



Commission for Energy Regulation

An Coimisiún um Rialáil Fuinnimh

**CER comments on responses received to the
Gas Criteria Document
Modification Proposal**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Gas Safety Supervision

Under the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, the CER has the statutory function to:

- Regulate the activities of natural gas undertakings and gas installers with respect to safety.
- Promote the safety of gas customers and the public generally.

In order to fulfil this safety function the CER launched a process to designate a body as the Gas Safety Supervisory Body (GSSB) in 2008. Following a competitive tendering process the Register of Gas Installers Ireland (RGII) were appointed as the GSSB.

The CER developed a Criteria document setting out the detailed rules, procedures and requirements in relation to fulfilling the obligations and functions of the regulatory system by Registered Gas Installers, Gas Safety Supervisory Bodies designated by the Commission, BGE Networks and other relevant parties. Registered Gas Installers must agree to be bound to the Criteria in order to be registered.

1.2 Consultation on the Modification of the Gas Criteria Document

The Commission previously chaired an industry working group, the Standards Development Group, which developed learning outcomes for training courses. The Standard Development Group's intention was that entry into the new Domestic Gas Safety (DGS) course, the completion of which would be required for registration with the GSSB, would be limited to individuals that held a Level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration. This would have ensured that only individuals with a relevant craft certificate could register with the GSSB.

However, this requirement for entry into the DGS training course (i.e. a relevant craft certificate) could not be specified as a pre-requisite by the certification/awarding body.

Therefore it is intended to enforce this requirement for registration with the GSSB through modifying the criteria document as outlined above, making the craft certificate a direct requirement for registration with the GSSB .

On 9th August 2013, the CER circulated a Proposed Gas Criteria Document Code Modification. This provided interested parties with the opportunity to comment on the CER's proposed amendment to the gas criteria document. The proposal requested responses to proposals and comments to these proposals.

In addition the CER also sought comments with regards to the suitability of an electrical trade certificate for entry into the scheme

The CER received submissions from seven respondents (the 'Respondents') to the Consultation Paper.

This paper sets out the CER's response to the submissions received.

1.3 Structure of the Paper

The structure of the remaining sections of this Paper is as follows:

- Section 2 is structured around respondents' comments and CER's response to those comments.
- Section 3 sets out the modifications to the Gas Criteria Document after consideration of the comments received.

2. Consultation Responses

This section sets out the comments received to the CER proposed modification and the associated CER response. The comments are covered by type. In total seven responses were received to the CER proposal.

2.1 Timeframe for completion of courses

Summary of proposal

The CER proposal stated that this requirement would come into effect from 30th August 2013, but that individuals that have a GIS certificate by 30th September 2013 would be accepted for registration with the GSSB until 1st May 2014 provided they also have a GID certificate by 30th November 2013. The proposal stated that a level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration would not be a mandatory requirement these individuals providing they register by 1st May 2014.

The CER's proposal intended to include time to allow individuals who had already committed to training which would facilitate RGII registration, but who had no relevant trade certificate, time to complete that training.

Summary of comments received

Two Respondents felt that the time frame proposed by the CER to allow completion of courses was too narrow. It was stated that the proposal did not allow time for individuals who have recently completed an OFTEC course to receive their certificates (required to gain entry into the GIS and continue into the GID) and as such the proposed cut-off dates for GIS and GID should be extended.

Two Respondents felt the time frame proposed by the Commission was too long. One submission recommended changing the GIS and GID dates to apply with immediate effect. This was to ensure that less individuals with no trade certificates would register with RGII.

CER Response

The CER has examined the existing timeframes in line with the submissions received. The CER also notes that any delay in a decision to not implement the above modification means that individuals that do not hold a Level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration will continue to be allowed entry into the scheme.

After careful consideration the CER has decided to maintain the position that individuals that have a GIS certificate by 30th September 2013 will be accepted for registration with the GSSB provided they also have a GID certificate by 30th November 2013.

However in light of submissions received the CER has determined that for individuals who have completed an OFTEC 101 course between the 1st August and the 9th September will be accepted for registration with the Gas Supervisory Safety Body if they obtain a GIS certificate

by 30th November 2013 and a GID certificate by 31st December 2013. The deadline for these individuals to register with the Gas Supervisory Safety Body will also be the 28th February 2014 (as explained below).

2.2 Timeframe for registration

Summary of proposal

The CER proposal had included a date of 1st May 2014, by which individuals who had completed the relevant courses, but did not possess a relevant trade certificates could register RGII. Those individuals would have to have completed the appropriate courses well in advance of that date, but would have up to 1st May 2014 to register if they did not possess a relevant craft certificate.

Summary of comments received

One submission recommended that one month after individuals had completed their courses, the Level 6 advanced craft certificate would be made a mandatory requirement for all individuals registering with RGII. The submission stated that failure to do so would encourage graduates to work in the black market.

Another respondent felt that the date by which the Level 6 advanced craft certificate becomes a mandatory requirement should be the 28th February 2014. The CER understand this was to facilitate RGII's processing of applications.

CER response

The CER has decided that the deadline for registration for individuals that do not possess a trade certificate should be brought forward relative to the proposal to allow for the above comments. Individuals that possess the GIS and GID by the specified dates will have until 28th February 2014 to register.

2.3 Acceptable types of craft certificates

Summary of proposal

The CER proposal was that, after a certain date, a level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration (or equivalent) would be a mandatory requirement for registration.

Summary of comments received

One respondent sought clarification as to whether the Advance Level City & Guild's Apprenticeship in Gas Utilisation was deemed to be equivalent. The respondent also requested clarification on what FAS Apprenticeships would be allowed under this change and whether Mechanical, Automation and maintenance Fitting (MAMF) is included in the criteria.

Two respondents stated that the entry requirements should be restricted to a level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Plumbing, or Refrigeration (or equivalent) and that electrical craft certificate should not be allowed as an entry criteria.

One respondent stated of any gas fitters being trained in Ireland in the last 30 years. They also stated that FETAC certificates only show fitters on the certificate, not gas or pipe fitters. They also stated that they were not aware of a craft certificate for refrigeration, only refrigeration engineers.

CER response

The CER can confirm that the Advance Level City & Guild's Apprenticeship in Gas Utilisation is considered to be an equivalent course.

The following current FAS apprenticeships are allowed under this change:

Fas Apprenticeship Trade - Plumbing

Fas Apprenticeship Trade - Electrical

Fas Apprenticeship Trade - Refrigeration & Air Conditioning

The CER has noted the comments received regarding removing the electrical craft certificate (or equivalent) as a scheme entry criteria. After examining these responses, the CER has determined that this position requires future examination. As a result, the CER will be endeavouring to publish a public consultation with regards to removing the electrical craft certificate as a scheme entry criteria in Quarter 4 2013.

The comment regarding gas fitter training in Ireland is noted. However, this has been retained to allow for personnel with older qualifications to register and also to allow for non-Irish equivalents.

Mechanical, Automation and maintenance Fitting (MAMF) is not specifically allowed for under this change.

2.4 Competency assessments

Summary of proposal

The CER proposal included a statement that the requirement for a competency assessment on application does not apply to Gas Safety Supervisory Bodies members who are renewing or-applying for membership unless their membership has lapsed for a period of two years or greater.

Summary of comments received

One respondent stated that note one of the proposed medication could be read as including new entrants as they would not have been previously registered, and queried whether this was intended to only apply to individuals that has previously been registered and wished to re-register.

One respondent stated that there appears to be a great deal of uncertainty regarding the timescales for undertaking reassessment when existing RGI certificates have expired, and that this may be an opportunity for the proposed changes to include the timescale for RGI's to renew expired certificates and specify the need for maintaining competency by holding at all times a valid non expired certificate of competence.

The respondent suggested that the CER position contradict the requirement or need to undertake the on-going competency re-assessment and that these installers do not need to hold a valid non expired certificate of competency.

CER response

An individual must have a GID certificate to register with RGII. The GID is treated as a lifelong award for the purposes of RGII registration, even though some GID certificates have expiry dates. An RGI is not removed from the register if their GID award expires.

Separately under the criteria document RGIs will be required to sit a competency assessment every five years (regardless of whether their GID has an expiry date or not). This requirement is already in place, but will not be implemented until that competency assessment is in place and available.

The CER has intended note1 to require that individuals:

- that had not been registered with RGII in the last two years and
- whose qualifications were more than two years old

would be required to sit the competency assessment prior to registering with RGII. This is intended to ensure that individuals who have not been working on domestic gas appliances in the preceding two years or have not been trained within the preceding two years have to sit the assessment prior to engaging in gas works. The approved modification has been amended slightly to clarify this.

2.5 Clarification request

Comments received

One respondent requested clarification that the existing route GIS/GID route to registration will continue with the exception that after the agreed date, a craft certificate will also be required for registration with RGII.

CER response

The above is correct. After the dates outlined, in order to register with RGII an individual will have to possess an appropriate craft certificate in addition to their GIS and GID certificates.

Comments received

One respondent queried the rationale for having one date for attaining a GID and a separate date for registration.

CER response

The intention was to allow individuals that had attained a GID a certain period of time to become registered with RGII. The alternative would have been to require individuals to register immediately following completion of their GID. This may have posed problems as those individuals may not have received the relevant documentation immediately. It would also have resulted in those individuals being required to pay full annual membership for the remainder of 2013.

Therefore the CER has allowed a period of time for individuals to register, but has move the 1st May date forward to allow for comments received, as outlined above.

Comments received

On party noted that the modifications to section B2.1.3 and C1.2.2 ended with the word 'and'. They queried what followed that word.

CER response

Sections B2.1.3 and C1.2.2 contain other paragraphs that follow on from the text that is being modified. This can be read in the published Criteria document. The text (which is not being modified) means that trainee members must also be supervised and have their work certified by a Registered Gas Installer.

3. Amendments to Gas Criteria Document

The CER Proposed Gas Criteria Document Code Modification was circulated on the 9th August 2013. The CER received submissions from seven respondents.

Having considered each of the issues raised, the following text in the grey box below will be inserted into the Gas Criteria Proposal Document.

Section B 2.1.3

The specific requirements for each membership category are as follows:

1) Full Membership (Domestic) will be open to individuals who hold [note1]:

Either [note2]:

- (i) A Domestic Gas Safety Award (DGS) ; or,
- (ii) A Gas Installer Safety (GIS) and a Gas Installer Domestic (GID) award or equivalent[note3]

And

- a. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting ,Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration[note4]

[note1] From the 1st January 2014, any individual who was not registered for the preceding period of two years on the date on application to the scheme shall also be required to complete the on-going competency assessment prior to entering the scheme. These requirements do not apply to anyone who has gained a qualification in the preceding two years that meets the scheme entry requirements. These requirements also do not apply to the Gas Safety Supervisory Body (GSSB) members who are renewing or re-applying for membership unless their membership has lapsed for a period of two years or greater.

[note2]Individuals that completed DGS or GIS/GID as part of their craft certificate in plumbing do not need to have a separate DGS or GIS/GID certificate.

[note3] Use of equivalent award subject to approval by the CER that award meets scheme criteria.

[note 4] This requirement comes into effect from 18th September 2013. However individuals that have a GIS certificate by 30th September 2013 will be accepted for registration with the GSSB until 28th February 2014 provided they also have a GID certificate by 30th November 2013. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration will not be a mandatory requirement for these individuals providing they register by 28th February 2014. Individuals that have completed an OFTEC 101 course between the 1st August 2013 and the 18th September 2013 will be accepted for registration with the GSSB until 28th February 2014 provided they also have a GIS certificate by 30th November 2013 and their GID by the 31st December 2013. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration will not be a mandatory requirement for these individuals providing they register by 28th February 2014.

2) Trainee membership – Domestic

a. will be open to individuals who are undertaking or have completed a plumbing apprenticeship (or a FETAC Level 6 advanced craft certificate in Electrical, Plumbing, Gas Fitting or Refrigeration.) and are working towards full membership; and

Section C 1.2.2

The specific requirements for each membership category are as follows:

2) Full Membership (Domestic) will be open to individuals who hold[note1] :

Either [note2]:

- (i) A Domestic Gas Safety Award (DGS) ; or,
- (ii) A Gas Installer Safety (GIS) and a Gas Installer Domestic (GID) award or equivalent [note3]

And

a. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration [note4]

[note1] From the 1st January 2014, any individual who was not registered for the preceding period of two years on the date on application to the scheme shall also be required to complete the on-going competency assessment prior to entering the scheme. These requirements do not apply to anyone who has gained a qualification in the

preceding two years that meets the scheme entry requirements. These requirements also do not apply to the Gas Safety Supervisory Body (GSSB) members who are renewing or re-applying for membership unless their membership has lapsed for a period of two years or greater.

[note2] Individuals that completed DGS or GIS/GID as part of their craft certificate in plumbing do not need to have a separate DGS or GIS/GID certificate.

[note3] Use of equivalent award subject to approval by the CER that award meets scheme criteria.

note 4] This requirement comes into effect from 18th September 2013. However individuals that have a GIS certificate by 30th September 2013 will be accepted for registration with the GSSB until 28th February 2014 provided they also have a GID certificate by 30th November 2013. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration will not be a mandatory requirement for these individuals providing they register by 28th February 2014. Individuals that have completed an OFTEC 101 course between the 1st August 2013 and the 18th September 2013 will be accepted for registration with the GSSB until 28th February 2014 provided they also have a GIS certificate by 30th November 2013 and their GID by the 31st December 2013. A level 6 advanced craft certificate in Gas Fitting, Electrical, Plumbing, or Refrigeration will not be a mandatory requirement for these individuals providing they register by 28th February 2014.

3) Trainee membership – Domestic

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