Disabled access

Access for disabled candidates must be available at every site offering BCS certifications. If it's not possible to provide disabled access to the site, alternative arrangements will need to be made.
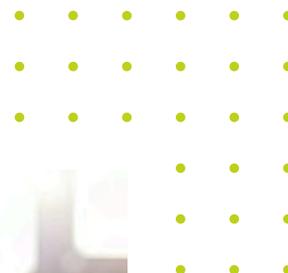
Policies

To help ensure the correct standards are in place in your ATP, there's a full set of policies available in our Training provider resources Sharepoint site to use as templates. Adapt them to reflect what happens in your organisation before incorporating them into your own policy documentation.

We recommend you make all your policies publicly available. At a minimum, it's important your candidates are aware of them and know where they can access them if needed. You may also be required to submit your policies when you undergo an audit.

You must have the following policies and procedures in place:

Policy/procedure	What's covered
Equalities policy	your commitment to providing equal opportunities and how this is demonstrated through your working practices
Liability insurance	your employers' and public liability insurance documents, available to view as either a hard copy or in electronic format — if you're outside the UK, you'll need the equivalent insurance for the location where your exams are held
Safeguarding policy	your commitment to safeguarding candidates, including: • how you ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected while they're a candidate at your ATP • the policies, codes of practice and action plans you adopt in your organisation to minimise potential risks • confirmation you have a safeguarding officer in place • details of the training that relevant staff undertake
Quality assurance policy	your commitment to quality assurance, with reference to the processes you have in place that support this
Data protection notice	a notice that's readily available to candidates, which clearly explains how you'll store and use their information
Exam security policy	your commitment to the security of all exam materials including exams, projects and supporting documents
Identification check procedure	your process for checking a candidate's ID
Reasonable adjustment policy	how you'll meet the specific requirements of individual candidates — this may also include a special considerations policy
Malpractice and maladministration procedure	the process for managing malpractice and maladministration in your organisation
Complaints procedure	how your ATP handles complaints from candidates (prior to the complaint being raised directly with BCS)
Candidate appeals procedure	how candidate appeals are managed in your ATP (prior to an appeal being submitted to BCS)

Courseware

To support your BCS delivery, we've developed comprehensive courseware for many of our qualifications, including slide decks, syllabus mapping, session plans, case study exercises and tutor notes. It's all available in editable-PDF format so you have the choice to use the content as it comes, or modify it to fit with your existing materials*.

To access the courseware, get in touch with your BCS account manager who will get the necessary access set up for you. Once you've obtained the courseware for your ATP, it must be stored securely with access limited to relevant staff only.

*All our courseware materials remain the intellectual property of BCS and cannot be resold or repurposed.

Trademark and logos

As an accredited training provider, you can use the appropriate BCS partner logos to promote your accredited status. Always check you're using the latest version and applying it correctly.

You'll find detailed brand guidelines in our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

Change of ATP name/address

If your organisation's name and/or address changes, your ATP manager must notify BCS by completing the Organisational detail change request form and emailing it to the channel partner quality team. The form can be downloaded from our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

If there's a change to your organisation name, you'll be asked to sign a new contract.

Please be sure to let us know **within 30 days** of a change being implemented, as delaying beyond this period could result in your contract being suspended.

ATP withdrawal/closure

If you stop trading or wish to withdraw from BCS-accredited status, you'll need to complete a *Notice of closure* form, available on the Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

BCS reserves the right to withdraw your ATP status if your organisation fails to comply with our approved training provider agreement.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff members who are involved in the management, delivery or invigilation of BCS certifications must be registered with us. A member of staff can be registered in more than one BCS role.

BCS role requirements

To deliver BCS Professional Certifications, you need to have staff registered in the following roles:

Registered BCS role	Minimum number of staff
approved training provider (ATP) manager	1
trainer per certification that you're delivering*	1
invigilators*	2
*For Business Analysis Professional Level certification	
trainers per certificate	2
independent BCS-approved invigilators	2

Registering staff roles

Staff registrations are set up and managed via our e-professional exam booking portal. The ATP manager receives access to *e-professional* as part of your organisation's accreditation process. Once they have access, they can:

- register staff members against BCS roles
- update staff details
- deregister staff

For more details, take a look at the e-professional user guide for accredited training organisations which is available to download from our <u>Training provider resources</u> Sharepoint site.

Deregistering staff

If a member of staff leaves your organisation or is no longer involved in your ATP's BCS delivery, you must deactivate their e-professional access straight away and notify the channel partner quality team.

The ATP manager role

The ATP manager is the single main point of contact for BCS. They're required to have excellent working knowledge of the certifications offered by your organisation.

The ATP manager has overall responsibility for your BCS certification delivery including:

Staffing
The ATP manager is responsible for ensuring:
- every staff member involved with BCS delivery is registered with us
- BCS is kept up to date with any staffing changes, including when someone leaves or is no longer involved with BCS certification delivery
- the workforce is an appropriate size for the certifications offered and maintains the required levels of competence
- staff have access to the current operational requirements manual
- all staff complete the BCS training relevant to their role
- sufficient management controls are in place and evidenced for all activities relating to our certifications, including management of BCS registered staff

Certification delivery
The ATP manager is responsible for ensuring:
- the ongoing quality of training, testing and exam sessions
- the security of all exam materials, including exam banks
- awareness of the policies and procedures that your ATP must follow
- all conflicts of interest are recorded and managed

- candidates are aware of any pre-requisites before booking their exam(s)
- sufficient management controls are in place and evidenced for all operational activities relating to BCS certifications
- all reasonable steps are taken to protect the interests of candidates should the ATP withdraw their BCS certification delivery

BCS communication
The ATP manager is responsible for ensuring:
- BCS is made aware prior to a change of ATP manager — and a full handover is carried out with the new ATP manager
- the channel parter quality team is emailed immediately if there's any suspected malpractice or maladministration
- your ATP assists BCS in carrying out any reasonable monitoring activities and when dealing with any investigations
- a full report is provided, when requested, detailing any exam anomalies outside of the ATP's operational profile

Changing your ATP manager

If you change your ATP manager, you must let the channel partner quality team know immediately and provide them with the new manager's contact information, including their email address.

You should also make sure a detailed handover is carried out with the new manager to ensure the smooth continuity of all operational requirements.

The invigilator role

Invigilators are responsible for making sure all requirements are met when preparing for, delivering and following an exam session. To conduct BCS exams, your ATP must have at least two registered invigilators.

The ATP manager must ensure that your organisation's invigilators:

- are registered with BCS
- complete the BCS invigilator training before they undertake any invigilation
- are observed by a BCS registered member of staff at their first live exam session — and an invigilator observation report is completed and signed by both observer and invigilator
- are annually observed by a BCS registered member of staff to ensure regulations are being followed — and an invigilator observation report is completed and signed by invigilator and observer

Course-specific invigilator requirements

For the *BCS Business Analysis Professional Level*, you must use an independent BCS-approved invigilator.

When delivering ISTQB certifications, the trainer cannot invigilate the exam for a course they taught.
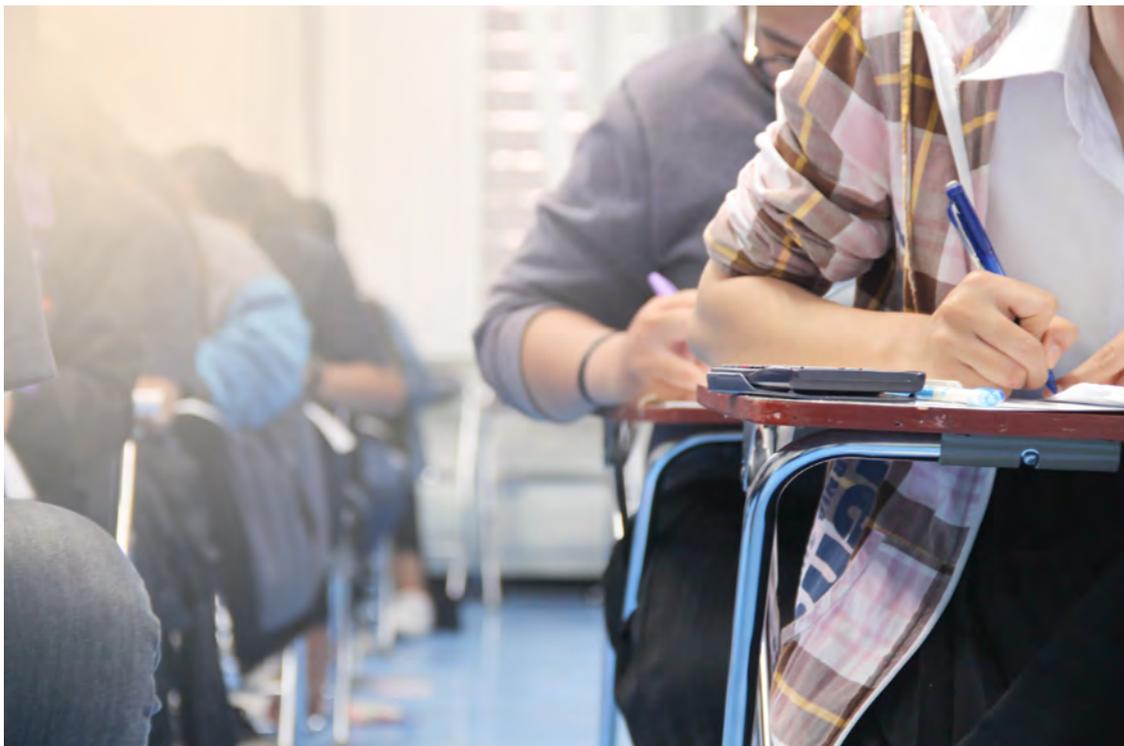
Invigilator conflicts of interest

Invigilators aren't permitted to be involved in any invigilation activity where a candidate is known to them personally.

We recommend that invigilators don't get involved in invigilation activity if they've had any prior involvement with the training of a candidate who's sitting the exam, no matter how far back it was.

Invigilator training

It's mandatory for all invigilators to complete the BCS training before invigilating any BCS exams. In fact you're unable to gain access to the required systems until your training's been carried out.

The training is in the format of a video presentation. It covers the requirements outlined in this manual and takes a closer look at the process for registering candidates and booking exams.

There are also invigilator guidelines available on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site which we recommend downloading ahead of your training session as they'll support your learning.

Access the invigilator training video

Observing invigilation

Your ATP is required to carry out ongoing observation of invigilators to ensure all BCS exam regulations are being met, and to oversee action is taken where there is non-compliance.

The ATP manager must ensure that:
- new invigilators are observed at their first live exam session
- every invigilator is observed at least a year

To document the quality assurance of their invigilation, ATP managers must ensure that:
- observation is carried out by an ATP representative who's registered with BCS
- the representative observes the whole exam session
- invigilator observation reports are completed and signed after each observation — these can be downloaded from our Training provider resources Sharepoint site
- observation reports are stored and available for audit or when requested by BCS

If any issues are identified during an observation, feedback should be given to the invigilator and corrective action taken. This might include further training in areas that need improvement and it may be necessary to carry out further observation to check that the training's been effective.

Observation feedback

When completing their invigilator observation report and providing feedback, as well as identifying any areas that require improvement, observers should also highlight the aspects of good practice that they observed during the exam session.

Feedback might include statements like these:

candidates were well briefed about the exam session and all seemed to understand the requirements

some of the candidates were sitting too close — next time please ensure the minimum spacing requirements are met

it became noisy when some of the candidates who'd finished left the room; this disturbed the remaining candidates — next time please ask candidates to leave the room in silence

an incident regarding a technical issue was handled well, and this was documented on the invigilator report

The trainer role

Your trainers are responsible for teaching candidates the certification syllabus and ensuring all areas are covered.

You must have at least one trainer registered for every BCS certification you deliver — with the exception of *Business Analysis Professional Level* certifications for which you must have **two** registered trainers per certificate.

For ISTQB certifications, your trainer cannot invigilate the exam for a course that they've taught.

Your trainer must:

- be registered with BCS
- hold the certificate in the subject they're delivering — when they register for their exam in e-professional, they should use their own personal email address (not their ATP email address)
- be able to evidence a minimum of three years' practical, on-the-job experience for the certification they're delivering, or experience in teaching the relevant subject area
- not be involved in any invigilation activity for ISTQB exams if they've had any involvement with the teaching of the candidates

Conflict of interest

At BCS, we apply strict procedures to remove/avoid any potential conflicts of interest. This not only helps us meet our regulatory requirements, it protects your candidates and your ATP staff.

We classify any of the following as potential conflicts of interest:

- a trainer being involved with invigilation for a candidate who they've taught for that module
- an invigilator invigilating a candidate personally known to them
- an observer carrying out observation of an invigilator who they know personally

The ATP manager must ensure any conflict of interest is identified and recorded in a *Conflict of interest record* which you can download from the Training provider resources Sharepoint site.
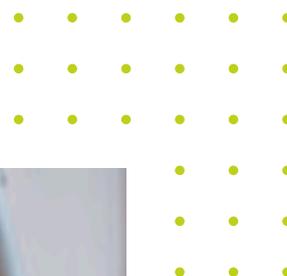
EXAMS

There are a number of methods available for delivering BCS certifications.

Exam method	Method detail
Paper-based	• exam materials are printed by BCS and sent to either the invigilator or exam venue ahead of the exam • candidates sit the exam at a fixed location with an invigilator present
Online: classroom-based	• the exam is delivered digitally via our e-professional portal • candidates sit the exam at a fixed location with your ATP's BCS-approved invigilator present, or an independent BCS-approved invigilator
Online: remote proctored	• exams are delivered digitally via our *Questionmark* partner portal • once we've confirmed the booking, candidates need to register directly with Questionmark and arrange their exam date and time through the portal • the exam can be sat at any location providing it's private and quiet • invigilators attend virtually via the *Questionmark* platform
Pearson Vue	• exams are delivered digitally via the Pearson VUE platform • candidates book their exam directly with Pearson VUE where they choose a convenient date, time and Pearson VUE location • the exam is held at the selected Pearson VUE exam centre where an invigilator will be present
Oral	• the exam is conducted in the style of an interview, either face to face or via *Skype for Business*
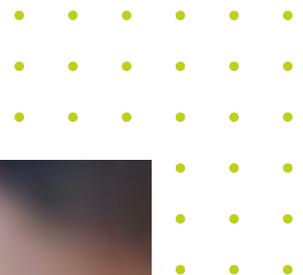
e-professional

All the administration for BCS exams takes place in our *e-professional* portal, a web-based system which staff log into to carry out their activities, including exam booking, registering candidates and viewing results.

For more information and detailed instructions for using the portal, please read our *e-professional user guide for ATOs available* on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

Accessing e-professional

When your organisation becomes accredited with BCS, we set up an *e-professional* account for your ATP manager and send them an email with their username and link for setting up their password. (The username will always be the staff member's email address.)

Booking a BCS exam

You will need access to *e-professional* to make your BCS exams bookings.

Paper based exams
- For exams in the UK, please book at least **7 working days** before the date of the exam.

- For international exams, please book at least **10 working days** before the exam.

Reasonable adjustments
If you're applying for a reasonable adjustment please allow **10 working days**.

For more information about booking exams in *e-professional*, take a look at the *e-professional user guide for ATOs* on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

Who should have access?
- ATP manager
- administrators who book exam sessions
- invigilators

Exam environment

Exams should only take place in an environment that meets our standard requirements — you must consider these aspects of the setting:

- the safety of the exam environment
- disability access
- spacing of the computers
- noise levels and other possible distractions
- the technical stability of the testing computers and software

Exam preparation

For your online exams, *Questionmark* software needs to be available on all the desktops or laptops that are going to be used — this should be uploaded and tested before the day of the exam.

Before any exam commences the following preparations have to be made (typically by the invigilator for that session):

Preparing the environment, ensure that:
- there's a wall clock visible to all candidates and the invigilator, so they can all work to the same time
- there's a minimum space of 1.25 metres between each computer/workstation, or that candidates are sitting at alternate machines
- the date and time is accurate on the computers being used for the exam
- the room is quiet
- the walls don't display information that could help candidates with exam questions
- system checks have been completed prior to the live exam taking place
- invigilators are able to log into the online exam system with their own secure login details

Preparing candidates, ensure that:
- the identity of every candidate is checked, and recorded as per our *Identification policy* (available to read on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site).
- candidates are aware of the start and finish times of the exam — they have a designated time period to complete each unit, unless extra time has been approved as part of reasonable adjustment application (which includes any reading time the candidate requires)
- candidates are able to log into the online exam system with their own secure login details
- all live exams are ended once the duration has passed

Candidate regulations during the exam

At the start of every exam, you must make candidates aware that they have to follow these regulations while the exam is in progress:

- books and other aids cannot be used, unless the exam has been expressly designated as open-book format
- mobile phones must remain switched off for the full duration of the session
- use of a calculator or other electronic device (MP3 player, personal laptop etc) is not permitted, unless the exam format specifies that they can be used
- candidates mustn't observe each other's work
- candidates must not talk to each other or ask the invigilator about exam questions
- plain paper and a pen/pencil can be provided by the invigilator if required — this will be collected at the end of the exam
- candidates should only address the invigilator if they experience a hardware or software failure, require plain paper or a pen, need a comfort break or have a medical issue
- no candidate should leave the room unaccompanied (by a member of staff)
- if there's a breach of any of these regulations, the exam will be terminated and invalidated

Exam interruptions

There are a number of reasons why an exam might be interrupted, for example a technical issue, building evacuation or medical emergency.

Any interruptions must be documented by the invigilator and reported to the ATP manager.

- For paper-based exams, they should be recorded in the invigilator report and returned to BCS

- For online exams, the interruptions report will be available on e-professional once the exam has ended

These records may be requested by BCS for audit purposes or during a candidate appeal.

Evacuating an exam
If you need to evacuate the room during an exam, candidates can resume the exam afterwards providing that, during the evacuation:

- all exam materials were secured
- candidates were separated from each other and not allowed to speak to anyone
- candidates had no access to any teaching/ learning or revision material

If the exam lapses during the evacuation period, you can contact the service delivery team at BCS who'll be able to restart the time allowance.

If the invigilator decides any candidate has been disadvantaged by the interruption, the candidate has the option to either:
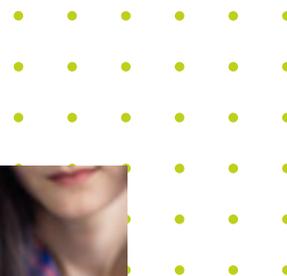
- resume the allocated exam (providing exam conditions have been maintained and the system permits)

or
- take a new exam

If the exam can't be resumed on that day, it must be ended — a live exam can't be 'carried over' and resumed on another day.

Professional judgement should be used as to whether a candidate retakes on the scheduled day of the exam or on another agreed date.

Exam certificates

On successful completion of the exam, candidates will receive their e-certificate from BCS via our *e-professional* platform. The e-certificate will be available to view and download straight away.

Hard-copy certificates are only provided for the *BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis* and the *BCS International Diploma in Solution Development*.

For other certification, we can provide a hard-copy certificate for a fee — please contact our customer service team to find out more.
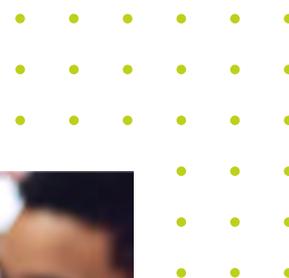
Exam security

It's the responsibility of your ATP and staff to ensure all BCS exam content remains confidential.

This manual outlines the procedures your organisation must follow to protect the content, including these guiding principles:

- Content must remain secure when in transit
- Access to exams should only be given to staff who need it to fulfil their role
- Staff who have knowledge of the exam content must never share the information
- There must be a secure procedure for issuing passwords to staff and candidates that gives them access to systems holding exam questions
- All users of the automated exam system — candidates and invigilators — should have their own login with a password known only to them
- The locations used for storage must be secure

If there's a breach to the security of the exams at your ATP, you must report it to BCS immediately by emailing our channel partner quality team.

Lost exam packs

Paper examination packs must be returned to BCS — or placed in transit, if international — within one day of the exam sitting. The pack must include all paperwork including any unused documentation, and be returned using a tracked courier service.

All examination packs are monitored by BCS. If you fail to produce a pack or determine its whereabouts, it will be classed as lost.

If your ATP loses more than one exam pack in any given six-month rolling period, you'll incur a fee of £700 (excluding VAT) for the second exam pack that is lost and for every additional pack that is lost after that. This payment goes towards the cost of creating new exam papers.

While we aim to work in close partnership with our ATPs to minimise the risk of losing exam packs, we've implemented this procedure to help safeguard the integrity of our exams.

ACCREDITED EXAM PROVIDERS (AEP)

Training providers are able to create their own exam papers for a number of the qualifications that make up our Business Analysis and Solution Development Diplomas.

EP organisational accreditation —
To create your own papers, your organisation firstly needs to achieve BCS-accredited exam provider (EP status. For more information, please read the *Exam provider accreditation requirements manual* available in our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

EP qualification accreditation —
When you create your own exam materials, these also need to be accredited before they can be used in a live exam.

There are specific requirements that need to be met for this method of exam delivery, and a number of additional roles that need to be allocated to your staff, including examination director and internal examiner.

The processes and requirements set out in this section of the manual relate specifically to EP delivery. For the full set of requirements, please read our *Exam provider accreditation requirements manual*.

Marking EP papers

When marking papers that have been created by an accredited exam provider (EP), the following requirements must always be met:

- manual exam papers should be marked by a trained marker who's been approved by the internal examiner (for more information about the internal examiner role, see our *Exam provider accreditation requirements manual*)
- the marker must not have any interest, whether real or perceived, in the success or failure of the candidate
- the marker should follow the mark schemes closely, applying the marks as instructed
- exam results must be added to the central recording system before they're sent to BCS

To ensure compliance with our conflict of interest policy, a marker is NOT permitted to mark an exam for any candidates to whom they've taught that module.

Verifying your marking
Marking of EP papers must be approved by an internal examiner, who:

- has at least two years' experience of exam setting and marking
- holds the certificate for each qualification module they're approved for
- holds the relevant Business Analysis or Solution Development Diploma
- is responsible for ensuring all marking, standardisation and moderation of exams meets BCS requirements

Moderation and standardisation

To ensure the effectiveness and standardisation of your marking and assessment, BCS will regularly assess your exam delivery by reviewing samples of your candidates' work and mark sheets. To enable this process it's essential all candidate work and associated mark sheets are securely stored electronically by your ATP to enable this process.

BCS may ask to see samples of your work in conjunction with an audit or at any other time during the year. When we do, we'll provide your examination director with a list of candidates whose work they'll be required to submit within 10 working days from the date of our request.

Alongside the moderation and standardisation carried out by BCS, the examination director is responsible for conducting their own. This could include sampling of marking and arranging regular standardisation meetings for all markers.

Retention period for candidate work

For external verification and audit purposes, and to assist with the fulfilment of our malpractice policy, you must keep fully auditable electronic records of all assessment materials at your ATP — passes and fails — for three years following their completion.

For every candidate, you should store the following:

- a copy of each question paper they were issued
- the completed mark sheets or evidence record sheets for all their assessments
- all outputs for each assessment
- all documented evidence of internal verification
- any requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations
- details of any exam incidents

For the full set of requirements relating to exam provider (EP delivery, please read the *Exam provider accreditation requirements manual*, available to download from our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

BCS aims to remove any unnecessary barriers for candidates by allowing reasonable adjustments or special considerations to be made where appropriate — while ensuring the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification is also preserved.

ATPs must have effective internal procedures in place for identifying any specific requirements that a candidate has.

Our Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy explains the adjustments that can be made and the process you must follow when applying them. The policy is available on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

RECORD-KEEPING

As an ATP, you need to maintain a number of records relating to your BCS certification delivery to assis with queries during an audit and/or when we carry out certificate validation checks.

Central recording system

It's important that you have a central system in place for recording all the details of your candidates, exams and certifications.

The following data should be recorded and available for checking when you undergo an audit:

Candidate details	Training details	Exam details
• Title • Forename • Surname • House number or name • Postcode • Qualification registered for • Registration date • Reasonable adjustments made	• Start date • Duration • Format • Name of trainer	• Date • Format • Version number • Start time • Finish time • Duration (this may be a calculated field) • Outcome (pass/fail, percentage or grade) • Name(s) of invigilator • Proof of identification

Backing up your data

Your central recording system must be retained for the duration of your ATP's accreditation period, with all data backed up and available on request. You can archive data on a secure server as long as it remains accessible when required.

You'll need to keep fully auditable records for a period of three years after the completion of the training/exam. Once the three years are up, you should check that there are no external organisations, such as regulators or funding agencies, who still require access to the data records, before disposing of them securely.

CANDIDATE APPEALS

It's important that your ATP has an appropriate candidate appeals procedure in place and that it's easily accessible to all your candidates.

If you're unable to resolve an appeal from one of your candidates, they have the right to submit their appeal directly to BCS.

They'll need to submit their appeal to us within 20 days of the date of the exam and they will incur a fee which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld and their exam result improved as a result.

Full details of the fees are outlined in our *Candidate appeals policy*.

Following our initial review of their appeal, BCS will write to the candidate with details of our decision, which will involve one of these resolutions:

- amendment of the decision, in light of new rationale/evidence put forward which we've reviewed

- confirmation that BCS stands by the original decision

If a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they have the right to seek an independent review — this will be carried out by someone who's not connected to BCS.

Our *Candidate appeals policy* is available on the Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AUDITING

The ATP manager is responsible for ensuring there are appropriate internal quality control measures in place to ensure the effective delivery of BCS certifications.

In addition to the mandatory processes outlined in this manual, there are lots of other measures the ATP manager can implement to safeguard the quality of the services your organisation delivers.

The quality assurance activities you choose to undertake should be appropriate to the size of your ATP and the type of operation you have.

They might include (but are not limited to):

- meeting with staff on a frequent basis
- carrying out regular site visits
- reviewing your programme of delivery
- measuring outputs from your organisation, such as exam data against expected results
- actively gathering and responding to feedback from candidates

Audits

ATPs are regularly audited to ensure that all BCS requirements are being continually met and that we're compliant with our regulators. Our audits take a risk-based approach and are carried out with the ATP manager.

Audits can be conducted by any of these methods:

- arranged physical visit from an auditor
- unannounced physical visit from an auditor
- carried out remotely, via video-conferencing or telephone, by an auditor or channel partner quality officer

Audits may include these activities:

- observation of an exam taking place at any of your examination venues
- interviews with your BCS-registered staff
- conversations with candidates to get their feedback — we'll never contact candidates who are under 18 without prior consent

As part of our monitoring process, your auditor may from time to time be accompanied by a second auditor or a member of BCS staff.

Arranging an audit

When an audit of your organisation is required, our auditor or channel partner quality team will contact your ATP manager to offer a range of dates and times for the audit to take place.

Your ATP manager should respond as soon as possible to confirm which of these appointments is most suitable or to request an alternative if necessary. If we don't receive a response, we may get in touch again to advise of a date that we will be attending.

What you'll be asked at audit

The auditor or channel partner quality officer will ask you a range of questions to determine your ATP's level of compliance and risk to BCS. They may ask to see evidence of your compliance first-hand, for example, a demonstration of your central recording system or a visit to the exam rooms being used.

The audit is also an opportunity for your staff to raise any queries or issues they might have about BCS qualifications and their delivery. It's helpful to make a note of these queries ahead of the audit.

What happens after the audit

We'll provide you with a report outlining our findings from the audit.

If any areas of non-compliance have been identified, our auditor or channel partner quality officer will be able to offer advice about the improvements you need to make, or tell you where you can get more information and support. We'll also provide you with an action plan, together with appropriate timescales for completion of each action point. The level of non-compliance will determine your ATP's risk rating to BCS.

If your ATP is not meeting BCS requirements or you're in breach of contract, we reserve the right to withdraw your accreditation or suspend you from registering candidates/ conducting exams.

You can find out more about sanctions in our *Malpractice and maladministration policy and procedure* available on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

MALPRACTICE AND MALADMINISTRATION

ATPs must have arrangements in place to prevent instances of malpractice and maladministration. We're required to report any adverse effects arising from malpractice or maladministration to our regulators.

To remain compliant with our regulators, it's essential that your ATP manager:
• has a malpractice and maladministration policy or procedure
• reports suspected malpractice or maladministration to us immediately
• assists us with any investigations

You must report any suspected or actual malpractice or maladministration to BCS by emailing our channel partner quality team — failure to do so constitutes malpractice in itself.

NON-COMPLIANCE AND SANCTIONS

This manual outlines the requirements for compliance with BCS and our regulators, providing examples of what good practice looks like to help you achieve compliance in your organisation.

To be compliant, you need to meet all BCS requirements. If there's a situation where a requirement is not being met, your level of non-compliance may lead to sanctions being applied. When this happens, a member of our channel partner quality team will email the ATP manager to inform them of the sanction and explain what will happen next.

Sanctions are intended to minimise risk to the integrity of BCS qualifications — there are a range of actions that can be applied as outlined in our *Malpractice and maladministration policy and procedure*.

For more information, please read our *Malpractice and maladministration policy and procedure*, which includes information about sanctions and is available to download on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

ATP COMPLAINTS

If the level of service you receive from BCS falls below your expectations, please let us know by contacting our channel partner quality team.

Our *Complaints policy* is available on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.

ATP APPEALS

To appeal any decision made by BCS, you must ensure you contact us within 20 days from the date we notified you of the decision.

You'll find our *ATP appeals policy* on our Training provider resources Sharepoint site.